

“A Relaxing Cup of Lingua Franca Core”: Local Attitudes Towards Locally-Accented English

JUAN ANTONIO CUTILLAS ESPINOSA

Universidad de Murcia

jacuti@um.es

Towards the end of the twentieth century, a view emerged suggesting that English had become a lingua franca for communication and, consequently, was no longer the property of its native speakers. Today, the emphasis is on the heterogeneity of the English-speaking world, thus calling into question the legitimacy of the *inner circle* Englishes. In this vein, it is suggested that non-native accents of English should be granted a legitimate status, provided that mutual intelligibility is preserved. In this paper we compare Lingua Franca Core (LFC) features of pronunciation with the speech to the 2015 International Olympic Committee given by the then Mayor of Madrid, Ana Botella. We use auditory analysis and speech analysis software when necessary in order to: (a) systematically describe her use of non-native features which could be labelled as *Spanish English*; (b) assess these in terms of their potential to impair intelligibility as described in Jennifer Jenkins’s LFC. The data obtained enable us to provide an analysis that sheds light on how the English as a Lingua Franca debate may be influenced by local attitudes towards correctness in speech. This, in turn, has implications for a sociolinguistically-informed approach to the teaching of pronunciation.

Keywords: English as Lingua Franca (ELF); Lingua Franca Core (LFC); non-native accents of English; linguistic attitudes; political speech

. . .

“Una relajante taza de *Lingua Franca Core*”: actitudes locales hacia el inglés con acento local

A finales del siglo XX surgieron voces que sugerían que el inglés se había convertido en una lengua franca para la comunicación y que, en consecuencia, había dejado de ser propiedad exclusiva de sus hablantes nativos. En la actualidad, se enfatiza la heterogeneidad del mundo de habla inglesa, poniendo en cuestión la legitimidad de las variedades del inglés del llamado círculo próximo (*inner circle*). En esta línea, se sugiere que los acentos no nativos

del inglés deberían tener su propio estatus, con la única condición de que se preserve la inteligibilidad mutua. En este trabajo compararemos los rasgos identificados como esenciales para la comprensión—el *Lingua Franca Core*—con el discurso que la alcaldesa de Madrid, Ana Botella, presentó ante el Comité Olímpico Internacional en 2015. Haremos uso de un análisis auditivo y acústico para: (a) describir de manera sistemática su uso de rasgos no nativos, que podrían considerarse como una variedad española del inglés; (b) evaluar estos rasgos en tanto que factores que pueden dificultar la comprensión, basándonos en el *Lingua Franca Core* de Jennifer Jenkins. Nuestros datos nos permiten arrojar luz sobre las implicaciones que las actitudes locales sobre la corrección en el habla pueden tener para el debate sobre el inglés como lengua franca. A su vez, estas actitudes serán esenciales a la hora de formular una aproximación a la enseñanza de la pronunciación que tenga en cuenta factores sociolingüísticos.

Palabras clave: Inglés como Lengua Franca (ILF); *Lingua Franca Core* (LFC); acentos no nativos del inglés; actitudes lingüísticas; discurso político

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning has customarily been conceived of as a process whereby a learner acquires (or at least approaches) the competence of native speakers of the target language. Inherent to this approach is the assumption that the language spoken by native speakers is unarguably the only appropriate model to be presented to learners. However, as English became a *de facto* lingua franca for international communication, there was an increasing trend to question the ownership of the English language. By the end of the twentieth century, linguists were wondering not only whether English as spoken by native speakers was the only possible teaching model but also whether it could indeed be regarded as the most suitable model in an international context. This led to the proposal that models of English for international communication should be based on principles such as simplicity and mutual intelligibility, rather than identity with native speaker practice. According to this view, not only should learners be allowed to keep L1 features that do not impair intelligibility but also that they be considered a valuable expression of identity. In our study, we look at the reception of foreign accented speech in the public arena, specifically focusing on the *ingroup* reactions—in the sense of Allan Bell (1984). In other words, we study how L1-accented speech is assessed by speakers of the same L1.

