

# Investigating the Relationship between Hesitation Phenomena and L2 Accentedness

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Hesitation phenomena (HP) includes a wide variety of linguistic phenomena which share a common trait: They delay the otherwise more immediate transfer of the speaker's intended message (Maclay and Osgood 1959) and include silent pauses, filled pauses (FP: e.g., *uh*, *um*), repairs, repeats, and prolongations. In accentedness studies, silent pauses have been observed to influence perceptions of accentedness (cf., Kang 2010, Trofimovich and Baker 2006). However, the relationship between other HP and accentedness has not been studied much (though Kang observed that FP rate was not related).

The present study reports on an in-progress large-scale project to construct the Crosslinguistic Corpus of Hesitation Phenomena (CCHP)—a crosslinguistic corpus of first and second language (L1, L2) speech for the purpose of investigating questions about HP. The corpus is intended to comprise the recorded speech of 100 native speakers of Japanese speaking in their L1 and in English as their L2 using parallel speaking tasks in each language. The speech samples will be transcribed and annotated for various HP elements and will be freely available. The corpus will also include information about each speaker's L2 competence level and therefore should be useful to study the relationship between the development of L2 accent and HP.

At present, the CCHP is in a pilot stage, creating a miniature version of the corpus based on the speech of 10 participants in order to test the corpus design. While this number is too small to provide robust statistics and conclusive evidence, some interesting trends have appeared. The typical FP in Japanese uses a mid-front vowel, /ɛ:/, while the typical English FP uses a mid-central vowel, near /ʌ/ (Vasilescu, Nemoto, and Adda-Decker 2007). In the CCHP, formant measurements show that speakers use a FP that is approximately midway between their L1 FP and the typical English FP. This trend varies with L2 competence level: high-level speakers produce an English FP that is closer to the target than low-level speakers.

The CCHP also shows that FP rate does not vary between L1 and L2 (consistent with Kang 2010). But repairs show a different pattern: The ratio of word tokens in the "repaired" version to word tokens in the actual speech version does vary. L2 speech shows a smaller ratio; in short, more repairs.

The talk will conclude with how the CCHP may help to address some questions about the relationship between HP and the development of L2 accent.

## References

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