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Pré-rapport concernant la thèse présentée par Marie HÉVROVÁ en vue de l'obtention du doctorat en Sciences du Langage de l'Université Toulouse 2 - Jean Jaurès, Cotutelle internationale avec l'Université Charles, Prague

Titre des travaux : «*Phonetic attrition and cross-linguistic influence in L1 speech of late Czech-French bilinguals.*»

External Examiner Report for Marie Hévrová's Doctoral Thesis entitled : «*Phonetic attrition and cross-linguistic influence in L1 speech of late Czech-French bilinguals.*»

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Using an experimental approach, the Doctoral thesis submitted by Marie Hévrová studies phonetic attrition and cross-linguistic influence in speaker's L1 (Czech), learner of French (L2) and resident in Toulouse area. Three distinct studies are carried out: a perception study which allows evaluating how native-like do the speakers sound, an acoustic analysis that allows comparing acoustic values/ features in Czech spoken by monolingual or late Czech/French bilingual, and a study on extra-linguistic factors based on a questionnaire. This work makes an interesting contribution in the large range of studies dedicated to phonetic CLIs and attrition.

The core of the manuscript is divided into two parts, each containing four chapters (for a total of 8 chapters), and it also includes an introduction and a conclusion. In the *introduction*, Marie Hévrová (henceforth MH) explains her motivations for studying phonetic attrition and cross-linguistic influences (CLI) from L2 French into L1 Czech, and presents the organisation of the document. In the first part, which contains chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3 and chapter 4, MH presents the theoretical background that is used to achieve the research presented in the document. **Chapter 1** provides a comprehensive presentation of several models used to account for L2 production / perception, starting from contrastive analysis to more elaborated models such as the "Native Language Magnet Theory" as developed by Kuhl and colleagues, the "Perceptual assimilation Model" or PAM as well as its new version designed for L2, PAM-2, both developed by C. Best, the Speech Learning Model (SLM), initially proposed by Flege, and its revised version, the SLM-r, the "second Language linguistic perception model" developed by Escudero and inspired by stochastic OT, and the model developed by Mennen to account for the acquisition of suprasegmental features, the L2 intonation learning theory (LILt). In

Chapter 2, MH clarifies the terminology for terms such as bilingualism, attrition, phonetic drift, cross-linguistic influences, etc. Several studies accounting for phonetic CLI are then presented and discussed, a distinction being made between L1 influence on L2, and L2 influence on L1, on the one hand, and on the feature investigated on the other (stop consonants, fricatives, vowels, liquids, suprasegmental elements, etc.). **Chapter 3** is a comparison of the Czech and the French phonological system/ inventory (vowels, consonants and suprasegmental features), variation being considered. In **Chapter 4**, which contains less pages, MH explains more clearly what are her research questions and how she will apprehend them, based on the presentation made in the three previous chapters.

The second part relates the three experiments achieved by MH during her doctoral studies. **Chapter 5** is dedicated to the perception test which consisted to evaluate the French/ Czech nature of items produced by Czech bilingual living in France, the items being extracted from distinct types of data. The results obtained confirmed the hypothesis formulated by MH : Czech bilingual productions sound 'less' Czech in comparison to items produced by Czech monolingual. As the participants had to indicate what was crucial in their evaluation, several cues (vowel quality, rising intonation, etc.) were mentioned and then taken into consideration to design the acoustic study presented in **Chapter 6** and based on data extracted from the reading and semi-spontaneous speech production produced by 17 female monolingual Czech and bilingual Czech/French speakers. Several acoustic features were analysed in order to evaluate possible phonetic CLI. They consisted of the spectral characteristics of vowels (F1, F2 and F3 values mostly), spectral and temporal characteristics of rhotics, spectral characteristics of glottal and velar fricatives, F0 in non-conclusive intonation patterns, and the occurrence of stuck schwas. As for the results, significant differences were observed for vowels (especially F1 values), fricatives and stuck schwas, whereas differences are less clear for rhotics and rising tonal patterns. **Chapter 7** focuses on external factors and provides ideas to take them into account in analysing phonetic CLIs. The study mostly relies on a questionnaire that was given to the speakers and is presented in the document as appendix. Four points were considered: Length of residence, use of Czech in France, preferred identity and proficiency in French. Among them, proficiency in French displayed significance. In **Chapter 8**, a general discussion of the results obtained for the various experiments is proposed. It allows analysing the results with regard to previous studies and models. Moreover, MH has the ability to evaluate the limits and contributions of her work. This second part, which contains four chapters, is followed by a *conclusion* which summarizes the findings.

This thesis is a very interesting work on phonetic CLI from French L2 to Czech L1 and on attrition. It is based on a solid knowledge of the literature. Moreover, the work achieved shows that MH has the ability to set up and question experiments and to use statistical modelling.

As for the document itself, it is well-presented and well-structured. In addition to the written part that I previously described, it contains abstracts (in English, French and Czech), a table of content and several lists (list of figures, list of tables and list of acronyms) before the introduction. As for the conclusive part, it is followed by 25 pages of references and 6 appendices displaying in details the data/ results used or obtained in various experiments. I really appreciated the presentation; the various summaries provided

at the end of each chapter, allow understanding clearly which issue is most specifically apprehended/ questioned in the chapter. As for the results, they are always clearly presented in the various chapter, and discussions are developed in such a way as to question the hypotheses investigated.

There are at least two issues I would like to address with MH during the defence. First, I would like her to clearly explain what she considered as phonological and as phonetics. Chapter 1 as well as examples given in chapter 2 may give the impression that phonetic CLI are in fact phonological one. Secondly, I would appreciate discussing the way intonation patterns have been analysed.

To my mind, this thesis has clearly much more strength than weaknesses. It results from an impressive work, a good knowledge of the literature, but also a coherent designing of several experiments. In addition, the author is almost always trying to draw conclusion by considering both bibliographical work and outcomes of the various experiments.

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