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Polish-accented English in prominent Polish politicians: the case of Donald Tusk

*Polski angielski w wystąpieniach czołowych polskich
polityków: przypadek Donalda Tuska*

Summary:

The aim of this paper is to provide an exemplification of selected, consonantal features of Polish-accented English on the basis of a biographical interview conducted with a prominent Polish politician, Donald Tusk. Typical examples of Polish-accented English, such as final obstruent devoicing, plosive insertion after /ŋ/, lack of linking /r/ or various sound substitutions, are presented in the paper. The paper finishes with concluding remarks which briefly recapitulate its main points and suggest further analyses within the field of Polish-accented English.

Keywords: Polish-accented English, phonetic features, pronunciation, British English

Streszczenie:

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest egzemplifikacja wybranych, spółgłoskowych cech polskiej angielszczyzny zebranych na podstawie wywiadu przeprowadzonego z czołowym polskim politykiem – Donaldem Tuskiem. W artykule przedstawiono takie cechy polskiej angielszczyzny jak np. ubezdźwięcznianie końcowych spółgłosek, wymawianie spółgłosek zwartych miękkopodniebiennych po /ŋ/, brak /r/ łączącego czy zastąpienia angielskich dźwięków dźwiękami polskimi. Artykuł zamykają uwagi końcowe podsumowujące jego treść oraz podające propozycje dalszych badań w obrębie polskiej angielszczyzny.

Słowa kluczowe: polska angielszczyzna, cechy fonetyczne, wymowa angielska

1. Introduction

The paper provides an exemplification of selected, typical features of Polish-accented English, also known as Polish English¹. Only consonantal features, or features closely connected with the discussed consonantal values, will be exemplified. The presentation is based on a biographical interview with Donald Tusk – one of the leading Polish political figures. The interview was conducted on 28.11.2014² and it is found on the political leader’s website³. It is entitled: *Donald Tusk: President-elect of the European Council – a biography in his own words*. The interview lasts 15.07 minutes and, as its title indicates, it provides information about Donald Tusk’s life, as given by himself.

The paper discusses the following features of Polish-accented English: final obstruent devoicing accompanied by a simultaneous shortening of the vowel preceding the obstruent; plosive insertion after /ŋ/; replacing /θ/ with /s/, /f/ or /t/; replacing /ð/ with /z/, /v/ or /d/; lack of linking /r/ and substitution of /h/ for /x/.

2. Devoicing of word-final voiced obstruents

The first phonetic feature of the English language used by Donald Tusk (henceforth referred to as DT) is the devoicing of word-final voiced obstruents, the sounds b, v, ð, d, z, ʒ, dʒ, g⁴. For example, the words *dogs* and *beds* both contain the word-final voiced obstruent /z/, which is frequently completely devoiced by Polish users of English who pronounce it as /s/. Another example of word-final obstruent devoicing is the use of the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ instead of the voiced, or, more precisely, partially voiced alveolar plosive /d/ as in the words *thousand* or *find*.

Below is presented a table that contains illustrations of the phenomenon under discussion, together with the exact time⁵ of the production of the word during the interview, the actual version produced by DT as well as the version that was intended by the speaker.

¹ W. Sobkowiak, *English Phonetics for Poles*, Poznań 1996; J. Szpyra-Kozłowska, *Pronunciation in EFL Instruction. A Research-Based Approach*, Bristol 2015; A. Bryla-Cruz, *Foreign Accent Perception: Polish English in the British Ears*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2016.

² <https://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/video/shotlist/a-biography-in-his-own-words>, [accessed: 08.03.2017].

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BU6jB4fu3A>, [accessed: 08.03.2017].

⁴ A. Cruttenden, *Gimson’s Pronunciation of English*, London 2008, p. 157.

⁵ All the times that appear in this article refer to the interview: *Donald Tusk: President-elect of the European Council – a biography in his own words*, whose exact source is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BU6jB4fu3A>, [accessed: 08.03.2017].

Table no. 1. Examples of final obstruent devoicing in DT's speech.

