The Most Common Pronunciation Mistakes in Georgian-Accented Speech and the Issue of Intelligibility

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Abstract

Kachru (1985) described three groups of English speaking world - inner, outer and extending, out of which the last circle includes those speakers who use English for international purposes. As he claimed, for native speakers' standard norm is acceptable, however, for the rest of the circles, local variations are more logical. Georgia is part of the third, extending circle, and thus, the question which deviances from norm are acceptable and which are not is the question to ask. The presented study of Georgian-accented English is the first research in the Georgian-English accent studies that is oriented to find out the three groups of pronunciation mistakes: unintelligible, disturbing and ugly. This was possible by creating three groups of listeners, native English speaking, Georgian and Dutch English speaking judges who assessed the Georgian-English speech and singled out the problematic features. The results of the study has shown some serious mistakes that hinder the intelligibility and are disturbing. However, those features that were assessed as ugly were not considered to be very important and were advised to improve only on the higher level of English teaching.

1. Introduction

More and more the English language becomes one of the most influential languages in the world, dominating many spheres of everyday life including business, politics, media, education computer sciences and many others. As Fishman stated "the world of large scale commerce, industry, technology, and banking, like the world of certain human sciences and professions, is an international world and it is linguistically dominated by English almost everywhere, irrespective of how well-established and well-protected local cultures, languages and identities may otherwise be" (1996:628). As the importance of English language is raising every day, it is not surprising that the number of English speakers has increased. As Gerry Abbot pointed out, "things have changed linguistically and demographically since imperial days. What was the British Empire is now the English Empire" (1991:55). This is proved by the many studies which claim that the number of non-native English language speakers in the world exceeds the number of native English speakers (Smith, 1992:75) David Crystal in 1985 stated, that the number of English speakers in total was approximately two billion people (1985:9). Thus, there are many speakers of English whose L1 background is different. Kachru (1985) tried to systematise different types of English speakers and created three circles – inner, outer and extending. Out of which inner circle refers to speakers for whom English is a native tongue, these type of countries are UK, USA, Australia etc., outer circle – includes those speakers and countries, for whom English is a second language for instance, India, Singapore, Bangladesh, or as Jenkins (2003) claimed, countries that had been colonised by English, the number of which is 350 million (Jenkins, 2003:16), and the last - expending circle is the one in which English is a foreign language like France, Spain, and others including Georgia.

The above-mentioned importance of English language raised many issues for discussion in theoretical linguistics and language acquisition. For instance, issue of the standard language; which language models should be accepted as standard and why; the problem of intelligibility – what kind of deviance from the norm is still understandable and problems connected with language teaching and issues connected with the attitudes towards the language users. The importance of the English language changed the reasons why people learn the language. As Jenkins noted, at first the reason to study English was only to

communicate with the natives in the US or in the UK (2003:16); Nowadays, the reasons have widened. Vivian Cook provides an example of survey held in six schools of European Union. The survey showed that the highest number of interviewers (94 %) named the ability to communicate with others as their primary reason to study English. Another survey provided nine main reasons to learn English language which included personal needs such as career, willingness to understand other cultures, education purposes etc. Aside from these nine main reasons, the survey also revealed 700 other reasons to study English (Euro Barometer, 2006, Cook, 2008, 137). Since some of the outer circle English speakers, with different L1 backgrounds already created their own variety of English language, which do not fully come in correspondence with the standard English, the question arises whether it is necessary to teach standard English everywhere if the local variety is still comprehensible. Thus one of the main problems in the world of English teaching is if deviation from the norm is acceptable, and if so, to what extent.

Several studies had been conducted on the limitations of the deviance. Most of them take into account intelligibility and annoyance. However, before deciding possible restrictions, it is important to decide which aspect of the language hinders intelligibility – is it connected with the grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or any other spheres? Many studies investigating intelligibility emphasized the importance of phonetic features (Rajadurai, 2001; Derwing, 2003, Munro and Derwing, 1995b), and thus, main focus of this thesis is phonetic aspects of the speech.

Discussion whether we should accept all the varieties of English language that exists in the world or not started long ago. Many scholars think that there are certain language characteristics that do not impede intelligibility, for instance, Jenkins created a "simplified, neutral, universal pronunciation variety, intelligible and acceptable to both native and non-native users" (Jenkins, 1998:120). As Cook (2008) noted, one of those solutions proposed by Jenkins is to disregard the difference between sounds /ð-θ/, instead she proposed to pay more attention to the sentence stress (Cook, 2008:192). The same ideas were introduced by Quirk (1981) who created so called 'nuclear English'- "which endeavoured … syntax and morphology" (Jenkins, 1998:120). Gimson (1978:51) is another scholar who reinvented international pronunciation by reducing the "phonemic inventory of English, i.e. 24

consonant sounds and 20 vowel sounds, to 14 and 15" (Jenkins, 1998:120). Seidlhofer (2004), listed several well-spread mistakes in English language that could cause the L1 influence, however, as Cook suggested, if those mistakes do not impede intelligibility there is no reason to change them (Cook, 2008:193). Kachru (1985) on the other hand, claimed that, inner and outer circles should follow the native norms, however, for the rest - local varieties should be acceptable. Some other scholars share the opinion of Kachru, for instance Jenkins (2003), brought example of ELF researches which show, that "just because a language item differs from the way it is produces by inner circle speakers it is not automatically an error" (2003:143). Therefore, these assumptions lead us to the problem of language teaching to non-native English speakers, if we agree with the opinion that the most important factor in language is intelligibility then all of those exercises that trains students to sound like natives are unnecessary. Many scholars share this opinion since everybody agrees that the English language has become the language of communication, and thus the language users communicate not only with natives but with non-natives as well. On the other hand, many studies show that non-native accents have influence over the success of the communication. Some native people consciously or unconsciously are not willing to comprehend talk which is affected by an accent. These are the issues that should be dealt when talking about the varieties of English and thus, will be discussed in this thesis.

1.1 Research Gap and Research Questions

All of the aspects of language mentioned in the previous chapter are also applicable to one of the varieties of English language – Georgian-accented English. Georgia, whose population speaks mainly in Georgian, has undergone many political changes during the past few years which have had serious influence on the language policy. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, knowledge for English obtained very high priority. However, it is obvious that because of the influence of the Soviet Union and afterwards the crises which occurred in Georgia after the collapse of the system, there are many gaps in the science, which should be fulfilled in order to achieve the set goals. One of those scientific gaps involve investigations in the sphere of theoretical linguistics and language acquisition, including Georgian-accented English, which has not been investigated so far. There exists only two complete studies which

have investigated issues connected to the theoretical and practical issues of the English language. One is conducted by Edisherashvili (2014) and the other which is the focus of my interest is conducted by Tkemaladze et al., (2001). The later study *Learning English in Georgia 2001: A Baseline Study* is interesting, because it mentions issues connected with the Georgian-English pronunciation, specifically, it discusses some differences between Georgian and English language; however, it has very general theoretical character based on which authors attempt to give advice to teachers which types of exercises are more suitable.

The given description for theoretical background to be given as advice about teaching practical matters is very general since it does not depend on the practical investigation it does not show the full picture. Any other study that would deal with the Georgian influence on English pronunciation has not been yet conducted. However, since Status quo during the past ten years changed significantly, the English language became part of the important strategy. To become closer to the western society (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:6; Edisherahvili, 2014:95) and moreover it became a necessary language for the development of the many spheres like business and education, which play such an important role for the developing country like Georgia; in turn the necessity of the research into Georgian-English grew. Therefore, this thesis tries to investigate Georgian-English accent that would help Georgian teachers focus on features that are considered to be unintelligible for natives as well as for non-native speakers of English language, dealing mainly with the theoretical as well as practical issues. Thus, this thesis is focused on three main research questions:

1. What are the most important characteristics of Georgian-accented English?
2. Which pronunciation features affect intelligibility most?
3. Which pronunciation features are the most disturbing?

1.2 General Methodology of the Study

The study is based on the speech recordings that were collected in ten different schools by Natalia Edisherashvili (2014). Research has a qualitative character and it includes three main focus groups: native English speakers, and non-native English speakers who are divided into two parts Georgian English speakers and foreigners – in this case, Dutch English speakers,

this division will give the opportunity to compare, if there is a different level of intelligibility of one and the same speech recording, among the ELF Georgian speakers and other nationalities in this case, Dutch speakers. The listeners decided which speech characteristics impeded intelligibility most of all and which speech features were typically disturbing. To describe pronunciation qualities acoustic measurements and perception will be used.

1.3 Historical Background and the Significance of this Study

The fact that there is a little amount of studies conducted about English language in Georgia is caused by the fact that attitude towards English language went through many phases. Those changes are, first of all, observed on the policy of the second language. Back in 90s Georgia was still under the influence of Soviet Union language policy and this was especially reflected on the language teaching style; books were written by Soviet authors and using styles characteristic of the Soviet teachers. As Natalia Edisherashvili described, teaching style was basically form-based and it emphasized grammar, at the same time teachers were developing memorizing skills mostly and did not pay enough attention to the speaking skills (2014:2).

To change teaching ideology and language policy was quite difficult as the Soviet way of thinking was maintained in Georgia for a long time, which is not surprising as Language policy in Soviet Russia was very important as far as language serving as a tool to unify nations and at the same time it had important cultural impact. As Blauvelt described, language for all the empires was way for legal and institutional power extension, way of creating "sense of unity and shared identity" (2013:1). That is the reason why Soviet government paid so much attention to language policy which aimed to spread Russian language all over the Soviet countries. Moreover, Russian represented the language of propaganda, and thus, in course of time, Russian became a lingua franca. Russian language influence began during Tsarist regime, as according to Pavlenko, in 1860 a "upon annexation of Georgia the tsarist regime closed all Georgian schools and opened Russian ones, where Georgian was taught as an optional subject". After 1905 tolerance towards the language policy raised and Georgian schools were reopened (Pavlenko, 2008:279). However, Russian language propaganda did not stop as Natalia Edisherashvili explained, this policy was called *sblizheniye*, which would lead to creation of new humankind *homo sovieticus.* According to her, "Russian was therefore, in some sense, seen by the Soviet authorities as a neutral, non-ethnic

language, and it remained the most widespread second language or lingua franca of the Soviet Union for decades" (2014:86). Kobaidze also suggested, that after 1921 Soviet government created language policy according to which languages created certain hierarchy, where all languages would have equal rights everywhere, however, only one language Russian would have special function, it would be used as a main domain for communication (2008:130). Therefore, in the framework of the general policy of the Soviet Union, according to which western countries were considered as enemies and everything connected to them, for example, famous brands manufactured there, were banned. According to Edisherashvili, "The official fear that Soviet social ideals might crumble in the face of Western influences went as far as banning by Moscow of Coca-Cola and Levi Strauss jeans" as well as any goods, songs or any kind of symbols associated with the US were believed to be the symbols of evil (Edisherashvili, 2014:86). It is not surprising that any language coming from the western world was treated very carefully and was taught though many restrictions. Moreover, language was taught through propaganda of Soviet Union. However, according to Pavlenko, learning languages was not discouraged (Pavlenko, 2003:322). The collapse of the Soviet Union, subsequently caused change of the attitude towards the second language, this first of all was conditioned by the new needs in the new political society. It was obvious that the status of Russian language was not as important in post-soviet countries. This new reality obviously raised the need to teach and learn other languages in Georgia too. However, Georgia in its newly obtained independence went into deep crises in 90s. This crises was one of the reasons why the needs that I have-mentioned were not fulfilled easily.