2. ENGLISH, WHOSE ENGLISH?

Braj Kachru (1985) suggested an influential classification of English using the image of three concentric circles: the *inner circle*, the *outer* or *extended circle* and the *expanding circle*. *Inner circle* countries comprise “the regions where [English] is the primary language” (Kachru 1985, 12) such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. *Outer circle* countries are regions which “have gone through extended periods of colonization, essentially by the users of the inner circle varieties” (Kachru 1985, 12) such as India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania and Kenya. Finally, *expanding-circle* Englishes are those that justify the status of English as an international language being “used as an additional language—often as an alternative language—in multilingual and multicultural contexts” (Kachru 1985, 14). Kachru’s paper was seminal, starting a trend towards approaches where English was no longer seen as a single model belonging to native-speaker communities. Rather, the term *Englishes*—both native and non-native—was preferred (Clark 2013; Görlach 1991, 1995, 1998, 2002; Hopkins 2013; Kachru, Kachru and Nelson 2006; Kirkpatrick 2010; McArthur 1998; Melchers and Shaw 2003; Seargeant 2012). Under this new approach, *expanding-circle* speakers are granted a role in the use and definition of English, so they are no longer considered mere learners struggling to reach a native speaker target. Their Englishes, which are primarily used for international communication, are considered a variety, not a deviation. On the basis of this, Jennifer Jenkins (2000) and Barbara Seidlhofer (2001) pioneeringly proposed the term *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF henceforth).

ELF is part of the GLOBAL ENGLISHES paradigm, according to which most speakers of English are non-native speakers (henceforth NNSEs), and all English varieties, native or non-native, are accepted in their own right rather than evaluated against an NSE [Native Speaker of English] benchmark. [...] [A]n ELF perspective sees non-native Englishes as different rather than deficient. Or, to put it another way, differences from ENL [English as a Native Language] are not assumed to be signs of incompetence, as they are when viewed from an EFL perspective, but are explored as emerging or potential features of ELF. (Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey 2011, 283-284)

The last decade has witnessed the emergence of ELF approaches through dozens of publications, conferences and a dedicated journal, Mouton's *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* (2011-present). Whereas Jenkins's initial concern was with the phonology of ELF (2000; 2002), Seidlhofer endeavoured to create a corpus of lingua franca English which would enable researchers to carry out lexical and grammatical research: the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE)—see Seidlhofer (2010) for a description. Other researchers focused their attention on the pragmatics of ELF communication (Firth 1996; House 2002; Meierkord 2002; see Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey 2011, 293-295 for a comprehensive review).

3. UNDERSTANDING THE LINGUA FRANCA CORE

As mentioned earlier, Jenkins (2000) suggests a set of pronunciation features which are deemed to be necessary for *intelligibility* in international communication. According to this view, the target for learners of English as an international language is not attaining a native-like pronunciation; rather, they should aim at achieving a repertoire unlikely to cause misunderstandings or breakdowns in communication. Jenkins's proposal is based on the study of interactions between non-native speakers. Features that do not seem to be the cause of misunderstandings are excluded from the LFC, whereas those that impair intelligibility are included. These core pronunciation features are summarized below, after Jenkins (2000, 159):

- Consonants. Most consonantal contrasts are essential for successful communication and should therefore be preserved. An exception to this is /ð/ and /θ/, which do not seem to cause intelligibility problems and may be replaced by /v/ and /f/, respectively, or even /d/ and /t/. The distinction between the dark, velarized [ɰ] and [ɪ] is also regarded as negligible. The LFC suggests a rhotic pronunciation of English, as well as avoiding “t-tapping”—characteristic of, for example, some varieties of American English where an intervocalic /t/ is realized as a tap /t/. Finally, the aspiration typical of English voiceless stops in the appropriate phonological contexts (consistent with native speaker practice) is considered indispensable for intelligibility.

- Vowels. L1 qualities may be preserved, provided that they remain consistent. The only exception is the central vowel /ɜ:/, which seems to require an L2 quality to avoid miscommunication. The emphasis of the LFC approach is on quantity, especially on keeping length distinctions and adapting them to their phonetic environment (pre-fortis clipping, when necessary).
- Clusters. Initial clusters should not be modified, although epenthesis is less likely to cause misunderstandings than deletion. Medial and final clusters may be simplified following L1 conventions.
- Lexical stress. Although unlikely to cause problems *per se*, it certainly has implications for aspiration, vowel length and nuclear stress production. Consequently, some basic rules should be taught in the classroom.
- Intonation. Intonational patterns and their associated attitudinal meanings are neither teachable nor likely to cause communication problems. Only nuclear stress placement and division into tone groups should be taught.