	WORD	TIME	ACTUAL VERSION	INTENDED VERSION
1	cult <u>u</u> res	00:00:22	s	z
2	relig <u>i</u> ons	00:00:23	s	z
3	and	00:00:33	t	d
4	live <u>d</u>	00:02:28	t	d
5	kill <u>e</u> d	00:03:07	t	d
6	side	00:03:24	t	d

In the Polish language it is natural to completely devoice word-final obstruents⁶. This is why such pairs of words as *kot* 'cat' – *kod* 'code', *buk* 'beech' – *Bug* 'name of river', *grat* 'wreck' – *grad* 'hail', *mieć* 'have' – *miedz* 'copper', *pot* 'sweat' – *pod* 'under' are homophones: they are all pronounced in the same way with the word-final (pre-pausal) consonant being completely devoiced. This is the reason why so many Poles who learn English devoice pre-pausal voiced obstruents. In the English language, however, word-final obstruents are articulated in a different way. Word-final devoicing in English is not complete, as it is in Polish and many other languages of the world, but partial.⁷ Gonet⁸, with the assistance of acoustic speech analysis, notices that English word-final obstruents, such as /v/ in *move*, /z/ in *lose* or /ʒ/ in *garage* consist of two phonetic segments – a voiced one followed by a voiceless one, which is different to what we find in similar-sounding Polish words (*mów* 'talk, imp.', *luz* 'ease' and *garaż* 'garage'), in which the word-final obstruents consist of one phonetic segment which is fully devoiced.

There are a number of words in Polish which terminate with a phonologically voiced obstruent articulated as a voiceless sound in natural speech. This is why Polish users of English transfer this pronunciation habit into English, which results in erroneous pronunciation of sounds and, consequently, a foreign accent: Polish-accented English.

At this point, it is important to make reference to the fact that DT does not always devoice word-final obstruents. For instance, the final /d/ in *would* (at 00:01:09), in *around* (at 00:02:42), in *started* (00:03:49) are not devoiced. The /dʒ/ in *huge* (at 00:02:54) and the /z/ in *wise* (at 00:01:59) are very close to the target version.

We may also note, in passing, that DT makes use of the opposite process to the one just discussed: he applies voicing when lack of voicing is the received norm. The

⁶ W. Sobkowiak, *English Phonetics for Poles*, Poznań 1996, pp. 49-50.

⁷ W. Sobkowiak, p. 50.

⁸ W. Gonet, *Explorations in the Acoustics of English Sounds*, Lublin 2016, pp. 182 – 187 and 220.

case in point is the phrase *of course I* [00:03:55, pronounced /ovko:zai/ in place of /ɔfko:sai/] or the word *football* [00:02:24, 00:14:33], which DT pronounces the way many other Poles do, which is: /'fɔdbɔ:l/ instead of the correct /'fʊtbɔ:l/. Many Polish learners of English apply voicing to voiceless consonants when they occur between voiced sounds, as in *basic*, *consists*, *this is*, *anecdote* being pronounced as: /'beɪzɪk/, /kən'zɪsts/, /ðɪzɪz/, /'ænɪgdəʊt/⁹.

3. Shortening of vowels preceding obstruents

Devoicing of word-final obstruents by Polish students of English automatically results in another error: shortening of a vowel that should not be shortened.

Vowels may be clipped or unclipped in English, which depends on whether the vowel within the syllable is closed by a voiceless or a voiced consonant. If it is closed by a voiceless consonant the vowel is clipped or is shorter than the one which is either closed by a voiced consonant or which is open¹⁰. Thus, the word *beat* has a considerably shorter vowel than the word *bead*. Clipped vowels are sounded more quickly than unclipped ones¹¹. For example, the vowel of *bat* is pronounced more quickly than the vowel of *bad*. At the same time, the /t/ in *bat* is slower in comparison to the /d/ in *bad*¹². To recapitulate: *bat* has a quick /æ/ and a slower /t/, whereas *bad* has a slow /æ/ and a quicker /d/. This phenomenon is known as *pre-fortis clipping*¹³.

If a Pole pronounces the final /d/ in *bad* as /t/ then not only does he/she commit the error of unnecessary devoicing but also automatically shortens the vowel, now closed by a fortis (voiceless) consonant. By pronouncing /p/ in *job* instead of /b/, a Pole not only makes the error of unnecessary devoicing, but also shortens /ɒ/, hence producing the incorrect form /dʒɒps/.¹⁴

Below is presented a table that contains illustrations of the phenomenon under discussion, together with the exact time of the production of the word during the interview, the actual version as produced by DT as well as the intended version.

⁹ W. Sobkowiak, *English Phonetics for Poles*, Poznań 1996, pp. 54 – 57. See also: J. Szpyra-Kozłowska, *Pronunciation in EFL Instruction. A Research-Based Approach*, Bristol 2015, p. 163.