1.3.1 Present Context of the Study

The situation after the Rose revolution in 2003 changed, as it is depicted in the annual report of TLG – Teach and Learn with Georgia, the new government was recruited with the young western-educated and western - oriented politicians, who started the process of reformation and took Europe and US as the models for many spheres, including the education (2011:6). As Edisherashvili stated, "seeing foreign language proficiency as a means of bridging the gaps between Georgia and the Western world, the government saw to it that language teaching found its way to the top of the priority list of the reforms to be implemented (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:6)" (Edisherahvili, 2014:95). Thus, it is logical to think that the

status of the English language changed and it became the priority of the country. This was expressed in the number of reforms which were connected to the language policy, as annual report of TLG stated, “from 2011, English will be the first mandatory foreign language in every public school of Georgia, more focus is on local English teacher training and adopting modern methodologies in foreign language teaching as well as adopting new textbooks of English” (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:11). Georgia opened doors to the international printing houses, like Macmillan, which proposed course books recognized into western European countries. After changing teaching materials, next step was to retrain the English teachers, and raise awareness of continuous professional development, this was achieved by the demand from the government to pass the Teacher Certification Exam, which became obligatory from 2010. Teachers trainings were organized through the government-accredited language teacher training centers, one of those institutions, for instance, was Teacher’s House, which helped teachers to prepare for the exams and at the same time as Edishrashvili mentions from the TLG annual report, “Macmillan Education, besides providing the biggest share of course books to the Georgian schools at that time, was also involved in teacher training provision to Georgian teachers” (Edisherashvili, 2014:100). According to TLG: Annual Document (2011), beginning from June to August 2011, Macmillan trained around 4,200 Georgian teachers of English in the new methodology of working with their course books, such as English World (2011:12)” (Edisherashvili, 2014:100). Another big step was to implement the project Teach & Learn with Georgia in 2010. Program was intended to bring native language speakers form all around the world to teach in Georgia. According to the annual report “by the end of academic year 2011, Georgian public schools hosted up to 1,000 English speaking volunteers” out of which some of them were native English speakers, others, fluent English speakers (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:12). The aim of the project was to introduce the new methodologies and help Georgian teachers “in the two most important skills of foreign language learning process – speaking and listening skills” (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:12) apart from the language abilities, report claims that they brought important programs like movie clubs, libraries, critical thinking activities, moreover, the program gave opportunity to the teachers and students to share the cultural values (Teach & Learn with Georgia (TLG): Annual Report, 2011:18).

From the above mentioned actions it is obvious that attention towards the English language raised, however, number of studies embracing theoretical or practical aspects, conducted about the English language are still very few. In fact, as already mentioned there are only two main studies covering some theoretical aspects of the language and teaching issues in Georgia, the first one is *Teaching and Learning English in Georgia 2001: A Baseline Study* conducted by Tkemeladze et al., 2001, and the second one is Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia, conducted by Natlia Edisherashvili, 2014. The former one is one of the first complete studies which deals with the English teaching practice in Georgia, where authors gave recommendations to teachers to make teaching process more efficient. From this perspective study plays very important role. The later one, deals with many interesting aspects connected not only with the practical issues of teaching English in Georgia, but also with theoretical problems associated with the language policy, and transition of Georgia from the Soviet influence into new reality. Therefore, this thesis is the first proper research that will try to analyze Georgian- accented English language and will attempt to point out main characteristics of the Georgian English speech, at the same time it will try to establish certain boundaries in the deviation from the norm in Georgian-accented English.

2. Literature Overview

The rapid raise of the EIL – English as an International Language, intensified the ongoing debates about the question which models of English language should be chosen, what are the most important factors determining intelligibility among nonnatives and native speakers of English Language (Rogerson-Ravell, 2011:1, Jenkins, 2003:83). Nowadays, many English teaching practices take a native English speakers as the model for teaching, however, many scholars claim that it is the senseless and timewasting activity. Since the reasons why people study English are various, it became more obvious that native-like English should not play vital role for everybody. As Michael Halliday mentioned, if your speech is intelligible it does not matter you are native or nonnative language user, (Michael Halliday, 2000:12). Because of these reasons, intelligibility has become one of the determinants in the speech, as the Routledge Encyclopedia of Second Language Acquisition pointed out intelligibility is the most important factor in successful communication (2013:329). Joanne Kenworthy in her book *Teaching English Pronunciation* gave more detailed definition of the term, she equaled intangibility to the concept of understandability and claimed that more the listener understands from the speaker, more intelligible is the speech, whereas according to her, since the speech is connected to the sounds, unintelligibility is connected to the listener's inability to understand or interpret sounds that were substituted by the speaker in the correct way (1987:13).

It is also noteworthy, that some scholars like Smith and Nelson (1985) distinguished between intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability, out of which, intelligibility is connected with the word forms and utterances, comprehensibility with the understanding of the meaning and interpretability with the speakers' intentions (Field, 2005: 400, Rajadurai, 2007:89). However, Jenkins (2000) in *The Phonology of English as an International Language,* emphasized the importance of intelligibility, although noted that it is a prerequisite not the guarantee for the successful communication (Rajadurai, 2007:89). In another study Munro and Derwing distinguished between *intelligibility* and *comprehensibility*, where former is connected with understandability of speaker's utterance and later with accentedness and "estimation of difficulty in understanding an utterance" (Munro and Derwing 2006: 112). According to Margie Berns, the main distinction between Jenkins and Smith's theories is terminology, as "Smith situates his views

in cross-cultural communication, Jenkins draws from general linguistics and speech act theory" (2008:328).

It is important to note, that the concept of intelligibility was introduced in 1949, when David Abercrombie emphasized the importance of learner's intelligible speech, according to him, "language learners need no more than, a comfortably intelligible pronunciation" as he defined by the term "comfortably" he meant pronunciation which is understood without much effort on the part of the listener (1949:120). Nevertheless, it was in 1970s only, when teachers realized that it was highly unrealistic and time-consuming to aim for native-like pronunciation and decided to take intelligibility as the main pronunciation teaching goal (Field, 2005:400). Later, the assumption became even more widespread, therefore, several studies were based on the idea of intelligibility, (Gilbert, 1980, Pennington and Richards, 1986, Crawford, 1987, and Morley, 1991), some of which revealed that "there is intolerance for foreign accents in some circles, particularly employers (Sato, 1991)" (Munro and Derwing, 1995: 286). In contrast to the Abercombie's assumption, there are some scholars who claim that speakers' main goal should be native-like pronunciation, those studies also show that the problems in communication between natives and nonnative English speakers can be caused by the accent (Lambert, et al,1960; Anisfeld, et al., 1962; Brennan and Brennan, 1981a, 1981b; Ryan and Carranza, 1975; Kalin and Rayko, 1978;). For instance, Griffen pointed out that "the goal of instruction in pronunciation is that the student (or patient) should learn to speak the language as naturally as possible, free of any indication that the speaker is not a clinically normal native" (1991:182). Munro and Derwing show that the reasons why accent reduction practice became very popular, is because accentedness was associated with 'language pathology' and it was very often considered as subject that needed '*treatment'*, '*intervention'* or even '*eradication'*, furthermore, Munro and Derwing added that the fact according to which, accentness hinders intelligibility is not yet well proved (1995:286)

2.1 What Hinders Intelligibility, Review

In the intelligibility investigation process, it is important to outline the main obstacles hindering the communication. Number of studies has been conducted to reveal which aspects of the language is the most important in the communication. One of the first researches done in the framework of Contrastive error Analyses, was conducted by Moulton (1962), he emphasized pronunciation

mistakes and classified errors made by American students learning German. According to his belief, the conducted study would make easier to create exercises that would improve students pronunciation, thus, he evolved list of broad pronunciation error classification: 1. Phonemic errors, 2. Phonetic errors, 3. Allophonic errors, 4. Distributional Errors. Alternatively, Gail Gunterann later, studied thirty volunteers in El Salvador, and tried to find out the most common grammatical mistakes in Spanish and attempted to figure out which of those mistakes hindered intelligibility. As he suggested, grammar errors mostly "do not impede communication to a significant extend" (1978:252). Conversely, Politzer (1978) analyzed American learners of German and estimated certain hierarchy, he deduced that vocabulary hinders intelligibility most of all, followed by grammar and pronunciation. Similarly, Alberchsten et al., (1980), examined Danish learners of English language, collected data was tested by 150 native British participants. Findings showed that discourse errors had significant impact and frequency of errors had very big influence on intelligibility. Later, Ensz conducted experiment on American speakers of French and deduced that grammar plaid important part in speech, however, according to him, "the areas of phonological accuracy and vocabulary acquisition should not be neglected either" (1982:138). Meanwhile, Varonis and Gass (1982) proved that grammar and pronunciation play more significant role than the other aspects of the language. After a while, Widdowson (1994) reported that in the intelligible communication, vocabulary should play more important role than the grammar, however, custodians of standard English focus their attention on grammar (Widdowson, 1994:381). It is even more interesting, that there are some studies which claim that despite the good grammatical and vocabulary skills, intelligibility may still not be achieved (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Lam and Halliday, 2002). For instance, Fayer and Krasinski (1987), investigated Puerto Rican learners of English language, experiment was conducted among native English and native Spanish speakers, who listened to the tape recordings of Puerto Rican students talking in English. Then, native participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire, testing which part of the speech caused irritation, investigation deduced that Spanish native speakers and English native speakers assessed linguistic forms differently, they were less tolerant and showed more annoyance than the English Native Speakers.

Each of these theoretical positions make an important contribution to the intelligibility investigation, however they do not describe sufficiently the importance of pronunciation, which to my mind, plays the most important role, as it is the first and the only source for speech, in the oral

communication. Although, Gynan in his paper Comprehension, Irritation and Error Hierarchies, suggested that the morphology and syntax was more salient for the native speakers of English language, he at the same time, emphasized the importance of phonological accuracy in the comprehensibility process (1985: 160). There are many other scholars who support pronunciation supremacy as well, such as Munro and Derwing 1995b, Rajadurai, 2001; Derwing, 2003 etc. some other scholars also make significant remarks, for instance, Abbot pointed out that "Since listeners can cope with only a limited amount of interference when processing non-native Englishes, there is a need for some conformity in the stream of speech itself (i.e. the pronunciation) because it is this, which 'carries' a speaker's linguistic and cultural messages" (Abbot, 1991:56).

2.2 Accent

Although several studies revealed that some speakers can achieve native speech levels (Ioup, et al., 1994, Bongaerts, T., Planken, B., & Schils, E. 1995 Bongaerts, et al., 1997), Major pointed out that a native speaker can still identify whether the language user is native or not (Major, 2007:539). Moreover, according to him (2007), even those listeners who are not native speakers of the language can guess whether speaker is the native or not (Major, 2007:552). According to his definition, "The overall rating for degree of native-like speech is often termed as global foreign accent" (2007:539-540). Paradoxically, according to Munro and Derwing, it is a common practice to consider accent as a main burden in communication (Munro & Derwing 1995a, 1999) however, for the late L2 learners, it is nearly impossible not to have the foreign accent, even for the ones, who spend certain time in the L2 environment (Flege et al., 1995) (Munro & Derwing, 1995b:289). On other hand, Derwing and Munro in their article - Putting Accent in its Place: Rethinking Obstacles to Communication, noted that the easily identifiable accent does not necessarily mean it can cause problems in the intelligibility or in the communication (2009:478).

Derwing and Munro overviewed the previous studies and methods done in the investigation of the accent. As they assumed, all the studies conducted so far, as well as all the methods that I have discussed above, show that intelligibility is different from the comprehensibility and accentedness (Derwing & Munro 2009:479). The example of this assumption is the investigations done in the intelligibility area, which showed that listeners' transcribed L2 utterances perfectly well, however, their speech were assessed as heavily accented (Derwing & Munro 2009:479).

Therefore, as Derwing and Munro suggested, even if the L2 speech is intelligible, L2 speakers may be assessed as heavily accented, however opposite can never occur (2009:479). Taking all the debates into consideration, Munro and Derwing supposed that the problem connected with the accent is still not solved (1999:288).

2.3 Listener's Factors

Joane Kenworthy in her book singled out two different types of listeners, the ones who are familiar with the foreign accent and the ones that have developed the abilities to use contextual clues when listening. As she stated, because of the pronunciation similarities, speakers from the same community tend to understand each other better, Kenworthy also brought the example of the individual speakers' parents, who understand their children in the young age better than the other adults, or people from different accent background in the inner circle, who at first cannot understand each other but, after a while, when they get used to their speech, accent becomes more intelligible (1987:14).