The publication of Jenkins (2000) had considerable impact on phoneticians, language teachers and sociolinguists. Initial expressions of rejection were occasionally harsh—see, for instance, the papers included in Dziubalska-Kolaczyk and Przedlacka (2005)—which led Jenkins to devote a substantial part of her book *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity* (2007) to responding to what she regarded as misconceptions based on standard language ideology. Jenkins explains that the LFC is not a model for teaching:

One frequent misinterpretation of the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) is that it is a model for imitation. This is not at all the case. It is, rather, a core of pronunciation features which occur in successful NNS-NNS communication and whose absence leads to miscommunication [...] The model, then, is not the LFC but the local teacher whose accent incorporates both the core features and the local version of the non-core items. (2007, 25)

Research carried out since 2000 has reinforced Jenkins's findings—for an overview, see Walker (2010, 43-44). With minor adjustments, Jenkins's LFC is a valuable instrument to measure speaker intelligibility from an international perspective. It is precisely this measuring potential that motivates the present study, because it enables us to judge accented speech with regards to intelligibility, not its proximity or deviation from some native standard, RP or American English, for example. There has, though, been research suggesting that certain aspects regarded as non-core by Jenkins do have the potential to impair intelligibility—see Deterding (2012; 2013) and O'Neal (2015). These studies emphasize the role of negotiating meaning rather than isolated pronunciation features in constructing intelligibility.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The Data

On September 7, 2013, Madrid presented its bid for the 2020 summer Olympic Games at the 125th International Olympic Committee Session held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was Madrid's third consecutive attempt, and became the third consecutive rejection, leaving a trail of disappointment and bitterness across Spain. However, the Buenos Aires gathering attracted public attention in Spain not only because of its disheartening outcome but also on account of the speech given by Ana Botella, mayor of Madrid. Her English was considered appalling by the Spanish press and the general public alike, thus adding some extra embarrassment to the rejection of the Spanish bid. Her speech—two minutes and forty six seconds long—was extracted from the video widely available to the public. It consists of two hundred and eighty three words, which constitute one of the most stigmatized examples of public speaking in Spanish history. This negative reaction was reflected in the press, both immediately after the speech and some time later. Just to mention a few headlines and comments published: “Deplorable speech,” which made her deserve the award to the worst campaign to promote tourism in Madrid (*El País*, 27th Dec. 2013); “one of the year’s mayors’ gaffes” in *Time* magazine (as reported in *El Mundo*, 12th Dec. 2013); “her speech and her English attracted the interest of social networks” (*El Mundo*, 9th September 2014, quoting the major scandals Botella had been involved in); “Spanglish made in Botella” (*El Periódico*, 9th September 2014). These are just a few examples of the widespread feeling of embarrassment among the general public in Spain.

The speech itself had been written by Terrence Burns, a native English speaker and one of the key advisors to the Spanish Olympic bid. He supervised the rehearsals of the speech and stated that the speech was appropriate and her English “excellent, charming and easy to understand” (Lamarca and de Pablo 2013, n.p.).

4.2. Research goals

Our research aims to achieve an objective characterization of the speech by Ana Botella. To this end we shall measure her performance against the intelligibility standards established by Jenkins (2000) and subsequent research in the field. We shall try to check whether her Spanish-accented English contained features that would impair comprehension by an international audience. If this is the case, the explanation for the widespread public embarrassment will be straightforward. If not, we will try to provide some alternative explanation for the uproar against this speech.