¹⁰ A. Cruttenden, *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, London 2008, p. 161.

¹¹ J.C. Wells, *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, Harlow 1993, p. 136.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p.136.

¹⁴ R. Wolak, *Wymowa języka angielskiego w ćwiczeniach. Część I i II*, Kraków 1987, pp. 15 – 146.

Table no. 2. Examples of shortening of vowels followed by voiced obstruents in DT's speech.

	WORD	TIME	ACTUAL VERSION	INTENDED VERSION
1	lived	00:02:28	lift	livd
2	killed	00:03:07	kilt	kild
3	side	00:03:24	saIt	said
4	needs	00:12:44	nits	ni:d
5	naïve	00:12:56	,naiif	na'i:v
6	called	00:13:49	kolt	ko:ld

It is important to stress the fact that DT does not always unnecessarily shorten vowels. The moment the final voiced obstruents are given their partially voiced value the quantity of the preceding vowels begins to assume a proper length.

4. Plosive insertion after /ŋ/

The third feature of Polish-accented English to be mentioned now is the frequent insertion of the voiceless velar plosive /k/ after the voiced velar nasal /ŋ/ (called *engma*). For example, the words *sing* or *sitting* contain engma: /sɪŋ/, /'sɪtɪŋ/. But, as can be seen in the transcription, the engma is not followed by /g/ or /k/ in the pronunciation, much as the spelling of the words suggests it. The graphic form of these words is no doubt one of the factors behind the plosive insertion after engma by Polish users of English. In Polish we often read as we write, hence the deep desire to sound /g/ or /k/ at the end of words like *sing* or *sitting*. Perhaps if there existed a separate letter for this sound in English then the confusion would be less.

What adds to the engma problem is the fact that in English this sound is sometimes followed by /g/ (e.g. in *finger*), sometimes by /k/ (e.g. in *sink*), sometimes by other sounds (e.g. by /θ/, as in *length* or by /z/, as in *kings*) and sometimes by nothing, as in *nothing*. Engma exists in Polish but it is always followed by the velar plosives /g/ or /k/, as in *Anglia, gang, tango, pociąg, ręka, drink, trening, lek*.

In the table below are presented illustrations of plosive insertion after /ŋ/ made by DT.

Table no. 3. Examples of plosives insertion after /ŋ/ in DT's speech.

	WORD	TIME	ACTUAL VERSION	INTENDED VERSION
1	thinking	00:01:31	ŋk	ŋ
2	among	00:02:23	ŋk	ŋ
3	hiding	00:05:35	ŋk	ŋ

4	working	00:06:27	ŋk	ŋ
5	propagating	00:07:07	ŋg	ŋ
6	demanding	00:09:02	ŋk	ŋ

A reference to the fact that DT does not always pronounce velar plosives after the velar nasal ought to be given. For example, the words *something* (at 00:06:22) and *interesting* (00:09.08) are sounded without one of the plosives following the velar nasal.

5. Replacement of /θ/ and /ð/ with /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /f/ or /v/.

The fourth feature of the English language as used by DT is his frequent replacement of one of two dental fricatives with an alveolar fricative or an alveolar plosive. For example, if someone says /fɪŋk/ or /tɪŋk/ instead of /θɪŋk/ then one commits the error of substitution of ‘th’ for another sound. DT, as many other Poles, makes a frequent use of this kind of replacement. Examples are presented in table 4 below.

Table no. 4. Examples of substitution of /θ/ and /ð/ with other sounds in DT’s speech.

	WORD	TIME	ACTUAL VERSION	INTENDED VERSION
1	<u>th</u> at	00:00:41	d	ð
2	<u>th</u> ousand	00:00:47	t	θ
3	with <u>th</u> eir	00:00:50	z d	ð ð
4	some <u>th</u> ing	00:01:07	s	θ
5	au <u>th</u> or	00:09:50	t	θ
6	<u>th</u> en	00:09:58	d	ð

It is worth noting that DT does not always make such substitutions. For example, he pronounces the words *think* (00:00:13) and *ethnic* (00:00:43) correctly, applying the interdental voiceless fricative. This suggests that DT has not yet fully internalised this difficult point of English phonetics. It seems that the proper sounding of ‘th’ has become part of his competence but not of his performance, at least not completely.¹⁵ This points in the direction of phonetic inconsistency, so important when speaking a foreign language¹⁶, though in the case of DT the degree of inconsistency as regards ‘th’ substitutions is not very high.