Generally certain main types of familiarity can be singled out, for instance, familiarity with the specific or general accent, familiarity with the topic or with the certain speaker. These listed types are proved by many investigations for instance, Wingstedt and Schulman (1984), who suggested that listener's familiarity with the certain accent helps to intelligibility. Several other studies showed that accent familiarity plays significant role, in particular, according to Smith and Bisazza (1982), Japanese speakers of English, comprehended Japanese accent better. Major, et al., (2002), investigated speakers of 100 Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Standard American, they also found, that nonnatives as well as natives scores were lower when they listened to non-native speech, however, native Spanish speakers scored higher when they listened to nonnatives speech, moreover, native speakers of Chinese, scored lower when they listened to the speakers of their own accent. Eisenstein and Berkowitz (1981), also claimed that English Learners in America comprehended non-native accent better than the native one. Wilcox (1978) investigated Singaporean English learners and similarly, results showed that the learners understood their own accent better. Several other studies have presented the same results, such as Brown (1968), who conducted the same examination about West Africans and found that they comprehended their own accent better than the other accents.

Word familiarity factor is another interesting issue to discuss. According to some investigations, words that are more frequently used in the language are more intelligible for the speakers. For instance, Bradlow and Pisoni (1991) compared if the word familiarity had the influence on native and non-native speakers of English language. They created two wordlists, one included so called hard words and another included so called easy words. Later, ten speakers produced those two "easy" and "hard" word-lists, but using three different speech rates. Among native speakers, easy words had better intelligibility scores than the hard words, speech rates also had the impact. Slow and medium speaking rate, according to the results, were more understandable than the fast speech rate. Moreover, the non-native listeners, had a difficulty to comprehend hard words. Several studies have been conducted to identify if the different tasks had the influence on speech production, for instance, Tarone, in her investigation pointed out, that there are two variables in learner's speech, this is first of all, linguistic context, which is also proved by Dickerson (1974); Dickerson & Dickerson (1977), and, second of all, the task that speakers are given to elicit the speech (Tarone, 1983:142). According to McCandless, Winitz (1986) and Elliott, (1995), "pronunciation when not formally taught, remained relatively stable in spite of the high degree of input the learners processed" (Elliot, 1997:96).

2.4 Phonetic-Acoustic Factors: Segmental and Prosodic Features

Besides all the factors mentioned so far, factors connected with the pronunciation is the one of the most important one. After the development of Contrastive error Analyses (CA) (Lado 1957), and the development of the interlanguage studies (Selinker, 1972), many investigations have been conducted to identify which part of the speech effects intelligibility most of all. It is noteworthy, that all of those researches are divided into the two categories, ones which claim that segmental features are more important (Fayer & Krasinski, 1987; Koster & Koet, 1993) and ones which claim that prosodic features make speech more understandable (Palmer, 1973, Johansson, 1978; Ganong, 1980, McClelland & Elman, 1986, Elman and McClelland, 1988 Anderson-Hsieh, et al., 1992; Derwing, et. al., 1998.) Munro and Derwing, in their study mention that, "Some of the key findings of the study—that even heavily accented speech is sometimes perfectly intelligible and that prosodic errors appear to be a more potent force in the loss of intelligibility than phonetic errors—added support to some common, but weakly substantiated beliefs" (1999:285). As, Major

(2007) summarized, the main discussions in the intelligibility investigation, is about the segmental feature superiority, (Major, 1987, González-Bueno, 1997; Munro, Derwing, & Flege, 1999; Riney & Takagi, 1999, Riney, Takada, & Ota, 2000;) the other - about prosodic features (Anderson-Hsieh, et al., 1992; Munro, 1995), as well as syllable structure (Magen, 1998), and speaking rate (Munro & Derwing, 1998, 2001). Major also mentioned paralinguistic phonetic feature investigations, like voice quality settings (Scovel, 1995, Esling & Wong, 1982) (Major 2007:540).

According to Waibel prosodic features of the language "usually encompasses the specific acoustic manifestations of pitch, amplitude, duration and stress" (Waibel, 1988:22). As Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, & Koehler (1992) attested, prosodic features affect communication most of all. In fact, Derwing and Munro (1997) in their study, showed that 27% of judges and 23% of native English participants, assessed prosodic features as the most important factor in the intelligibility (Aoyama & Guion, 2007: 282). Jenkins also shared the opinion according to which supra-segmentals take much more importance than the segmental part of the speech, however, she at the same time, argued that certain balance should be maintained between these two, especially when it comes to teaching. Consequently, she emphasized three main areas, which according to her, have great influence on intelligibility, these areas are: "certain segmentals, nuclear stress (the main stress is in the word group), and the effective use of articulatory setting to the extent that it underpins the first two areas" (1998:121). However, she also claimed that the main difference between natives and non-natives speech is that latter ones can deviate from native models, in so called 'core' sounds, although they should try to pronounce very close sounds, not to lose intelligibility, this can be true about the distinction between long and short vowels, as well as about the cluster simplification. Jenkins brought example of the word 'postman' where sound /t/ can be deleted and thus, simplified cluster will take place - /pəʊsmən/ (1998:122). Joann Kenworthy also mentioned sound substitution factor, however, according to her, it may not cause difficulties if substituted sound is close enough to its variant, however, in other cases it can be the reason for misunderstandings, for instance, if the substituted sound is also significant in English language such as 'th' in word 'thick' if the speaker substitutes it with 's' listener will hear 'sick' instead of 'thick' this means that 's' is a significant sound and it may lead to intelligibility problems. However, context can always be helpful to understand the speaker's talk (1987:14). Jenkins also claimed that distinction between /ð/ and /θ/ is not important as this distinction does not appear in many world's languages as well as in the English language variants (1998:122).

Joanne Kenworthy in her book *Teaching English Pronunciation* also singled out some basic prosodic features for instance, the use of stress, sometimes speakers stress the wrong syllable, Kenworthy claims that, it can lead to the misunderstanding even when the sounds are pronounced correctly. Moreover, Archibald who investigated lexical stress among the non-native English speakers, came to the interesting finding according to which, although participants of the research were familiar with English lexical stress, and they used it quite accurately, still some errors were found, which were caused by L1 (Archibald, 1995, 1988a, 1998b). For instance, English speakers from Hungarian background tend to put stress on the initial syllable in such words which did not have initial stress, this is caused by the fact that in Hungarian, stress is fixed on the initial syllable (Archibald, 1998b). Another feature which is mentioned by Kenworth is rhythm use, English has got very specific sense of rhythm, "there must be alteration of stressed and unstressed syllables, with the stressed syllables occurring on a regular beat, and the unstressed syllables must have a less-than-full vowel" (1987:19). Another significant feature according to her, is use of intonation which is important to elicit the intentions of the speaker – "a speaker can show that he or she is asking for information, or asking for confirmation, seeking agreement, or simply making a remark that is indisputable or 'common knowledge', through the intonation of the voice" (1987: 19).

Many investigations has been conducted to identify which part of segmental features influenced intelligibility most of all, several studies claimed that vowels had more significance, others, that consonants affected speech most of all. For instance Munro and Derwing in their study bring example from Gimson (1970) who suggested that proper pronunciation of consonants was more important than the accurate pronunciation of vowels, on the other hand, Schairer (1992) from his investigation of Spanish English speakers deduced that Vowels play more important role than the consonants (Munro & Derwing, 1999: 288).

Kennworthy also listed main sources for the problems in the intelligibility process. These sources are, sound substitution, sound deletion, sound insertion, links between words. She also gives brief description of each problem. According to her, sound deletion, is when the speaker does not pronounce consequent sound in the word. Deletion can be connected to the sound cluster as well, example of this is word 'hold' which without the last sound will be the word 'hol' which may be understood as 'hole'. Sound insertion in opposite is connected to extra inserted sound for instance, word 'speak', some speakers add '*a'* sound in front and thus, 'a-speak' is produced.

There exists three kinds of links between words, a linking sound – instead of ‘go in’, ‘w’ sound is inserted as a linker, and thus sentence meaning is accidentally changed to – ‘go win’. Sound merger – when the last sound of the word merges with the first sound of the following word – ‘nice shoe’, ‘ny shoe’. Composite sound – when for the sentence ‘this year’ English speakers may use /ʃ/ instead of /j/ and thus it will lead to the different sentence – ‘the shear (1987: 17). Another factor, which Kenworthy described, is speech speed which sometimes leads to misunderstandings as speaker emphasizes words that are not as important as the other ones which convey the information. Moreover, sometimes nonnative speakers transfer some of the features of the L1 for instance Chinese speakers of English language use tag which sounds similar to ‘la’, and which is equivalent to English ‘Ok?’, however, for most of the listeners outside the Chinese background this, feature is understandable and thus causes misunderstandings (1987: 14).

3. Methodology

The study Georgian-accented English is based on the speech recordings that were collected by Natalia Edishrashvili (2014) for her Phd dissertation – Communicative Language Teaching in Georgia. The research is based on the qualitative approach and tries to investigate the Georgian-accented English speech by analyzing speech recordings. Using acoustic measurements and speech perception tools. Collected recordings were assessed by three different groups. Each group was given the questionnaire which included ten fragments each of which lasted from 1 to 2.5 minutes. Judges were asked to listen each fragment and list at least three phonetic mistakes and assess the problem. Moreover, all the participants were asked to classify intelligibility of each fragment on a scale 1 to 5, out of which 1 equaled not understandable at all, and 5 equaled 100% understandable. Participants were asked to add any other comment that they considered necessary in the assessment process.

3.1 Participants

Judges who concluded the assessment were chosen according to their nationality and level of English language. In total fifteen participants were chosen who were divided into three groups, Georgian English speakers, Native English speakers and Dutch English speakers. Each group included five participants. Group of Georgian judges included five female judges, the ages ranged from 24 to 35, the level of English ranged from B2 to C1, all the judges had teaching experience and all of them were living in Georgia. Group of native speakers included Australian, British and American participants, five listeners in total. The ages ranged from 21 to 46. Out of the five participants all of them were females, moreover only three participants had teaching experience. Group of Dutch listeners included judges whose ages ranged from 22 to 23, the level of English ranged from C1 to C2, out of three participants only two had teaching experience, one was male the rest were females (see the Appendix A). In total nine of the respondents were teaching English privately (75%), five of them at university (40%), four of them at school (33%), four of them in the other institutions like language schools, NGOs, or as tutors and freelance dialect coach/accent specialists (33%) three of them did not have any teaching experience.