4.3. Procedure and variables

The speech was first transcribed using a model British English RP transcription which took into account variability within RP and which was used as the starting point to

measure deviation from native speaker practice. When such a deviation was detected, we then considered whether this was a feature that could be attributed to the other main native variety of English used as a model for teaching, Standard American English. When it wasn't, the deviations were identified as instances of non-native speaker pronunciations, and then classified as belonging to the LFC or not. Subsequently, the data were analysed using the free acoustic analysis software PRAAT (Boersma and Weenink 2016) paying specific attention to the following areas:

- Vowel quality (F1 and F2 measurements) and quantity for the following vowel contrasts /i:/-/ɪ/-/i/, /ʌ/-/æ/-/ɑ:/ and /ɒ/-/ɔ:/. We also looked at the quality of the long vowel /ɜ:/. F1 values are inversely correlated with vowel height, whereas F2 values are correlated with vowel frontness.
- Voice Onset Time (VOT) measurements for voiceless stops, as compared to their voiced stop counterparts in comparable phonetic environments. A relatively long VOT is indicative of aspiration.
- Consonant pronunciations that differ considerably from those of native speaker English, such as /b/-/v/ or /s/-/z/.
- Lexical stress, nuclear stress and the formation of tone groups to indicate phrasing—the boundaries between phrases from an intonational perspective.

The data obtained were used to create a table (Table 1) expressing percentages of native-speaker use, LFC features—those complying with LFC assumptions—and non-LFC features—those violating LFC assumptions and thus likely to impair intelligibility. It also served as the basis for a phonetic transcription of Ana Botella's speech.

4.4. Research questions

The following research questions will provide us with a principled evaluation of the speech by Ana Botella in terms of intelligibility for international communication.

1. Do Ana Botella's vowels correspond to either NS pronunciations or acceptable LFC versions of the same?
2. Is sufficient aspiration present in the /p, t, k/ set in the appropriate phonetic contexts to prevent confusion with /b, d, g/?
3. To what extent do the remaining consonants comply with either NS norms or the LFC?
4. Is lexical stress correctly placed?
5. Is nuclear stress placement and the formation of tone groups performed appropriately enough to prevent misunderstanding?

5. RESULTS

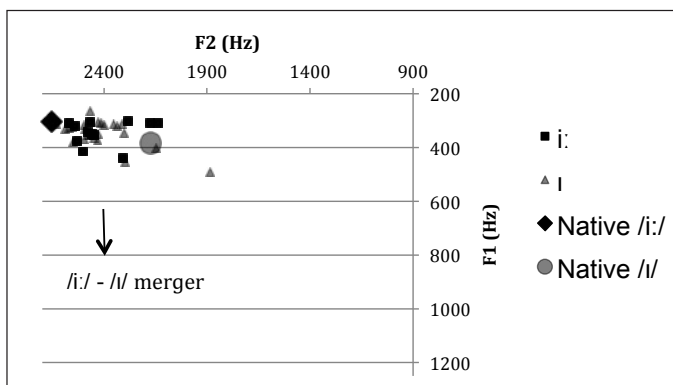
5.1. Vowels: Quality

There is a generalized merger of quality values for all vowel contrasts that do not have an equivalent in Spanish. To put it differently, Ana Botella is using L1 qualities throughout (see Table 1). With minor differences, F1 and F2 formants for /i:/-/ɪ/-/i/ suggest that Ana Botella keeps the same quality for all the different English sounds that roughly correspond to Spanish /i/. The same is true if we limit our comparison to stressed occurrences of contrastive /i:/ and /ɪ/ (see Figure 1). From an LFC perspective, this merger in quality should not impair intelligibility. F1 and F2 values across words are coherent and these could be seen as acceptable L1 qualities.

Table 1. Mean of observed F1 and F2 (Hz) in Ana Botella's vowels, contrasted to average female British RP values taken from Gimson ([1962] 2001, 99)

Vowels	ANA BOTELLA		BRITISH RP VALUES	
	F1	F2	F1	F2
/i:/	344	2409	303	2654
/i/	351	2411	-	-
/ɪ/	355	2417	384	2174
/æ/	964	1559	1018	1799
/ʌ/	972	1482	914	1459
/ɑ:/	1024	1442	910	1316
/ɒ/	725	1165	751	1215
/ɔ:/	719	1083	389	888
/ɜ:/	756	1130	606	1695

Figure 1. Formant analysis of stressed /i:/ and /ɪ/, as compared to the typical values of a female British RP speaker as per Table 1



As for the /æ/-/ʌ/-/ɑ:/ contrast, the qualities of these three vowels also overlap (see Figure 2). It is worth mentioning, though, that /æ/ values cluster around slightly more fronted realizations as compared to /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/. This may indicate that Ana Botella could have been trained (with little success) to keep a distinct quality for /æ/, whereas /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/ are left to overlap.

