PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY IN MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Ulrike Gut
University of Münster

Romana Kopečková
University of Münster

Christina Nelson
University of Münster
Abstract: This Element focusses on phonetic and phonological development in multilinguals and presents a novel methodological approach to it within Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST). We will show how the traditional conceptualisations of acquisition, with a strong focus on linear, incremental development with a stable end point, can be complemented by a view of language development as emergent, self-organised, context-dependent and highly variable across learners. We report on a longitudinal study involving sixteen learners with L1 German, L2 English and L3 Polish. Over their ten months of learning Polish, the learners' perception and production of various speech sounds and phonological processes in all of their languages were investigated. Auditory and acoustic analyses were applied together with group and individual learner statistical analyses to trace the dynamic changes of their multilingual phonological system over time. We show how phonetic and phonological development is feature-dependent and interconnected and how learning experience affects the process.

Keywords: third language acquisition, speech perception, speech production, multilingual, Complex Dynamic Systems Theory

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ISBNs: 9781108994743 (PB), 9781108992527 (OC)
ISSNs: 2634-1689 (online), 2634-1670 (print)
Contents

1 Introduction 1
2 Theories of L2 Phonological Acquisition 3
3 The Conceptualisation of Foreign Language Development 10
4 Study: Multilingual Development of Phonetics and Phonology 19
5 Results 30
6 Discussion 45
7 Conclusion 49

Appendix 51
References 55