¹⁵ W. Sobkowiak, *English Phonetics for Poles*, Poznań 1996, p. 21.

¹⁶ M. Mizak, *Wymowa brytyjska i amerykańska – jak je skutecznie odróżnić: pomoc dla nauczyciela i ucznia*, “*Języki Obce w Szkole*”, 2005 no. 1, pp. 31 – 32.

In Polish, the dental (or interdental) fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ do not exist¹⁷, which largely explains the failure to articulate these two sounds with great precision by Polish users of English. Even though the fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are not part of the Polish inventory of sounds, they surface up in the speech disorder called *sigmatism* (or *lisp*) in which the sibilants /s/ and /z/ are misarticulated and sound like fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. Needless to say, lisp exists in English as well. In an *interdental* (or *frontal*) *lisp* a child fails to produce the alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/ and replaces them with interdental fricatives, which shows up in forms such as *thoop* in place of *soup* and *eethee* in place of *easy*¹⁸.

Interestingly, there exists a phenomenon in English phonetics called *th-fronting* in which the /f/ or /v/ substitutes are applied in place of /θ/ and /ð/ respectively by native speakers of English themselves, as in, for example, *think* or *brother*: /fɪŋk/ and /'brʌvə/. This is a characteristic feature of the London accent called Cockney¹⁹. Such pronunciations are sometimes reflected in the spelling of such words as *north* or *brother* written *norf* or *bruver*. Even in mainstream English, which does not ordinarily exhibit dental fricative fronting, dental plosive articulations for /θ/ and /ð/ are not uncommon, usually in more emphatic expressions, such as, for instance, the more vigorous *Thank you* – /'tæŋk ju:/ – in answer to *Will you have a drink?*²⁰

6. Linking /r/

The fifth consonantal feature of Polish English to be described is the difficulty in producing the natural version of linking /r/ so characteristic of the General British pronunciation of English²¹.

In order to understand the concept of linking /r/ it is worthwhile to mention the usage of /r/ in General British first. The /r/ sound is, as a rule, pronounced pre-vocally²²; it is mute before consonants and word finally. For example, the /r/ sound is sounded in *red*, but it is not sounded in *horse* or *car*. This rule is also applied across

¹⁷ A. Reszkiewicz, *Correct your English Pronunciation*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 80 – 83.

¹⁸ C. Bowen, *Lisping – when /s/ and /z/ are hard to say*, 2015, <http://www.speech-language-therapy.com/>, [accessed: 11.03.2017].

¹⁹ J.C. Wells, *Accents of English II. The British Isles*, Cambridge 1992, p. 328; A. Cruttenden, *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, London 2008, p. 86.

²⁰ J. Windsor Lewis, *English Dental Fricative Fronting*, 2006, <http://www.yek.me.uk/archive1.html#blog001>, [accessed: 10.03.2017].

²¹ J.C. Wells, *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, Harlow 1993, p. 578; J. Windsor Lewis, *Linking /r/ in the General British pronunciation of English*. Adapted and updated from “The Journal of the International Phonetic Association”, 1975 vol. 5 no. 1, pp. 37 – 42; 2016: <http://www.yek.me.uk/>, [accessed 30.12.2016].

²² A. Cruttenden, *Gimson's pronunciation of English*, Abington 2014, p. 224.

word boundaries. Thus, in such phrases as *far away*, *never again* or *more interesting*, the /r/ sound is usually pronounced – this is exactly what linking /r/ is: a /r/ sound heard in such and similar phrases in General British²³. What is important about r-links is that they are regularly made in natural speech²⁴ and if the link is broken there is often a reason, e.g. emphasis, that substantiates the break. However, DT's r-links are more often than not left broken, which makes the non-linkings stand out as rather unnatural.

Below is presented a body of data from the interview alongside the more natural version as would have been found in General British in this context.

Table no. 5. Examples of lack of linking /r/ in DT's speech.