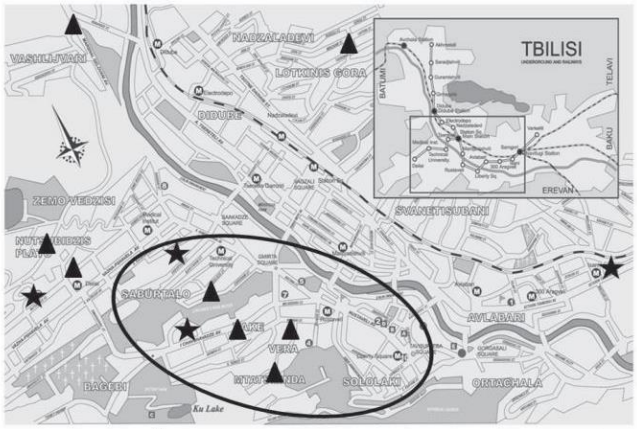
3.1 Information About the Listeners				
	Age	**Sex**	**Level of English**	**Teaching experience**
Georgian	Low – 24 High - 35 Mean -30	Male - 0 Female -5	Low – B2 High-C1	Yes – 5 No – 0
Native	Low – 21 High - 46 Mean -34	Male -0 Female -5		Yes – 3 No – 2
Dutch	Low – 22 High - 23 Mean -23	Male -1 Female-4	Low – C1 High-C2	Yes – 2 No - 3

3.2 Research Material

Recordings were collected from the public and private schools located in the capital city of Georgia – Tbilisi. According to Edisherashvili the selection criteria of the schools had a big importance, as the differences among the speech recordings were conditioned by the teaching situations, which was directly connected whether the school was private or public, and whether it was located in the central or peripheral area of the capital (2014:122). Moreover, the reason why all the recordings were collected in the capital is that the most of the schools in Georgia are located in Tbilisi. As statistics show the largest number of population lives in the capital, therefore highest number of schools (12.90%) and students (30%) are recorded in Tbilisi [1] (Edisherashvili, 2014:122). Moreover, the situation in each region differs so much that conducting research only in one of the regions and leaving any other out of the research would give inaccurate results, from which it would be very difficult to draw general conclusions (Edisherashvili, 2014:123). Furthermore, because of the reason, that Tbilisi is the capital city all the reforms first of all, take place there, (Edisherashvili, 2014:123) and because of the fact, that teaching quality in regions does not coincide to the established standards (http://tpdc.ge/old/ge/programs/teach-for-georgia), students may have been under the influence of their own Georgian accent variation, which may have

[1] 2,340 schools in Georgia, out of which 2,085 are public and 255 are private, namely in Tbilisi there are 177 public and 124 private schools. The total number of pupils in Georgia 570,372, out of which 518,467 are studying at public and 51,905 at private schools. There are 142,700 pupils at public schools and 28,183 at private schools in Tbilisi. Retrieved from http://catalog.edu.ge/index.php?module=statistics . Also available at http://www. emis.ge (accessed January 2015) (Edisherashvili 2014:122).

influence on English accent as well, this accent variation is mainly reflected on intonation, stress etc. because of these reasons, I decided to include recordings made only in Tbilisi (see Fig. 3.2).

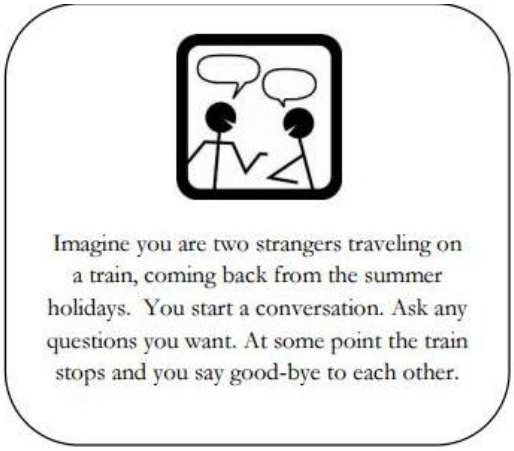


3.2 Map of Tbilisi and Location of the School of the Preset Study (Edisherashvili, 2014:9)

Thus, research material included ten recordings in total, out of which four were from public and central schools, four public and peripheral schools, one private and central school and one from private and peripheral school. Selection criteria was mainly the voice quality that could have the influence on the listener, as well as speech duration. Speech recordings mainly represent either picture description activities or role plays between two students. As Edisherashvili suggested picture description helped free narrative speech generation, picture was taken from the randomly selected magazine. Picture presented "a family of four, consisting of parents and two young children, on the beach with an interesting scenery and summer activities visible in the background" (2014:205). Furthermore, topic of the image was considered to be interesting for the students, since the speech recordings were made in September when students were newly retuned from the holidays, therefore "learners were expected to have much to say" (2014:205) (see Fig. 3.3).

To widen the scope of the speech recordings, role-plays that would also give wider picture of the students' speech were chosen. According to Edisherashvili students were asked to act the dialogue between two strangers who meet each other on the way back home from the holidays. The task topic in this case, was upon students to decide, however, "a certain framework was naturally generated by the cues that were included in the task requirements given to the learners. Figure [3.4] presents the role play task given to the study participants" (Edisherashvili, 2014:206).

3.3 The Picture Used for Speech Data Collection (Edisherashvili, 2014:205)



3.4 Role Play Task Assigned to the Participants in the Study (Edisherashvili, 2014:206)

3.3 Interviewees

Interviewees of the research were mainly 12 year old pupils. The expectations from students was to produce the language suitable for levels from A1 to B1, which would cover both basic and more complex language (Edisherashvili, 2014:206). Each recording was divided into two parts according to the task that the speakers were given. The recordings were collected during the school hours, in accordance with the school administration, which allow interviewers to work with pairs of pupils during the lessons. Participants were asked to speak continuously without the interruptions, and therefore interviewers tried to limit interference to the minimal level, however,

when participants were unable to produce any speech interviewers tried to help them with giving the extra questions (Edisherashvili, 2014:207). Therefore, each task (role play; picture description) lasted for approximately 3 minutes, however, each recording was reduced to 1-2 minutes, as the voice of the interviewer was cut out not to cause confusion in listeners.

3.4 Procedure

Group of fifteen judges were given the questionnaire and were asked to fill in the survey. The questionnaire included ten fragments, each judge was asked to single out at least three phonetic mistake for each fragment and assess the mistake. Moreover, each judge was asked to evaluate general intelligibility of the fragment on scale 1 to 5, out of which 1 equaled not intelligible at all and 5 equaled to 100% intelligible. At the end all judges were asked to add any other comment about the questionnaire and the listening fragments acoustic measurements and perception were used to describe the outlined phonetic features.

3.5 Research Variables - School Type

As mentioned above, teaching school types have significant influence on the teaching atmosphere in Georgia (Edisherashvili, 2014:123). Thus, the school type in which the recordings were collected had an influence on the speakers' speech. Namely, students from the public schools located in the central areas had less accented speech than speakers from the peripheral schools and private schools. The distinction between private and public schools as claimed by Edisherashvili is based on the fact that "in Georgia, private schools are widely believed to offer a better quality education: they are expensive compared with public schools, which are free in Georgia and they are affordable only by those with a high income" (2014:122).

Moreover, the location of the school has a high affect the students of the school as well, as Edisherashvili quoted Siniscalco and Auriat (2005) "[t]he location of a school is often a key issue in data collection because physical location is often strongly related to the socio-cultural environment of the school" (Edisherashvili 2014:122). Therefore school location had very important impact, Edisherashvili also noted that schools located in the central area, specifically

public schools are considered more prestigious, than the schools located on the peripheral areas, as government "tends to invest more financial resources and efforts in them as flagships of education policy and of society, and consequently, these schools have a better learning infrastructure and offer considerably enhanced social opportunities to their students" (2014:123), on the other hand, schools on the peripheral territories do not have as many human and material resources as the central public schools, however, same distinction should not be made between central and peripheral private schools (Edisherashvili, 2014:123).

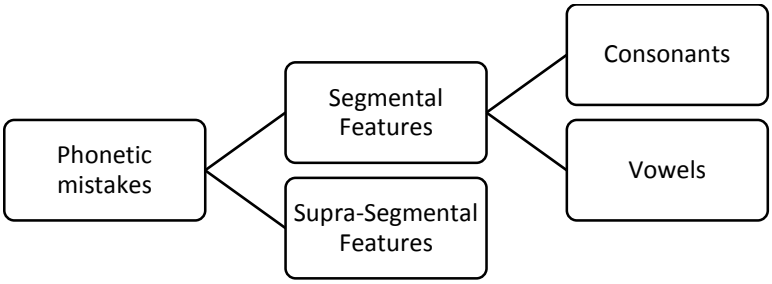
3.5.1 Judges

Although all the judges were asked to fill in only phonetic mistakes some of them outlined grammatical mistakes as well, especially omission of the articles, which were considered irrelevant for the study and were excluded. Moreover, in the problem assessment part, number of listeners instead of assessing the problem, brought the examples of the mistakes from the fragments. Those answers were also considered.

4. Results

The result analyses revealed two major types of phonetic problems, segmental and supra-segmental features, consequently, segmental features were divided into consonants and vowels (see table.4.1, 4.2.)**.** The comparison among the three groups of listeners revealed some general tendencies. The group of native listeners paid more attention to the pronunciation of consonants: /θ/ and /ð/ which was mentioned 38 times, and was considered as the most prominent feature because of its frequency. Second feature mentioned sixteen times was speakers' confusion between /v/ and /w/ sounds, it was followed by the tendency of devoicing the final consonants, which was mentioned fourteen times as well as issue of aspiration mentioned three times. From the vowel system, most prominent outlined feature, mentioned sixteen times was the problem with the vowel length. It is noteworthy, that problem with the vowel substitutions were equally important for the native and Georgian listeners, mentioned thirteen times by both groups of judges.

4.1 Data Categorization



The Group of Georgian listeners revealed that among the most frequently mentioned features were problems connected to the vowel substitution mentioned thirteen times and mispronunciation of diphthongs mentioned sixteen times, as well as Georgian segments spread all over the ten fragments and mentioned sixteen times. Group of Dutch listeners on the other hand, emphasized problem connected to the rhoticism, mentioned nine times, as well as problem with consonant substitution mentioned fourteen times, followed by the problem with schwa, mentioned thirteen times. The problem with the consonant substitution was mentioned the same amount of times, by both Dutch and Georgian groups of listeners (see table 4.2).

4.2 Frequency of the Mentioned Problems, Segmental Features			
Feature	Georgian	Natives	Dutch
"Th" problems	22	38	31
Confusion between /v/-/w/	8	16	2
Devoicing of the final sounds	6	14	7
Rhoticism	5	4	9
Substitution of consonants	14	13	14
Aspiration	1	4	4
Vowel length	7	16	2
schwa	2	3	13
Substitution of vowels	13	13	0
Diphthongs	16	0	1
Georgian segments	16	5	4

It also has to be noted, that supra-segmental features were most frequently outlined by Georgians and Dutch groups of listeners. In total there were 22 references made by Georgians, to the prosodic features, out of which there were nine references to the intonation, four – to tone, three to pauses and six to stress, Group of Dutch listeners referred to prosodic features 22 times as well, out of which fourteen times were mentioned problem with intonation, and eight times problem with stress, whereas, group of native speakers mentioned supra-segmental features only fifteen times, in which most often, eight times was mentioned problem with the intonation, four times was mentioned problem with the stress, three times was mentioned problem with pauses (see table 4.3)

4.3 Frequency of the Mentioned Problems, Supra-segmental Features			
Features	Georgians	Natives	Dutch
Intonation	3	5	14
Tone	10	3	0
Word stress	6	4	8
Pauses	3	3	0
Total	22	15	22

The general analyses of the problem assessment revealed that for group of Georgian listeners devoicing of the final sounds were assessed mainly as unintelligible, as well as the problem of vowel length, whereas, so called “Th” problems were assessed as mainly disturbing as well as problem connected with the confusion between /v/-/w/ sounds, substitution of consonants, aspiration, schwa related features, substitution of vowels and diphthong characteristics. On the other hand, rhoticism was assessed as mainly ugly. The group of native listeners assessed devoicing of the final sounds as unintelligible as well as disturbing, rhoticism, vowel length, and vowel substitution was also considered as unintelligible. On the other hand, “Th” problems were assessed as disturbing, as well as confusion between /v/ and /w/ sounds, consonant substitution, aspiration, and schwa related features.

For group of Dutch judges, confusion between /v/ and /w/ sounds was mainly unintelligible as well as ugly, the same was said about the problem of rhoticism. Devoicing of the final sounds also were assessed as unintelligible as well as substitution of consonants, whereas problems with the vowel length, and diphthongs were assessed as disturbing and problems with aspiration and schwa were assessed as ugly (see table 4.4). From supra-segmental features, group of Georgian and native listeners assessed intonation, tone and pauses mainly as disturbing, and word stress as unintelligible, whereas Dutch group of listeners assessed intonation and word stress as unintelligible and did not pay any attention to the tone and pauses (see table 4.5).