Figure 2. Formant plotting of stressed /æ/, /ɑ:/ and /ʌ/, as compared to the typical values of a female British RP speaker as per Table 1

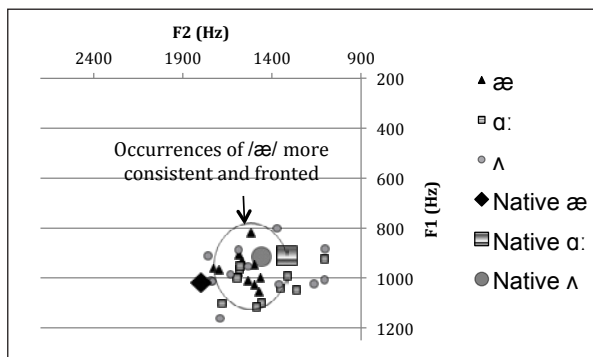
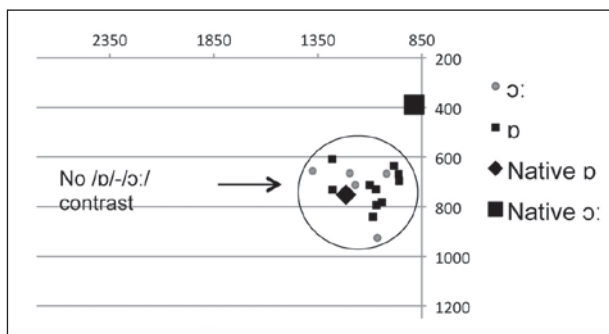


Figure 3 shows a merger of /ɒ ~ ɔ:/ vowel qualities, which roughly fall on the area occupied by Spanish /o/. This merger is also typical of many native speakers of American English, rarely impeding intelligibility.

Figure 3. Formant plotting of stressed /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/, as compared to the typical values of a female British RP speaker as per Table 1



There were only two instances of /ɜ:/ in the data. These two words were *world* and *working* and seem to have been pronounced in the area that would roughly correspond to that of a Spanish /o/. This is quite a common pronunciation among Spanish learners of English, arguably induced by spelling.

Apart from these contrasts, a general feature of Ana Botella's speech is the lack of the reduced, unstressed vowel /ə/. Its quality is systematically replaced by that of the corresponding Spanish vowels, with spelling determining which Spanish vowel is used. It is unclear, though, if /ə/ replacement may cause intelligibility problems. Jenkins (2000, 148) states that the categorical use of strong forms does not cause comprehension problems, but she explicitly mentions appropriate /ə/ reduction in non-function words as a factor in maintaining intelligibility.

Generally speaking, Ana Botella seems to be merging contrasts that do not exist in Spanish, using only one quality for different English vowels (see Figures 1 to 3). However, only her pronunciation of /ɜ:/ and the lack of an appropriate /ə/ reduction would be considered contradictory to LFC principles. Figures 4 and 5 show the typical female British RP values as compared to Ana Botella's values respectively.

Figure 4. Average of formants of the relevant vowels produced by a model female native speaker of British RP, taken from Gimson ([1962] 2001, 99)

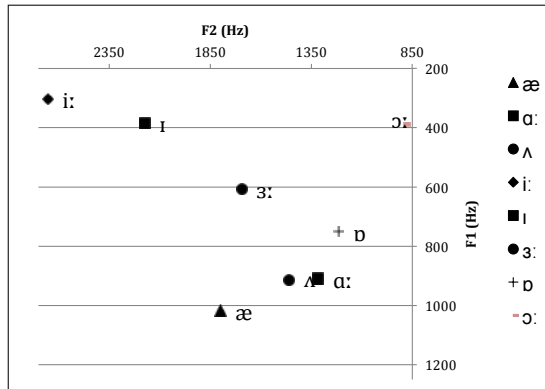
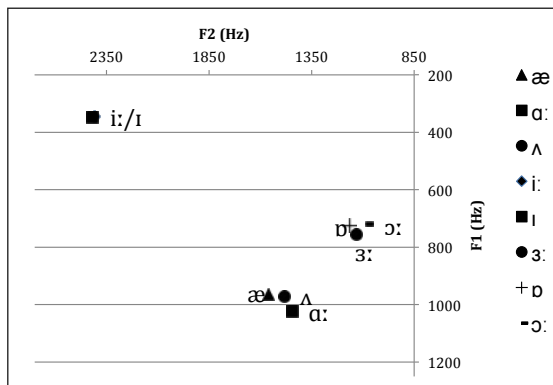