	PHRASE	TIME	ACTUAL VERSION	INTENDED VERSION
1	their own	00:00:48	no r-link made	r-link made
2	my four identities	00:01:11	no r-link made	r-link made
3	more interesting	00:02:44	no r-link made	r-link made
4	more often	00:03:34	no r-link made	r-link made
5	for all	00:05:25	no r-link made	r-link made
6	were arrested	00:05:31	no r-link made	r-link made

It is natural to sound a glottal stop (symbolised /ʔ/) before vowels in Polish – a pronunciation habit that Polish students of English often transfer onto English²⁵. Glottal stops are not unknown in English, but their usage is different from the usage of this plosive in Polish²⁶. Examples of the inappropriate Polish-English transfer abound. For example, the plosive can be heard in such phrases as *an ʔenlightened ʔage*, *were ʔallowed*, *are ʔall*, *are ʔalmost* etc. It is readily apparent from these instances that the context of linking /r/ is highly susceptible to the interruption of the vowel sequence with a glottal stop.

²³ M. Mizak, *What kind of /r/ is linking /r/? An analysis of the realization of /r/ in linking /r/ in RP on the basis of Polish phonetic books*, "Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature", 2016 vol. 40 no. 1; M. Mizak, *What kind of /r/ is linking /r/? An analysis of the realization of linking /r/ in RP on the basis of selected English phonetic books and usage-based accounts*, "Lingwistyka Stosowana", 2016 no. 19:4.

²⁴ J. Windsor Lewis, *Linking /r/ in the General British pronunciation of English*, 2016, <http://www.yek.me.uk/>, [accessed 30.12.2016].

²⁵ W. Sobkowiak, *English Phonetics for Poles*, Poznań 1996, p. 80.

²⁶ J.C. Wells, *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, Harlow 1993, p. 307.

It is worth noting that in some linking /r/ contexts DT does not sound the glottal stop nor the /r/ sound, skating over the latter and moving in a gliding fashion over to the vowel that follows it²⁷.

It is also worth noting that DT probably yields to hypercorrection, which results in inappropriate forms. On the basis of the phonetic material contained in the interview, it is possible to assert that DT has acquired or internalized one of the rules of General British /r/ first and follows it quite faithfully. It is the rule of no pre-pausal (or word-final) /r/. The rule states that the /r/ of such words as *car*, *more* or *better* is not sounded, unless followed by a vowel. If someone wants to utter the phrase *more interesting*, then he/she – being guided by the no word-final /r/ rule – may fail to pronounce the /r/ of *more* due to its allegedly pre-pausal position. This, however, is a hypercorrect, inappropriate form. It would be much more natural to make the r-link in this context²⁸.

Much as the realisation of linking /r/ by DT is not wholly satisfactory within the General British standard, it should be stressed that the rule of the no pre-pausal (or word-final) and no pre-consonantal /r/ is highly consistently followed throughout the interview. In other words, the way DT deals, as it were, with the /r/ sound during the interview is exceedingly good, given the strong tendency among Poles to sound <r> whenever it occurs in the spelling²⁹.

7. Replacing /h/ with /x/

The sixth consonantal feature of Polish English used by DT is replacing the English glottal fricative /h/ with the Polish velar fricative /x/. For example, saying /xəʊ'tel/ instead of /həʊ'tel/ is one instance of this kind of substitution. Both sounds have the same manner of articulation, which might make one think that they are very similar. However, the sounds differ greatly in their place of articulation, the English one being glottal only and the Polish one being velar, or, more precisely, glotto-velar³⁰. The fact that /h/ is purely glottal (the friction is made only in the glottis) makes it a hardly audible sound, more like a breath of air, especially when compared to /x/ whose friction is made both in the glottis and in the mouth, where the back of the tongue articulates with the velum. These two sounds are markedly different from

²⁷ Cf. G. Brown, *Listening to Spoken English*, London 1990, p. 39.

²⁸ B. Bałutowa, *Wymowa angielska, czyli dlaczego nie rozumiemy Anglików i Amerykanów, a oni nas*, Warszawa 2003, p. 87.

²⁹ A. Bryła-Cruz, *Foreign Accent Perception: Polish English in the British Ears*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2016, p. 58.

³⁰ A. Reszkiewicz, *Correct your English Pronunciation*, Warszawa 2005, p. 88.

each other, which is the likely reason why Gimson³¹ should advise foreign learners against any velar friction when pronouncing /h/ and treating it “as a voiceless onset to the following vowel”.

DT makes an occasional use of the replacement under consideration, as is demonstrated by the data included in table 6.

Table no. 6. Examples of replacing /h/ with /x/ in DT’s speech.