4.4 Assessments of the Outlined Phonetic Characteristics, Segmental Features

Feature	Georgian	Native	Dutch
“Th” problems	2-unintelligible 4-disturbing 3-ugly	5-unintelligible 6-disturbing 3-ugly	3-uninttelligible 5-disturbing 4-ugly
Confusion between /v/-/w/	3– unintelligible 5-disturbing	2 – unintelligible 4-disturbing 1 - ugly	1-unintelligible 1-ugly
Devoicing of the final sounds	4-unintelligible 2 – ugly	5-unintelligible 1-disturbing	1-unintelligible

Rhoticism	2-disturbing 3-ugly	1-unintelligible 2-ugly	1-unintelligible 1-ugly
Substitution of consonants	3-unintelligible 4-disturbing 1-ugly 2-sounded foreign	4-disturbing	1-uninteligible
Aspiration	1-disturbing	2-disturbing	1-ugly
Vowel length	5-unintelligible 2- sounded foreign	6-unintelligible 4-disturbing 3-sounded foreign	3-unintelligible 4-disturbing 4-ugly
schwa	1-disturbing	2-disturbing	3-ugly 2-unintelligible
Substitution of vowels	5-disturing 3-ugly	6-unintelligible 2-disturbing	0
Diphthongs	10-disturbing	0	1-disturbing
Georgian segments	5-disturbing 3-ugly	4-disturbing	2-unintelligible 2-disturbing

4.5 Assessments of the Outlined Phonetic Characteristics, Supra-segmental Features			
Features	Georgians	Natives	Dutch
intonation	2-Disturbing 1-ugly	4-Disturbing 1-Sounded foreign	6-Unintelligible 5-Ugly
Tone	6-unintelligible	2 -unintelligible	0
Word stress	4-unintelligible	3-Unintelligible	5-unintelligible
Pauses	2-disturbing	2-disturbing	0

4.1 Segmental Features – Consonants

One of the main phonetic features outlined in the all ten fragments was pronunciation of dental voiceless fricative /θ/- and dental voiced fricative /ð/, this problem was mentioned 91 times by all fifteen judges. The pronunciation mistake mainly involved substitution of /θ/- sound with alveolar voiced fricative - /z/ in words like – father, mother, brother, there, this, they, the, their, they're. The mistake is so prominent that in ten cases problem was connected to the intelligibility issues, fifteen times it was assessed as disturbing, and in ten cases the problem was characterized as ugly. This very prominent issue was connected with L1 interference, since Georgian language do not contain any sounds like /θ/ and /ð/, speakers with little or no training in English pronunciation find it difficult to articulate them properly. This is the reason, why all speakers from the recording chose those sounds, from their L1 sound system, which they considered as the closest to the /θ/ and /ð/ fricatives. Those closest sounds included voiced alveolar fricative /z/ and voiceless alveolar fricative /s/. Moreover, because of the absence of the two dental fricatives, Georgian-English speakers could not differentiate between /θ/ and /ð/, therefore, sometimes they substituted both sounds with one correspondent sound /z/, or in some cases with /s/, in other times /θ/ was substituted with /s/ and /ð/ was substituted with /z/ (e.g. fragment ten – "think" - /θɪŋk/, /sɪŋk/). Interesting example, connected to the above-mentioned issue is word "month" - /mʌnθ/, and "months" - /mʌnθs/ which was mentioned ten times, the problem was mostly related to the wrong pronunciation of /θ/. Naturally, because of the fact that Georgian-English speakers are unfamiliar with /θ/ sound, in number of cases speakers tried to simplify two final fricatives by adding extra vowel /e/ in between thus, they articulated it as /mʌnθes/ or /mʌnses/, this problem was mentioned by six different judges and it obviously caused irritation as it was assessed as stupid, and disturbing.

Another prominent feature outlined 26 times was related to the labio-dental voiced fricative /v/ and labial-velar /w/. This problem as well, was caused by the influence of L1, Georgian sound system does not include labial-velar /w/ and consequently, Georgian English speakers substitute it with the closest Georgian correspondent sound labio-dental voice fricative /v/. Because of the reason that Georgian English speakers' articulatory apparatus is not trained well-enough to produce /w/ sound in a correct position, in most of the times, speakers are not able to differentiate between /w/ and /v/. The examples of this problem are quite many, for instance word "Hawaii" from the second fragment-/'hɑ: waɪɪ/ which was pronounced as /'hɑ:vaɪɪ/, word "woman" in

fragment six, which was pronounced as /ˈvʊmən/ instead of /ˈwʊmən/, or the word “was” in fragment seven–which was pronounced as /vɒz/, as well as word “what” pronounced as /vɒt/, or word “housewife” in fragment ten pronounced as-/ˈhaʊsvʌɪf/. However, opposite process of the substitution takes place in word “very”-/ˈvɛrɪ/ which was pronounced as /ˈwɛrɪ/ pronunciation of all these words were assessed as disturbing.

As it was outlined in fragment five, alveolar liquid /l/ was not pronounced accurately as it was weakened, nearly swallowed, (e.g. word -“people”*).* Word “people*”* is also mentioned by another listener, who has noticed that final /l/ sounded more like labial velar glide /w/- /ˈpiːpw/. In fragment eight the same /l/ sound in word “tell*”* was assessed as too soft and disturbing. All these according to the assessment strained the listening process.

Clear alveolar /l/ and velarized lateral /ɫ/ were also listed among the problematic issues. Apparently, Georgian English speakers do not differentiate between these two sounds, and therefore, both of the sounds are pronounced as either /l/ or /ɫ/. This problem was especially revealed in the words “play” and “family” where instead of clear alveolar /l/ dark velarized lateral /ɫ/ was pronounced, which was characterized as disturbing.

It is also noteworthy, that some judges, mentioned inaccurate pronunciation of glottal voiceless fricative /h/ which according to them was voiced in number of cases and was pronounced as /ɦ/. This issue was found in fragments two, eight and ten. Interestingly in the fragment ten, three words were outlined – “his*”, “*her*”, “*husband*”* in which, as it was commented, /h/ was palatalized and was characterized as disturbing and not clear.

Another significant problem mentioned twice in two different fragments was connected to initial sounds example of which is velar voiced obstruent /g/, which according to the listeners was devoiced to voiceless unaspirated obstruent /k/ in word “girl” -/gəːl/-/kəːl/. Moreover, there were other cases as well, when listener’s found wrong pronunciation of the letter – g, for instance in word “Argentina” in which speaker instead of palate-alveolar voiced affricate /dʒ/-/ˌɑː.dʒənˈtiː.nə/ used velar voiced obstruent /g/-/ˌɑː.gənˈtiː.nə/, this problem was mentioned three times by different judges and it was assessed as disturbing feature.

Interesting tendency was outlined with the final voiced sounds, in number of cases, final syllables were devoiced, for instance in fragment three as it was remarked by the listeners, alveolar voiced fricative /z/ was devoiced to alveolar voiceless fricative /s/, the example of this is word

“boys” /bɔɪz/ - /bɔɪs/, the same problem was depicted in fragment eight, in word “yours” - /jɔːz/ which was substituted by /jɔːs/ or fragment nine, in which final sound alveolar voiced obstruent /d/ was devoiced to alveolar voiceless obstruent /t/ in word “food” - /fuːd/ - /fuːt/, which may have caused intelligibility problems, as this substitution can change the meaning of the word.

Word endings in velar sonorant /ŋ/ was also changed in the final position, for instance in words “working” and “playing”–final velar sonorant /ŋ/ was substituted by velar voiceless unaspirated obstruent /k/, the same was depicted in fragment ten, in word “everything”, which was mentioned four times by different judges. In fragment six, listener also mentioned that it was very difficult to make a distinction between / ŋ/ and /k/ in word-ending “wearing” - /ˈwɛərɪŋ/. One more example is the word “smiling”-/ˈsmaɪlɪŋ/ in which final /ŋ/ was again pronounced as voiceless unaspirated velar /k/. In the rest of the cases, for instance in fragment two, according to the listeners /ŋ/ in the end of the words “playing”- /pleɪŋ/, “swimming”- /ˈswɪmɪŋ/ and “long”- /lɒŋ/, was pronounced with velar voiced obstruent /g/.

Another example of devoicing was found in the second fragment, word “have”- /hav/ in which final labio-dental voiced fricative /v/ was turned into labio-dental voiceless /f/, or fragment seven, in which according to one of the judges, speaker used alveolar voiceless unaspirated obstruent /t/, instead of final alveolar voiced obstruent /d/. Furthermore, it was also noticed that in number of cases final sounds were lost, example of which is labio-dental voiced fricative /v/, in fragment four.

Sounds on the initial position also deserve attention, as it was observed, in fragment four, the problem involved aspiration, as the listeners claimed speakers used less aspirated initial bilabial voiceless obstruent /p/, alveolar voiceless obstruent /t/, and velar voiceless obstruent /k/ than natives, which caused disturbance. There were two other references of the aspiration in the fragment seven, in which listener pointed out that word “state” was wrongly aspirated. Similarly, sound /k/ in fragment one, was aspirated in the word “sky”.

Following feature is rhotic alveolar trill /r/, which is directly related to the Georgian sound /r/. The problem with rhoticism was outlined twelve times, in sentences such as –“It is river bank” the pronunciation of which was characterized as very rough. In the first fragment one of the judges also outlined that the placement of the /r/ sound as well as manner of the pronunciation in the word

“river” was not accurate and was considered as a problem. The words – “brother” and “river” as well as “father”, “mother”, “sister”, “summer” and “girl”, were characterized as ugly.

Another interesting characteristic was related to the palato-alveolar voiceless affricate /tʃ/ -which was mentioned as a problem four times and was considered by judges as disturbing. According to one of the explanations it sounded more alveolar than palate-alveolar in the fragment four, this problem was mentioned in fragment nine as well. Furthermore, /tʃ/ was substituted with alveolar voiceless unaspirated sound /t/ in word *statues*- /ˈstatʃuː/ - */ˈstatuː/,* the same was depicted in the fragment seven, in which it was noted that /t/ sound needed palatalization.

Furthermore, another problem was related to the alveolar voiceless unaspirated sound /t/ which for some of the listeners sounded very loud, foreign accented and disturbing especially in word “communicate*”*- /kəˈmjuːnɨkeɪt/ (fragment four, nine). In fragment ten, one of the judges remarked that /t/ in word “water*”* was substituted by alveolar voiceless fricative /s/ /ˈwɔːtə/- /ˈwɔːsə/, which was assessed as unintelligible and ugly. Listeners judged pronunciation of the sound /t/ in word “daughter*”* as “released rather than flapped” (fragment five). This problem was also mentioned by native speakers in fragment nine, according to them final /t/ sound was “released” which sounded disturbing for the listeners. Moreover in fragment seven and ten, they noticed that “intervocalic /t/ was released instead of flapped” which again was assessed as disturbing.

Finally, the very last outlined issue was related to the alveolar voiced fricative /z/. As it was listed, in some cases, /z/ sounded very foreign because it was pronounced very loudly, in the rest of the cases problem occurred with the alveolar voiceless fricative /s/, as it seemed, it was very difficult for listeners to distinguish between /s/ and /z/, the example of this is the combination of words “it is” or the word “was” in both times as judges explained /z/ was pronounced as /s/, which caused disturbance in all groups of listeners. Moreover, /s/ sound was characterized as ugly and it sounded foreign, some of the judges also remarked that it was pronounced as “very hard”, consequently it caused disturbance in listeners. Furthermore, in the first fragment one of the native judges also mentioned that in the word “babies”-/ˈbeɪbiz/, marker of the plural – s was pronounced as alveolar voiceless fricative /s/ (see table 4.6).

4.2 Segmental Features - Vowels

Frequently mentioned problem in the vowel system was connected to the issue of the vowel length. The problem was depicted by all judges from all the three categories and it included all the ten fragments. This problem was again caused by the L1 influence, since in Georgian language the length of the vowels are approximately the same, and consequently, the vowel length does not have distinctive character, it is very difficult for Georgian English speakers to make a distinction between short and long vowels. For instance, in fragment one, speaker pronounced word “beach” - /biːtʃ/ as /bɪtʃ/ or “it” as - /iːt/, as well as word “mountain” - /ˈmaʊntɪn/ as /ˈmaʊntiːn/ or “too” /tuː/as /tu/ all these words were assessed as disturbing, confusing and unintelligible. The same problem was outlined in the first fragment in which the word “sister” -/ˈsɪstə(r)/ was pronounced as /ˈsiːstə(r)/, as one of the listeners mentioned letter - i “was not short, placed too high”. The same comment was made about the word “little” - /ˈlɪtl/ - /ˈliːtl/. In the third fragment one of the native listeners also depicted that in word “seen” - /siːn/, /iː/ sound was not long enough, and finally, word “people”-/ˈpiːpl/ in fragment five was pronounced as /ˈpɪpl/.

