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# Bad rabbits and mouse traps: Making sense of pronunciation for Brazilian students

Laura Patsko

[lpatsko@cambridge.org](mailto:lpatsko@cambridge.org)

 @lauraahaha

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Experience

Better

Learning

# In this talk...

Learning English in Brazil in 2016

Identifying priorities

What to do in the classroom

# Learning English in Brazil in 2016



# Learning English in Brazil

- **194 million+ people**
- **30 million in compulsory education are learning English**
- **Language of business & tourism**
- **Major business conducted with Americans, Germans, Chinese, Japanese, etc.**

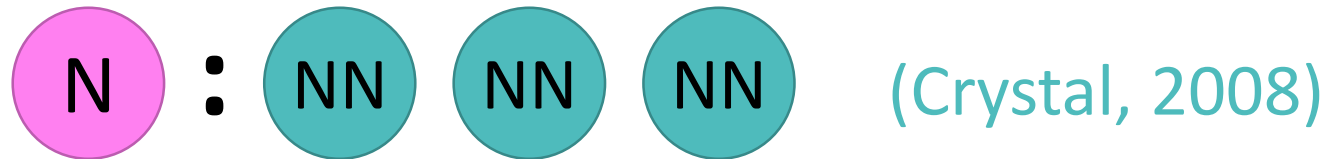
(British Council, 2014)

(Becker & Kluge, 2014)

# Learning English in 2016

**Approx. 80% of spoken interaction in English takes place with no native speaker present**

(Beneke, 1991)



**E F L vs. E L F**

# Learning English in 2016

**In most interactions in English nowadays, English is not the first language of all or any of the speakers, and they might not share the same L1.**

**“English is the communicative medium of choice and often the only option.”**

(Seidlhofer, 2011, pg. 7)



Embrace  
variety!

# Identifying priorities





# New challenges & aims for ELT

- **Intelligibility:**

**“the extent to which a speaker’s message is actually understood by a listener”**

(Munro & Derwing, 1999, p. 289)

- Identifying words + understanding the speaker’s intended meaning (Levis, 2007)

- **Choosing (from) materials**

- **What constitutes an “error”** (Walker, 2010, p. 71)

# What is intelligible in ELF?

- **Benchmark is the Lingua Franca Core:**
  - Most consonant sounds + one vowel (/ɜ:/)
  - Preservation of most consonant clusters
  - Vowel length (especially before voiced/unvoiced consonants)
  - Appropriate word grouping and placement of nuclear stress

(Jenkins, 2000)

<https://elfpron.wordpress.com/2013/11/21/what-is-the-lfc/>

# What does this mean for BP speakers?

## These may need attention:

- Consonants, especially:
  - /p t k/ (aspiration)
  - /t/ and /d/
  - Contrasts (e.g. /r/ vs. /h/)
  - /m/ and /n/ (end of words)
  - Clusters (maybe...)
- Vowels:
  - /ɜ:/
  - Length before voiced/unvoiced consonants

(da Silva, 2010)

(de Castro Gomes, 2013)

# What does this mean for BP speakers?

## **Don't worry about these:**

- /θ/ and /ð/
- [ɾ] at ends of words
- /ə/
- Word grouping and stress (maybe...)
- Precise vowel quality (just be consistent!)
- Rising/falling intonation
- Syllable-timing

(da Silva, 2010)

(de Castro Gomes, 2013)

**Bad habits or bad rabbits?**

**Mouse traps or mouth traps?**



# What to do in the classroom

# Evolution, not revolution

- Productive and receptive skills
- Filter & supplement your materials
- Drilling + simple awareness-raising techniques
- Homework & on-the-spot correction

# Laura's top 3 ELF pron techniques

**“Ping pron”**

**“Sound hunt”**

**“Borrowing”**



# 1. Ping pron

**cough**

**coffee**

# 1. Ping pron

**roll**

**hole**

## 2. Sound hunt

tʃ

t

ʔ

r

What do learners of English need to sound like?  
Who do they speak to? Who needs to understand  
them? Who do they need to understand? In 2016,  
the answer to all these questions is probably not  
“native English speakers”. What does this mean for  
our classrooms? This session will consider new  
pronunciation priorities and challenges for learners  
and teachers of English in Brazil.