Figure 5. Average of formants in Ana Botella's vowels



5.2. Vowels: Quantity

Moving on to vowel quantity, the data seem to suggest that some length distinctions may hold (see Table 2). Generally speaking, /i:/ is consistently longer than both [i]—the tense version of /i/ in word-final and morpheme final non-stressed weak position—and /ɪ/, /æ:/ is longer than both /æ/ and /ʌ/ and finally, /ɔ:/ is longer than /ɒ/.

Table 2. Mean of observed vowel duration (ms.) in Ana Botella's speech

VOWEL	DURATION
/i:/	151
[i]	89
/ɪ/	101
/æ/	129
/ʌ/	151
/ɑ:/	174
/ɒ/	105
/ɔ:/	139
/ɜ:/	173

These raw data have to be interpreted carefully to control two essential variables: stress and phonological context. Fair comparisons about length can only be established if we contrast equally stressed syllables. Attention should also be paid to the shortening or “clipping” effect of voiceless consonants following English vowels. As far as the /i:/-/ɪ/-[i] contrast is concerned, some of the items were excluded from analysis on account of the inherent stress asymmetry between /i:/ on the one hand and /ɪ/-[i] on the other. Whereas /i:/ is always found in the stressed position in our data, [i] only appears in an unstressed position, and /ɪ/ is found both in stressed and unstressed syllables. For this reason, we decided to consider the /i:/-/ɪ/ contrast in the stressed position only, obtaining the following length measurements (Table 3).

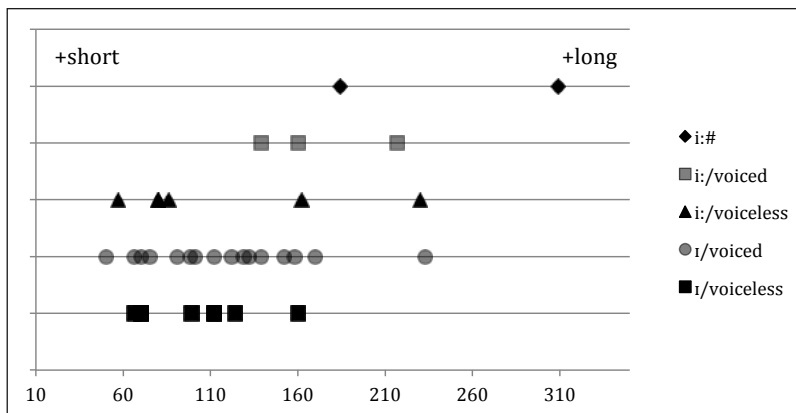
Table 3. Mean of observed F₁, F₂ and duration values for the /i:/-/ɪ/ contrast in stressed position

VOWELS	F ₁	F ₂	DURATION
/i:/	344	2409	151
/ɪ/	347	2416	116

A non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed, which showed that the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0,101$). This could be due to the fact

that Ana Botella may not have been consistent in her use of length distinctions. The data under analysis are also limited. However, that the difference is not statistically significant does not necessarily imply that the length contrast is not perceptible for at least some of the vowels. We have tried to show the length of the different occurrences of /i:/ and /ɪ/ in stressed position interacting with phonological context in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Duration (ms.) of instances of /i:/ in open syllables, before voiced consonants and before voiceless consonants. Duration (ms.) of instances of /ɪ/ before voiced consonants and before voiceless consonants