In contrast to the vowels that were pronounced as not long enough, there were vowels that were assessed as longer than it should be for instance, in fragment five the word “his” - /hɪz/, /ɪ/ was assessed as “too long and high”. In fragment five, word “swimming” also included inaccurately pronounced long /iː/, instead of /ɪ/, /ˈswɪmɪŋ/- /ˈswiːmɪŋ/. The same problem was depicted in fragment seven in word “live”-/lɪv/ which was pronounced as /liːv/, this problem was assessed as confusing and hindered intelligibility, another example is word “Italy” in fragment nine, which was pronounced as */‘iːtəli/* instead of */ ‘ɪtəli/* or word “sleep” - */sliːp/* in fragment ten pronounced as /slɪp/.

One more feature was related to sound /a/ and /e/, words “happy” - /ˈhapi/ and “family” - /ˈfam(ɹ)li/, according to the assessment were pronounced as /ˈhepi/ and /ˈfem(ɹ)li/, this vowel substitution was considered as a burden in the process of the intelligibility. The problem with sound /a/ in the word “and” was mentioned number of times in almost every fragment, by all judges. In fragment two it was assessed as “foreign” whereas in fragment four as well as in fragment eight and nine, listener’s remarked that the problem was disturbing.

Interestingly, word “France” was outlined several times, the pronunciation of this word was mainly assessed as disturbing, because of the vowel substitution - /fræns/. The same problem

was depicted in fragment six, in which speaker pronounced “man” as /mæn/ instead of /man/, or “fan”- /fæn/ being pronounced as /fan/ (in fragment nine), which was assessed as disturbing. In the rest of the cases sound /æ/ was substituted with /e/, for instance in fragment seven, speaker pronounced “have” - /hæv/ as /hev/, this problem was figurative in fragment seven as well. It was also mentioned that “speaker in fragment ten replaced native /æ/ with something like /ɛ/”, this problem was assessed as disturbing as well.

Problems related to /ʌ/ was presented in fragment two in which listener noticed that – “the speaker has a difficulty with the sound /ʌ/, usually replacing the vowel with a more open vowel, similar to /a/” (e.g. fragment six “some” - /sʌm/ - /sam/, fragment nine “country” - /ˈkʌntri/- /ˈkantri/, fragment seven “London” - /ˈlʌndən/ -/ ˈlandon/, fragment nine “study” - /ˈstʌdɪ/ - /’stʌdɪ/).

Several times was mentioned problems with sound /ʊ/, in fragment eight in word “goodbye” -/gʊdˈbʌɪ/ in which listener pointed out that first vowel /ʊ/ was too rounded. Similarly, fragment seven included one reference to word “good” -/gʊd/ which was pronounced as /gud/, and fragment ten in which word “football”- /ˈfʊtbɔːl/ was pronounced as /ˈfutbɔːl/. The fragment seven also included intelligibility problem as the listener could not differentiate between two words “you”- /jʊ/ and “you’re” - /jɔː(r)/. The problem also occurred with the semi-vowel sound /j/ in the second fragment in word “young” - /jʌŋ/. /j/ was also assessed as incorrect in fragment seven in word “you”-/jʊ/. The same issue was depicted in the word “communicate”- /kəˈmjuːnɨkeɪt/, which was pronounced as /komuːnɪkeɪt/.

Another frequently mentioned issue was connected to schwa, the problem was mainly caused by the ignorance of schwa or putting it in a wrong place, after words. This issue was mentioned in fragments three, four, five, seven, eight, nine and ten. In fragment four and seven, as it was noticed word “and” was pronounced as /andə/, which was assessed as disturbing. In fragment three, in word mountain /ə/ was omitted in the final syllable and substituted by diphthong /ei/. In the same fragment, one of the listener noticed that speaker replaced schwa with sound close to /a/. Moreover, as it was claimed, in fragment four, omission of schwa was also noticeable in word “support”- /səˈpɔːt/,in which /ə/ was substituted with /a/ sound and thus, was pronounced as /saˈpɔːt/ and was assessed as ugly, another example is the word “Germany”- /ˈdʒɜː(r)mənɪ/ pronounced as /ˈdʒɜː(r)manɪ/ in fragment eight and words “comfortable”- /ˈkʌmfətəb(ə)l/ and

“common” - /ˈkɒmən/, pronounced as /ˈkomfotibl/ and /ˈkoman/, in fragment eight, both of these words were assessed as ugly.

One of the major problems included inaccurate pronunciation of diphthongs, which was revealed in fragment two, according to one of the listener word “beautiful” - /ˈbjuːtəf(ə)l/ was pronounced as /biutiful/, here pronunciation of /juː/ diphthong was assessed as disturbing. Diphthong was mispronounced in fragment six as well, in which listener assessed pronunciation of the word “towel” - /ˈtaʊəl/ as ugly, because of the /aʊ/ diphthong. Another example is in fragment three, listener remarked word “year” - /jɪə(r)/ in which diphthong /ɪə/ was pronounced as /a/, thus /jar/. Furthermore, in fragment eight, in the word “holidays” - /ˈhɒlɪdeɪs/, diphthong /eɪ/ - was pronounced ass /i/, thus /ˈhɒlɪdɪs/. Moreover, /oa/ diphthong in fragment six and /ur/ diphthong in fragment seven was considered as ugly. Similarly in fragment ten speaker pronounced word “chair” - /tʃeə(r)/ as /tʃer/ and thus, diphthong /eə/ was reduced to /e/ sound, which was assessed as ugly as well as in fragment nine diphthong /ɪə/ in word “where” - /wɪə(r)/was close to /e/ sound - /we(r)/.

4.3 Georgian Segments

Many pronunciation mistakes were made because of the L1 interference. Since in Georgian, speakers pronounce words as they are written, Georgian English speakers tend to repeat the same in the other languages as well. This is well-revealed in fragment two, where word “England” - /ˈɪŋgləɪnd/ was pronounced as /ɪŋglend/, the same problem occurred in word “jail” - /dʒeɪl/, which correspondingly, was pronounced as /dʒaɪl/. Fragment three also included word “girl” which was pronounced as it is written /girl/ and thus, was assessed as ugly or in fragment five, the word “son” which was pronounced as /son/, and which at one point indicates on the above-mentioned L1 interference, on the other hand it also showed the problem related to the wrong pronunciation of the /ʌ/ sound, the same should be claimed about word sculpture - /ˈskʌptjʊə(r)/ and sculptor - /ˈskʌlptə(r)/, which was mentioned six times by the listeners and which was pronounced as /ˈskulptor/ and /ˈskulptur/. Fragment eight also included another example, word “Turkey” - /ˈtɜːkɪ/, which was pronounced as /ˈturkɪ/ and which was assessed as ugly, the problem was mentioned twice. In fragment nine speaker uttered “club” - /klʌb/ as /klub/ which again was labelled as disturbing.

L1 influence is specially revealed in the word “Venice” - /ˈvɛnɪs/ where listener combined

Georgian correspondent word and English translation and thus, pronounced it as /ˈvenetsia/, this feature was assessed as disturbing, confusing and inaccurate also word “museums” - was pronounced as /muzeums/ (fragment nine), word “fountain” - which instead of /ˈfaʊntɪn/ was pronounced as /ˈfauntɪn/ (fragment ten) this problem was mentioned three times by different judges and it was assessed as inaccurate and disturbing. The problem is also figurative in the pronunciation of “Georgia” as well /ˈdʒɔː(r)dʒə/ in which speakers pronounced all the written vowels. However, because of the L1 influence “Georgia” sounded as /ˈdʒɔrdʒia/ (see table 4.6).

4.4 Supra-segmental Features

One of the most prominent characteristics among supra-segmental features was intonation pattern, which was mentioned in all fragments by most of the judges. Intonation in the first fragment was said to cause intelligibility problems. In the second fragment listener gave further explanation and pointed out that sentences were pronounced as if speaker was asking something, giving “higher intonation at the end of sentences” on the other hand, in fragment eight, intonation in the first sentence “how are you” was not raising as it should be in the question, this feature was assessed as disturbing. In fragment two, three, five and eight listeners pointed out that intonation pattern affected the flow of the speech and hindered the intelligibility. In fragment four, six and seven intonation was assessed as disturbing. Fragment two and eight were considered as monotonous. In fragments six, seven and eight listeners also pointed out that the speaker was speaking very rapidly without pauses and word stress which seriously affected the flow of the air.

Several comments were made about the speech tone as well, in the first fragment listener explained that “the tone is not balanced”. Several comments were made about speakers’ low tone, as it was mentioned in the second fragment because of speaker’s “indistinct mumble” it was difficult for the listener to focus. Another comment remarked that speaker used “too rapid delivery” and “mumble” which made speech unintelligible. More specific example is given in the fourth fragment in which speaker noticed that sentence “I have seen” was mumbled together which was difficult to understand. The same problem of mumble was noticed in the fragment seven. Pauses also played very important role. In the first fragment it was mentioned that pauses which occurred quite often in the speech strained the attention of the listener and were annoying, moreover, as mentioned by another listener it was confusing.

Stress pattern, also played important role. The examples of this were given in the third fragment in which words “Sagrada” and “communicate” were not stressed correctly, as well as word “family” (second fragment) or word “children” in fragment five and six (as listeners remarked, here speaker stressed the second syllable instead of the first one, the same comment was made about word “towel” in fragment six, word “football” in fragment ten and words “Wyoming” and “Germany” in fragment eight), In fragment seven, stress problem was outlined in the word “museum”. Fragment three also included word “mountain” which according to the comment “was stressed on the final instead of penultimate syllable” (see table 4.6).

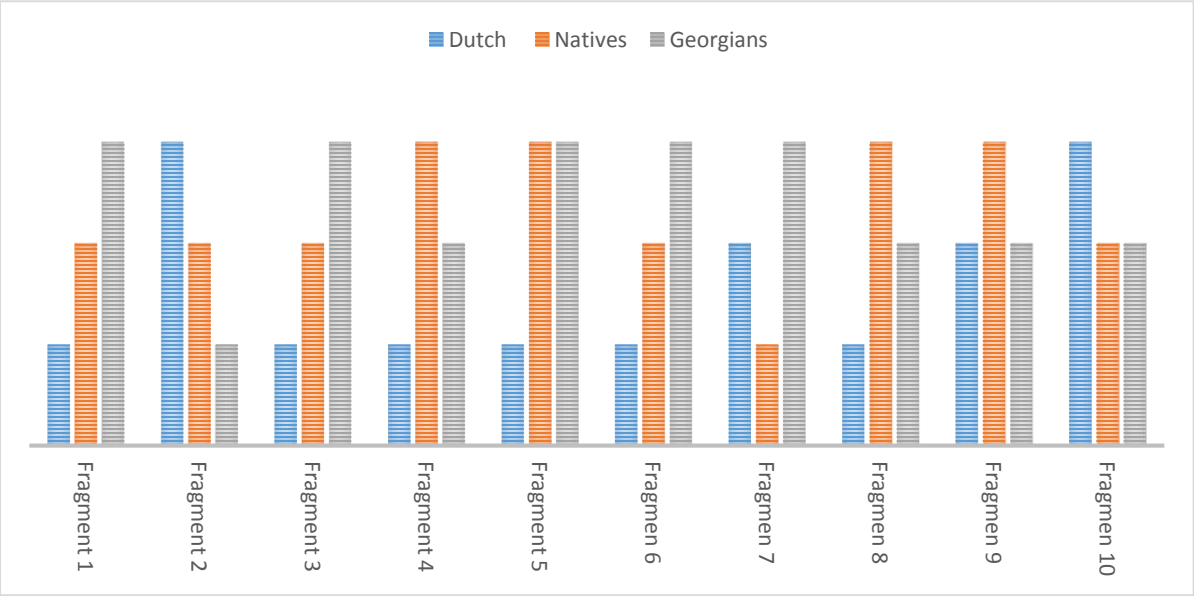
4.6 Segmental and Supra-segmental Features in Georgian-Accented English Outlined by Georgian, Native and Dutch Groups of Listeners		
SEGMENTAL FEATURES		**SUPRA-SEGMENTAL FEATURES**
CONSONANTS	**VOWELS**	
1. Confusion of the sounds /θ/- /ð/ /v/- /w/	1. Vowel length	1. Intonation 2. Tone 3. Stress 4. Pauses
2. Substitution of consonant /θ/→ /s/ /ð/→/z/ /l/→/w/ /l/→/ɫ/ /h/→/ɦ/ /g/→/dʒ/ /s/ →/z/ /t/→/s/	2. Substitution of vowels /a/→/e/ /a/→/æ/ /æ/→/ɛ/ /ʌ/→/a/ /ʊ/→/u/	
3. Devoicing of the final consonants	3. Schwa	

