

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Phonology

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## SECOND LANGUAGE PHONOLOGY

*Phonetic Variation and Phonological  
Representations*

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CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-66330-4 — Second Language Phonology  
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Frontmatter  
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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009663304](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009663304)

DOI: 10.1017/9781009420648

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009420648

First published 2025

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-1-009-66330-4 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-009-42063-1 Paperback  
ISSN 2633-9064 (online)  
ISSN 2633-9056 (print)

Additional resources for this publication at [www.cambridge.org/Simon](http://www.cambridge.org/Simon)

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## Second Language Phonology

### Phonetic Variation and Phonological Representations

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DOI: 10.1017/9781009420648  
First published online: February 2025

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**Abstract:** This Element deals with the interplay between phonology, phonetics and acquisition. It addresses the question of whether and how phonological representations are acquired in adult second language (L2) learners in the face of phonetic variation inherent in speech. Drawing from a large number of empirical studies on the acquisition of L2 speech sounds, the Element outlines how phonetic or phonological representations develop in L2 learners on the basis of input in immersion and instructed language learning contexts. Taking in insights from sociophonetics and clinical linguistics, the Element further discusses how accent variation impacts L2 phonological acquisition and what clinical studies on individuals with atypical language development can tell us about the nature of phonological representations. Finally, new avenues in the field of L2 phonology are explored, especially with regard to methodological challenges and opportunities related to the use of spontaneous speech and remote data collection.

**Keywords:** second language phonology, sociophonetics, variation, phonological representations, perception

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ISBNs: 9781009663304 (HB), 9781009420631 (PB), 9781009420648 (OC)  
ISSNs: 2633-9064 (online), 2633-9056 (print)

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	The Field of Second Language Phonology	4
3	Towards Robust Phonological Representations in a Second Language	7
4	Flexibility of Phonological Representations	14
5	Sociophonetics and Second Language Phonology	21
6	Fuzzy and Overspecified Representations	35
7	Assessing the Formation of Categories	40
8	Avenues for Future Research: How to Advance the Field of Second Language Phonology?	50
9	Conclusions and Implications	59
	References	62