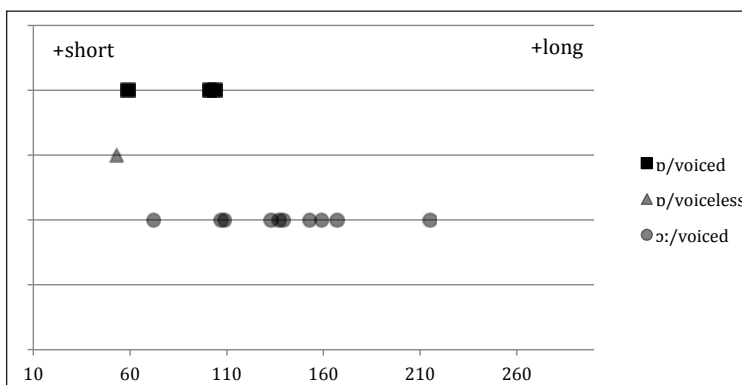
As Figure 6 shows, the two instances of /i:/ in the open syllable position are longer than almost all the occurrences of /ɪ/, with one single exception. Comparing /i:/ and /ɪ/ followed by voiced consonants, the three instances of /i:/ seem to be longer than most instances of /ɪ/, although there is an area of overlap with the five longest occurrences of /ɪ/. The duration of the clipped /i:/ vowel (i.e., checked by a voiceless consonant) is comparable to that of /ɪ/ followed by a voiced consonant, which is consistent with native speaker practice. However, no clipping effect is visible distinguishing /ɪ/ followed by voiced or voiceless consonants. A relevant question would be how much longer a vowel should be to trigger the categorical perception as /i:/ or /ɪ/ among non-native speakers. This would be open to further research in the field of ELF speech perception.

As for the /æ/-/ʌ/-/ɑ:/ contrast, /ʌ/ appears to be longer than /æ/, which is contrary to native speaker pronunciation, making both sounds practically indiscernible in Ana Botella's speech. Comparing both sounds to the long /ɑ:/ sound, the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests shows a significant difference ($p=0.026$). Thus we have a situation of /æ/-/ʌ/ merger, with both sounds contrasting to the long /ɑ:/.

The /ɒ/-/ɔ:/ contrast shows a non-significant effect in the Wilcoxon signed-rank test ($p=0.50$). As we mentioned in the case of the /i:/-/ɪ/ contrast, this does not necessarily mean that at least some contrasts were not accomplished, as shown in Figure 7. In our

data, there were only occurrences of /ɔ:/ before voiced consonants, not in open syllables or before voiceless consonants. Of these, the majority (six out of nine) are longer than all the occurrences of /ɒ/. This suggests that there has been some attempt to mark this vowel as long, and once again, it would be open to discussion as to how much increase in duration suffices to mark a contrast.

Figure 7. Duration (ms.) of instances of /ɔ:/ before voiced consonants and of /ɒ/ before voiced and voiceless consonants



We can now provide an answer to our first research question. As far as quality is concerned, Ana Botella's vowels do not correspond to NS pronunciations but, with the exception of /ɜ:/ and the reduction of the weak vowel /ə/ in non-function words, her pronunciation appears to be acceptable according to the LFC. Regarding quantity, suitable length distinctions exist, even if they are occasionally not consistent. This is to be expected from a person who is in the process of receiving phonetic training.

5.3. Aspiration of /p, t, k/

The acoustic correlate of aspiration is Voice Onset Time (VOT), which can be defined as the time elapsed between the release of a stop and the beginning of vocal fold vibration—i.e., vowel pronunciation. A long VOT will contribute to perceiving a particular stop as aspirated; a shorter one will similarly indicate lack of aspiration. Arthur S. Abramson and Leigh Lisker (1973) report on perceptual tests to establish the minimal voice onset time (VOT) that would guarantee successful categorization of English /p, t, k/. This research was based on native speaker judgement; once a particular VOT duration threshold is reached, listeners shift from categorizing a sound as /b, d, g/ to categorizing it as /p, t, k/. Abramson and Lisker (1973, 4) found that a slightly different threshold existed for each one of the voiceless plosives: 25 milliseconds for /p/, 35 milliseconds for /t/ and 42 milliseconds for /k/. This enables us to classify Ana

Botella's production of /p, t, k/ as correctly aspirated or unlikely to cause confusion with its /b, d, g/ equivalents (Table 4). We have only included those words where the appropriate phonetic context for full aspiration is found: initial position of a stressed syllable, not preceded by tautosyllabic /s/.