/d/→/t/ /ŋ/→/k/ /ŋ/→/g/ /v/→/f/	/ə/→/ei/ /ə/→/a/	
4. Sounds in the initial position (less aspirated than usual) /p/; /t/; /k/;	4. Diphthongs /juː/ /aʊ/ /ɪə/→/a/ /eɪ/→/i/ /ei/→/ea/ /ea/→/e/ /ɪə/→/e/	
5. Aspirated /k/ and /t/ → /sk^{h}ai/ /st^{h}eɪt/ 6. Rhoticism		

4.5 General Intelligibility

General intelligibility of each fragments was measured to reveal how those outlined features hindered listening process and if there were any differences among the listeners from the different language backgrounds, at the same time, it served to test the theory according to which listeners who are familiar with the accent are able to understand speech in the better way. The fragments were assessed on the scale from one to five, in which one equaled to not understandable at all and five equaled to 100 % understandable. The analyses of the measurements has shown that first and the second fragment received the lowest intelligibility scores, whereas fragment four and seven were assessed as the most intelligible ones. The comparative analyses of all the fragments also revealed that Georgians assessed intelligibility higher than other two groups, the second place takes native English speakers who assessed intelligibility higher than Dutch (see Figure 4.7 and Appendix B,C). It also has revealed that some of the outlined features had very big influence of general fragment intelligibility (see Appendix C), for instance fragment one was the least

intelligible, comparing to the other fragments. Fragments three, four, six, seven, eight and ten received higher intelligibility rates than fragments two five and nine (see Appendix B,C).



4.7 Overall Intelligibility Rates, Comparative Analyses

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Current study attempted to identify major phonetic features in Georgian-accented English language. The overall results can be divided into three main categories: features that hinders the intelligibility, features that are disturbing, features that are ugly, unaesthetic or features that sounded foreign but did not affect intelligibility (see table 5.1). In establishing problematic features, it was decided to use the data collected from all three groups, out of which preference was given to Georgian and native group of listeners, as far as Georgians are very familiar with the Georgian-English accent, and thus, features not understandable for them can be a serious problem, as for group of native speakers, it was believed that, they can determine better which sounds can actually create a difficulty in speech. Group of Dutch listeners were brought to compare how the problematic features differed from the other two groups and to test the rates of intelligibility among the three groups. Moreover, the decision whether this or that sound was problematic, was based on the unintelligible and disturbing features only, as those features that were assessed as ugly and unaesthetic, or the ones that sounded foreign for the listeners were considered as less problematic in the process of communication (see table 4.6, table 5.1).

5.1 Georgian-Accented English

The most serious phonetic mistakes were considered the ones that hindered intelligibility. This group mainly involved problems caused by the L1 interference, for instance, consonant substitution (/s/→/z/ /t/→/s/), or the tendency of devoicing the final consonants (/s/ →/z/ /ŋ/→/k/ /ŋ/→/g/ /v/→/f/ /g/→/dʒ/) as well as vowel length as Georgian vowels are approximately the same length Georgian English speakers find it difficult to differentiate between long and short sounds. From supra-segmental features it mainly involved word stress and tone problems.

The group of disturbing features were also considered to be important, it involved confusion between the sounds that are absent in L1 but exist in English language, the example of which was inability to differentiate between /θ/- and /ð/ sounds or pronounce them correctly. Because of this reason, /θ/- and /ð/ were substituted by sounds found in Georgian sound system /s/ and /z/. Another example was confusion between /w/ and /v/ sounds. Besides, two other consonants

- /tʃ/ and /t/ were assessed as too noisy and disturbing. Another important characteristic was connected to the consonant substitution (/l/→/ɫ/ /l/→/w/ /g/→/dʒ/ /h/→/ɦ/), as well as aspiration. From the vowel system vowel substitution (/a/→/æ/ /æ/→/ɛ/ /ʊ/→/u/) were assessed as disturbing as well as schwa related features and mispronounced diphthongs. Supra-segmental features played important role as well, as far as speakers' intonation and pauses were considered as disturbing (See graph 5.1.). Third group of – ugly and unaesthetic features was relatively smaller and it included only features, two consonants (/z/ and /s/) as well as rhoticism which again was caused because of the Georgian influence.

5.1 Assessment Analyses according to Georgian and Native Groups of Listeners		
Features Hindering Intelligibility	**Disturbing Features**	**Ugly and Unaesthetic Features**
1. Substitution of consonant /s/ →/z/ /t/→/s/	1. Confusion of the sounds /θ/- /ð/ /v/- /w/	1. Consonants /z/ /s/ 2. Rhoticism
2. Devoicing of the final consonants /d/→/t/ /ŋ/→/k/ /ŋ/→/g/ /v/→/f/ /g/→/dʒ/ /t/→/s/	2. Consonants /tʃ/; /t/ 3. Substitution of consonant /l/→/ɫ/ /θ/→ /s/ /ð/→/z/ /l/→/w/ /l/→/w/ /g/→/dʒ/ /h/→/ɦ/	
4. Tone	4. Aspiration	

	5. Substitution of vowels /a/→/e//a/→/æ/ /æ/→/ɛ/ /ʊ/→/u/ 6. Schwa 7. Diphthongs 8. Intonation 9. Word stress 10. Pauses 11. Georgian segments	

Interesting outcome gave the general intelligibility test. It is quite natural that Georgian group of listeners assessed general intelligibility higher than other three groups of judges, as all of the judges were teachers and they have to deal with the Georgian-accented English every day, however, native English speakers assessed general intelligibility of Georgian English accent higher than Dutch group of listeners, it was striking that despite higher intelligibility markers, native listeners outlined problematic features with higher frequency than the Dutch and Georgian group of listeners, which means that they detect problems more easily however, it does not strain the intelligibility as much as for the Dutch English speakers. Thus, based on the conducted research it is recommended for English learners and teachers to spend more time on the three groups of mistakes, especially the group of unintelligible and disturbing features as they are the main burden in the process of communication.

5.2 Recommendations for the Further Research

Further research should include speakers not only from the capital city, but from the whole Georgia, as this would give the opportunity to widen the scope of the investigation; moreover, it

would give the opportunity to compare the differences between the different regional accents, and at the same time, it would allow to detect what are the needs of speakers in each region. This approach will help teachers to set right goals for the students' needs. Furthermore, since this research was based only on the school students whose level ranged from A2 to B2, it would be appropriate for the future to concentrate on the higher academic level of English language, this would allow to reveal all the problems existed in all the levels of English language. Moreover, it will give the opportunity to compare and see what are the differences between phonetic mistakes occurred on different stages of education and age. Finally, it would be also interesting to involve listeners from not only Dutch or Native English community, but from all over the world, and analyse the different phonetic mistakes that will be outlined by different groups of people. It would be necessary to use quantitative approach to the study.

5.3 Discussion

As it was shown in the previous chapters globalization of the English language has started long ago, and it is developing with high speed, which is not surprising at all, if we take into the consideration the history of the spread of English language in the world. The reasons why English gained such popularity is various (see Crystal:2012), which I am not going to discuss here, however, it is important to point out that this development and gain of the power raised very significant questions in the English language, these questions were foregrounded by Widdowson (1994) and Cook (1999) as well as some other scholars like Strevens,1982; Wardhaugh, 1987, Bailey, 1991; Crystal, 1994; Hayhoe & Parker, 1994; Those important aspects involved the problem of ownership of the English language, and very wide and highly debated issue, the problem of norm - which norm of English should be taken as a model, what are the acceptable deviances from the norm, what is the correct way of teaching English to non-natives, these are the main questions, about the English as a lingua franca. To answer this question it is important to outline what is meant under the term "ownership". Many scholars have pointed out different opinions, like Chisanga (1997) who brought some examples of the definitions, for instance, Ferguson (1982) thinks that to "own" a language means to "control" it, "i.e. to determine its future structure and use by their own usage and their beliefs about the language" (Kachru, 1992:xvi), for Widdowson ownership is connected to the ability "to take possession of the language, turn it to

your advantage, and make it real for you. This is what mastery means. So in a way, proficiency only comes with nonconformity, when you can take the initiative and strike out on your own" (1994:383). Wee explained a claim on the ownership as a certain relationship between the language and the speaker of that language, according to her, the concept of the ownership is a metaphor for the control that the speakers have over the language (2002:283). Thus, we should assume, that the control, is one of the main aspects in the ownership of any language. This logic brings us to the idea that non-native language users are owners of the language as much as native language users.

Discussion about this idea is very wide in the linguistic circles. According to Chisinga (1997), linguistic school is divided into two halves, the 'purists' and 'pragmatists', the first group unifies scholars like Prator, (1968); Quirk et al. (1972), Quirk, (1988), who think that native speakers are the ones who own English language, and the second group includes scholars Kachru (1976, 1982, 1983) and his associates Bailey, (1991) Kamwangamalu, (1996), Smith and Sridhar, (1992) Jenkins (2000). Wee rightly remarks that, for pragmatist school, English is no longer owned only by natives, it is not restricted by any specific individual or group of speakers (2002:282). Kachru and Nelson, (1996) claimed that the 'pluralistic centers of reference for norms and standards' should be established (Kachru & Nelson, 1996:84) Moreover, Wee (2002) also mentioned Foley (1988:xiv) and Hayhoe and Parker (1994) who stated that natives do not show the directions and the models anymore (Wee, 2002:282). Wee (2002) also pointed out two main arguments that lead the pragmatists, the one is that the number of non-native speakers are more than natives, (Crystal, 1988, 1997; Jenkins, 2000; Phillipson, 1992), Crystal listed two billion English speakers, according to Jenkins there are 1350 million second-language speakers of English language, whereas first-language speakers are only 335 million (Jenkins, 2000:1). The second argument is stated by Achebe, (1965); Kachru, (1986); Widdowson, (1982), and it is connected to the 'nativisation', "which highlights the fact that the spread of English necessarily leads to changes and variations in the language, as it becomes adapted to the needs of different groups of speakers, resulting in the existence of many different Englishes" (Wee, 2002:283). Kachru also stated that English is not only nativised but also institutionalized, thus, it is given the official status and at the same time "a large range of functions in the local educational, administrative, and legal systems" (Kachru, 1986: 19).

Because of these arguments it is quite natural to think that due to the raised variety of World Englishes, it is almost impossible to maintain only one type of English and therefore, other variations are acceptable as well. This is well-proved by Widdowson (1994) who argued that since English language obtained the status of the international language, the issue of the custody became irrelevant. Moreover, according to him, accepting the idea of custody, inevitably stops the development of the international language. Bonny Norton (1997) also claimed about the firm connection between language ownership and identity, by bringing example of Bourdieu (1977), "If learners of English cannot claim ownership of a language, they might not consider themselves legitimate speakers of that language" (Norton, 1997:422). Identity factor seems important for Abbot as well, in his observations he claimed that "The 700 million English-users, most of them not native speakers, wish to maintain their own sociocultural identities when using English in international contexts" (Abbot, 1991:56).