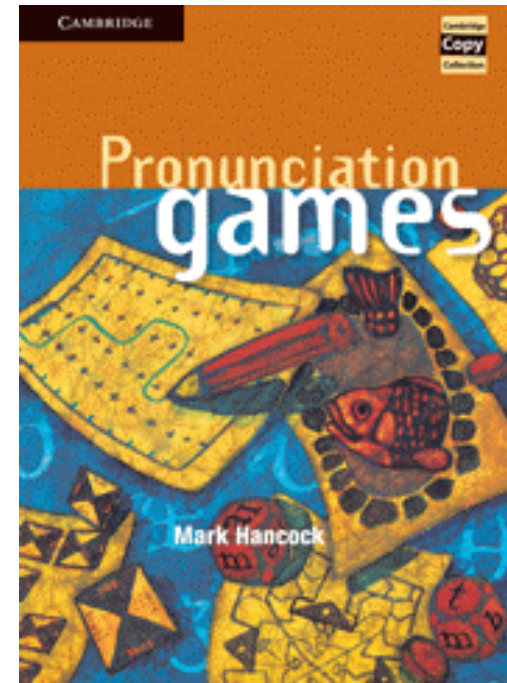
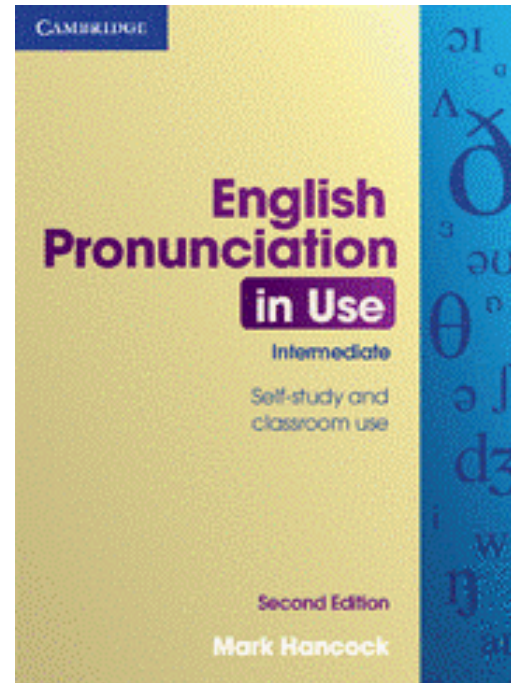
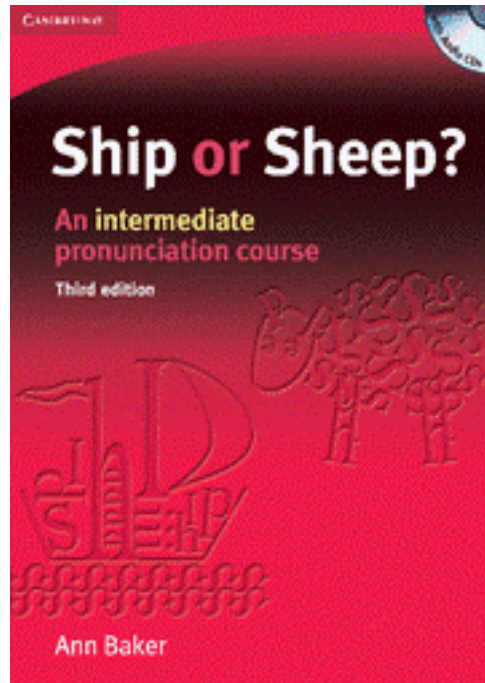
# 3. Borrowing

- 1. Find an example of the target sound in the student's L1.**
- 2. Get the student to pronounce this word in the L1.**
- 3. Isolate the target sound.**
- 4. L2 can now “borrow” it.**

[https://youtu.be/fYzQawKB\\_ts](https://youtu.be/fYzQawKB_ts)



# More materials and resources



# Webinar recording: 5-step lesson plan

<https://youtu.be/Dd6wSDIGGVI>

Laura Patsko - ELFpron.ppt

Laura3.mp4

Laura2.mp4

Laura1.mp4

Chat (Everyone)

User 34: I think its...5-7 just RT?

User 5: yes

User 71: Anyone from Lithuania? :D

User 154: Hi from The Netherlands

User 150: Hello, Alastair!

User 117: Welcome everyone

User 169: Excellent topic!

User 5: but i am based in KSA

User 155: Greetings from Romania

User 156: Hello from Russia!

User 106: hello Giorgiana

User 157: Hello!

User 158: Hi i'm from Peru

User 67: Al Khair university

User 159: Hello from Kazakhstan

User 148: Hello from Philippines

User 160: hello from China

User 161: Hello from Mexico!

User 150: Hello, Georgiana!

User 163: Hi, I'm Nyron Gonzales and I'm delighted to participate

User 162, User 164 are typing...

Cambridge English Teacher

Helping learners understand different accents of English

Laura Patsko

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH Language Assessment

'The Ear of the Beholder' with Laura Patsko; a Cambridge English teacher webinar

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<https://elfpron.wordpress.com/2015/11/07/helping-learners-understand-different-accents/>

# Good news!

- **Pronunciation is not contagious**
- **“Being an NNEST or NEST is not a critical factor in teachers being effective pronunciation teachers.”** (Levis et al, 2016:25)
- **Teachers who share the learners’ L1:**
  - Have a bilingual advantage
  - Are good L2 role models
- **Narrower focus → more time**
- **Intelligible to whom?**



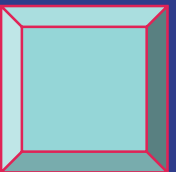


# Obrigada!

[lpatsko@cambridge.org](mailto:lpatsko@cambridge.org)

 [@lauraahaha](https://twitter.com/lauraahaha)

 [@ELF\\_pron](https://twitter.com/ELF_pron)



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