	PHRASE	TIME	ACTUAL VERSION	INTENDED VERSION
1	he	00:01:42	x	h
2	hooligan	00:02:14	x	h
3	huge	00:02:54	x	h
4	who	00:03:29	x	h
5	had	00:04:18	x	h
6	neighbourhood	00:13:38	x	h

8. Other substitutions

There are other phonetic features of Polish-accented English "found DT’s speech" that deserve a brief mention. The first of them is the replacement of the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ with the native Polish alveolo-palatal fricative /ɕ/ as in the words *national* [00:04:29] and *especially* [00:09:56]. Another Polish-to-English feature refers to the use of the native voiced alveolo-palatal affricate /dʒ/ in place of the British palato-alveolar affricate /dʒ/ as in the words *region* [00:00:16] and *journalist* [00:04:43]. The third one concerns the distinction between clear /l/ and dark [ɫ] which is sometimes blurred as in the words *manual* [00:06:24] and *principles* [00:07:12], both pronounced with the sound closer to /l/ rather than to [ɫ], which would be the case in General British. The alveolo-palatal nasal /ɲ/ which is used inappropriately in place of the alveolar nasal /n/ and which reappears in the word *new* [e.g.: 00:07:08, 00:10:31] is one more example of the Polish sound used by DT in English.

9. Concluding remarks

The paper was aimed at providing an exemplification of selected, consonantal features of Polish-accented English on the basis of a biographical interview conducted with a prominent Polish politician, Donald Tusk. Examples of Polish-accented English, such as final obstruent devoicing, plosive insertion after the velar nasal, replacing interdental fricatives with alveolar labiodental fricatives or alveolar stops, breaking r–links, pronouncing /h/ as /x/, /ʃ/ as /ɕ/, /dʒ/ as /dʒ/, [ɫ] as /l/ or /n/ as /ɲ/

³¹ A.C. Gimson, *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, London 1965, p. 188.

have all, in varying degrees, been found to be present in DT's speech. This should not be surprising: almost every Polish speaker's English pronunciation is, to a certain extent, affected by his/her first language pronunciation habits.

The fact that the politician does not always fall into his native phonetic habits and, therefore, does not transfer them into English suggests that his level of competence in English is being developed and that, with practice, it may well be increased to such a degree that the phonetic inaccuracies, if not eliminated, are substantially reduced. There does not seem to exist any real difficulty, either in terms of the manner of articulation or the place of articulation, which would preclude the Polish speaker from further accent enhancement concerning such areas of the General British pronunciation of English as final obstruent devoicing, plosive insertion after /ŋ/, replacing interdental fricatives with other fricatives or stops, the usage of linking /r/, replacement of /h/ with /x/, /ʃ/ with /ç/ or /dʒ/ with /dʒ/.

One of Bryła-Cruz's³² findings described in her recent paper devoted to native speakers' acceptability judgements on Polish English pronunciation was that native speakers of English assessed plosive insertion after /ŋ/ or final obstruent devoicing as more serious errors than e.g. the error of giving no aspiration to the stressed /k/ or the error of pronouncing [ɫ] as /l/. Improving at least on the major aspects of the General British pronunciation of English is recommended, especially if it concerns leading political figures who have to use English on a daily basis. An improvement on the accent is simultaneously an improvement on how the user of the accent is perceived³³.

The analysed interview was carried out in 2014. It is highly likely that since that time there has been a variation in DT's English pronunciation. Therefore, another study may – for example by means of a comparative analysis – establish the degree of phonetic difference between DT's English pronunciation then and now as regards the features described above. It would be interesting to find whether and how the pronunciation of this prominent politician has changed over the years.

Another study may inspect the relationship between intelligibility and foreign accentedness. In spite of the fact that a number of Polish English features have been identified in DT's speech, my English speaking informants have found DT's speech completely intelligible. Consonantal features of DT's Polish-accented English – as well as other features not discussed in this paper, such as word stress or the quality of vowels – have not impaired the intelligibility of the text. How is it possible that

³² A.B. Bryła-Cruz, *Scottish native speakers' acceptability judgements on Polish-accented English*, "Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature", 2016 vol. 40 no. 1.

³³ J. Szpyra-Kozłowska, *Pronunciation in EFL Instruction. A Research-Based Approach*, Bristol 2015, pp. 45 – 49.

the foreign accentedness present in DT's English has not affected intelligibility? The relationship under discussion depends on a combination of factors, which are worth exploring further.

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