This discussion brings us to the idea that all the varieties of the English language has got legitimate right to exist, however, second very important question that arises is what is the limit, which brings us to the problem of the standard. As it is depicted by Bambgbose, English language scholarship is divided into two parts, the ones that think that the standard English should be the norm for all the varieties of English language, and the ones that opposes this idea (1998:1). However, Rosina Lippi Green noted that, the claim according to which standard language is non-accented is nothing more than abstraction (1997:42). Opponents, put forward interesting question which English is a standard and why that particular variety should be considered as standard variety. Widdowson asked, about that important quality in the English varieties, which made it the standard (1994:379). According to him, this quality is connected with the clear communication and intelligibility standards, however, Widdowson also noticed that, the disperse of the language into the various forms, that is to say, into different varieties of Englishes, causes it to stop to act as a mean of an international communication, and this in its own right loses the point to learn the language (1994:379). Moreover, he claimed that with the spread of the language there are some peripheral changes, however, these changes should not be seen only as a peripheral but the ones that can be put back to the centre of the standard, Widdowson argued, that if centre is not maintained then the future is connected with the anarchy which leads us back to the Babel (1994:379).

As Lucy Pickering described, there is a dichotomy between the ideas about the model of the English language. Where on the one hand stands Randolph Quirk and on the other Braj Kachru. Quirk stated that non-native standard English should be based on either American, or British English, however, Kachru opposed this idea by claiming that non-native varieties should receive legitimacy, and "recognize the “paradigm shift” that the increasing use of English as an international language required (Pickering, 2006:219).

However, it is important to take into consideration that if all the representatives of English speaking world will start talking in their own variety of language, which time by time can deviate from the norm, there is a danger that after a while, speakers will not be able to understand each other, and consequently, one of the main functions of the language – communication, will be lost. Thus, as Abbot (1991) mentioned, it lies in the great difficulty of ensuring intelligibility within and between the outer and expanding circles without recourse to a common model. These Englishes are all subject to the disparate influences of various mother tongues and mother cultures, and without a shared model would be held apart and would tend to grow even further apart. Given time, parties A and B could, of course, develop between them a Pidgin English AB; but this would probably be of little use to either of them in dealing with parties C and D or X and Y. It would clearly be far more efficient for each to have a set of common factors, and it would seem that at present such a set can be supplied only by the inner circle of mother tongue Englishes. (A nonnative English could be selected as model, but this would be no less problematic.) (Abbot, 1991:55).

It is important to decide the main factor in the process of establishing the norm. One of the most important factor, to my mind, and according to some other scholars as well is the factor of intelligibility. Each of these theoretical positions make an important contribution to the understanding of the concept of English as an International language. Therefore, this on-going debates about the ownership of English language, acceptable models or deviations from the norm, has to come to one conclusion, that because of the fact that number of Kachru’s expending circle members are rising and it becomes more and more difficult to use one and the same variety of English language for all the different L1 background English speakers and because of the fact that boundaries between the English language owners and English language users are fading every day, it would seem logical to accept the idea that one standard variety of any language used by millions of people is unreal and time-wasting activity. Influence that L1 can have on speakers is inevitable,

however, as Jenkins (2000) pointed out it is important not to create anarchy, and it is crucial to collaborate certain boundaries. These boundaries I believe, should be based on one of the main functions of the language – communication. Thus, the goal of successful communication, can be achieved through intelligible speech, thus, the idea of intelligibility should be taken as one of the main measurements in the successful communication, however we should not forget about the irritation factor which can be caused by the disturbing or ugly sounds, which can affect the attitude of the listener, and consequently, all the three categories has to be investigated in the field of World Englishes.

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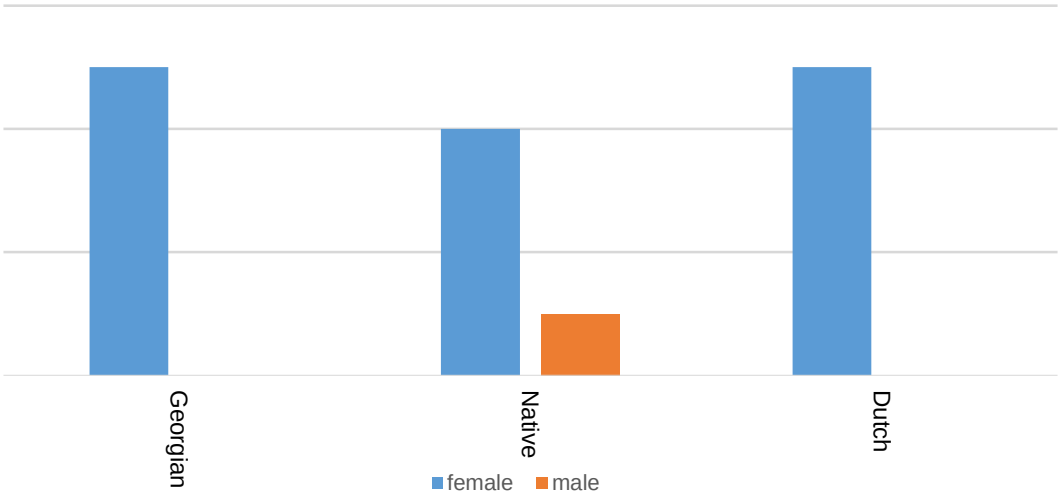
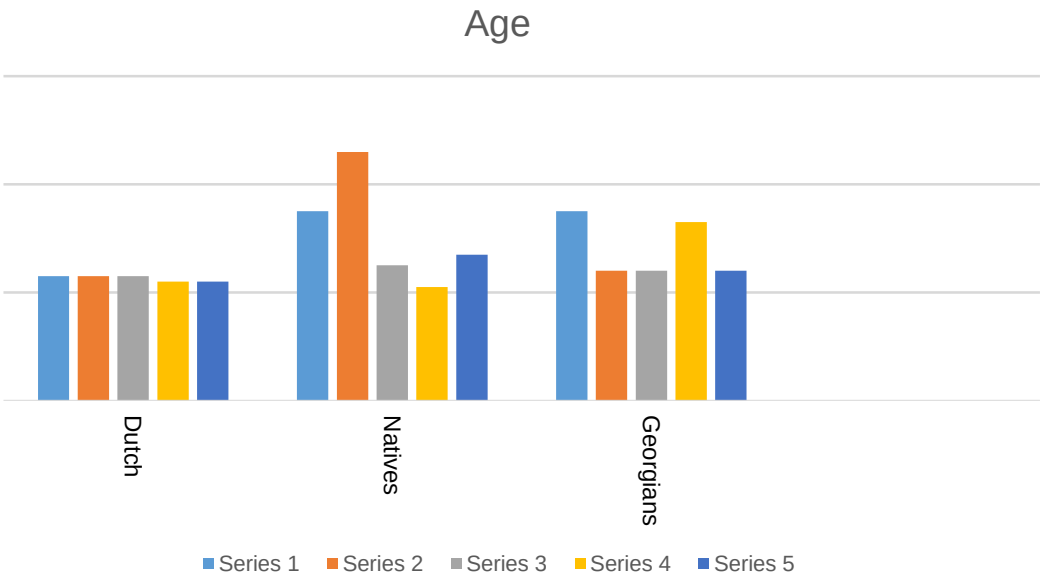
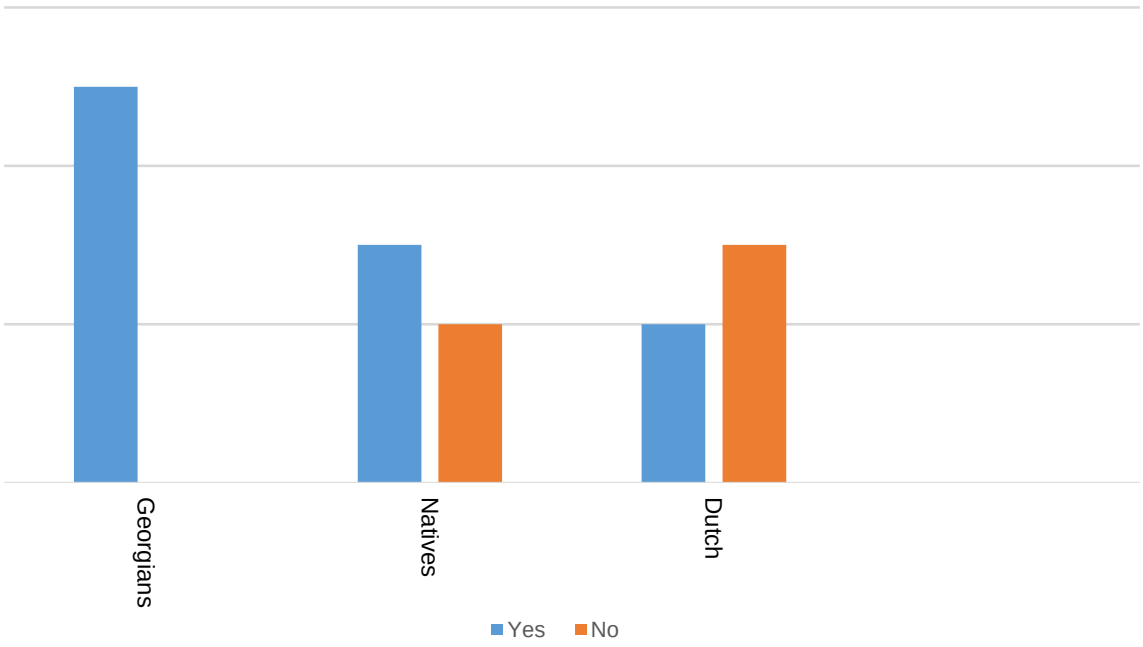
Appendix A

Comparative analyses of the listeners






Georgians
Natives
Dutch
Yes
No

Appendix B

Results of the general intelligibility assessments

fragment	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Georgians	3	2	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
Georgians	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3
Georgians	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5
Georgians	3	2	4	4	4	2	5	3	4	4
Georgians	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
British	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	5
Australian	2	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3
American	2	2	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3
American	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	4
American	2	2	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Dutch	1	2	4	5	3	3	5	3	4	5
Dutch	2	3	3	4	2	3	5	2	4	3
Dutch	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
Dutch	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	4
Dutch	2	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4

Appendix C

Statistical analyses of the general intelligibility assessments

Fragment 1

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		1	25%
3	3		1	25%
12	4		2	50%
13	5		0	0%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	12
Mean	7.25
Variance	30.25
Standard Deviation	5.50
Total Responses	4

Fragment 2

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		2	50%
3	3		2	50%
12	4		0	0%
13	5		0	0%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	3
Mean	2.50
Variance	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.58
Total Responses	4

Fragment 3

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		0	0%
12	4		3	75%
13	5		1	25%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	12
Max Value	13
Mean	12.25
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	4

Fragment 4

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		0	0%
12	4		1	25%
13	5		3	75%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	12
Max Value	13
Mean	12.75
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	4

Fragment 5

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		1	25%
12	4		3	75%
13	5		0	0%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	12
Mean	9.75
Variance	20.25
Standard Deviation	4.50
Total Responses	4

Fragment 6

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		0	0%
12	4		2	50%
13	5		2	50%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	12
Max Value	13
Mean	12.50
Variance	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.58
Total Responses	4

Fragment 7

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		0	0%
12	4		2	50%
13	5		2	50%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	12
Max Value	13
Mean	12.50
Variance	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.58
Total Responses	4

Fragment 8

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		0	0%
12	4		1	25%
13	5		3	75%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	12
Max Value	13
Mean	12.75
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	4

Fragment 9

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		2	50%
12	4		2	50%
13	5		0	0%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	12
Mean	7.50
Variance	27.00
Standard Deviation	5.20
Total Responses	4

Fragment 10

#	Answer		Response	%
1	1		0	0%
2	2		0	0%
3	3		0	0%
12	4		3	75%
13	5		1	25%
	Total		4	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	12
Max Value	13
Mean	12.25
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	4