Table 4. VOT of /p, t, k/ onsets in contexts favoring aspiration, compared to crossover values as established in Abramson and Lisker (1973, 4)

WORD	VOT (ms)	CROSSOVER (ms)	ASPIRATED
comfortable	73	42	YES
culture	81	42	YES
culture	26	42	No
cup	42	42	YES
importantly	67	25	YES
parks	72	25	YES
part	34	25	YES
people	11	25	No
Petersburgh	27	25	YES
prepared	57	25	YES
quaint	95	42	YES
quite	71	42	YES
taste	13	35	No
tell	24	35	No

Addressing now research question two, the data suggest that Ana Botella performed 71.4% of the instances with a sufficiently long VOT for /p, t, k/ as opposed to 28.6% of words with little or no aspiration. The words which did not receive appropriate aspiration include *tell*, *taste*, *people* and *culture*. We should note, though, that her pronunciation of /p, t, k/ is judged using data from discrimination tasks performed by native speakers. More research would be needed in order to ascertain that these VOT crossover values guarantee intelligibility among non-native speakers.

5.4. Other consonants

As for the rest of the consonants in Ana Botella's speech, we classified her performance under the following headings: (a) typical of NSE, that is included within RP or General American; (b) Lingua Franca Core (LFC) pronunciations, i.e., features which

according to Jenkins's LFC do not cause intelligibility problems; and finally, (c) Non-Lingua Franca Core (NLFC) pronunciations. NLFC forms are those likely to impair intelligibility because they involve the realization of a certain sound not conforming to native speaker practice or LFC prioritization (see Table 5).

Table 5. Instances (#) of consonant production classified as typical of Native Speaker Englishes (NSE), Lingua Franca Core (LFC) or Non-LFC pronunciations (NLFC). Percentages (%) of NSE and LFC pronunciations compared to NLFC pronunciations

Manner of articulation	Cons.	NSE#	LFC#	NLFC#	NSE/LFC% Total	NLFC% Total	NSE/LFC% Total	NLFC% Total
Fricatives	f	17	0	0	100%	-	90.6%	9.4%
	v	13	3	4	80%	20%		
	θ	2	0	0	100%	-		
	ð	1	17	0	100%	-		
	s	47	0	0	100%	-		
	z	10	5	8	65.2%	34.8%		
	ʃ	5	6	1	91.7%	8.3%		
Affricates	tʃ	10	0	0	100%	-	100%	-
	dʒ	3	0	0	100%	-		
Liquids	l	23	24	0	100%	-	100%	-
Nasals	m	37	0	1	97.4%	2.6%	97%	3%
	n	51	0	2	96.2%	3.8%		
	ŋ	4	4	0	100%	-		
Approximants	r	0	66	0	100%	-	98.1%	1.9%
	j	2	9	2	84.6%	15.4%		
	w	16	0	0	100%	-		
	h	2	7	0	100%	-		
Total #		243	141	18	NSE/LFC		NLFC	
Total %		60.4	35.1	4.5	95.5%		4.5%	

Table 5 shows a near-categorical use of either native speaker forms of the relevant consonants or LFC versions. Consonant pronunciation which may result in intelligibility problems is concentrated in the following areas:

- Replacement of syllable initial /v/ with Spanish /b/. Syllable final devoicing is not considered a problem for intelligibility, as /v/ is also partially devoiced in NSE.
- /s/ as a substitute for /z/ in syllable initial position, as well as in word-final position in the auxiliary *is*. Syllable final devoicing is not necessarily critical for intelligibility.
- One instance of /ʃ/ being replaced by /s/.
- Place of articulation assimilation in some nasals, which is directly transferred from Spanish. Word-final /ŋ/ is sometimes pronounced /n/, which is also the case in many NSE varieties particularly in *-ing* verbal endings.

Consonant clusters are almost exclusively resolved in a way that is consistent with native speaker practice, as, for instance, in the case of CCC sequences which are reduced to C(C)C. However, there are instances of NLFC consonant deletion or consonant permutation: *I've had* [aɪ 'hʌb], *I'd like* [aɪ 'laɪk] and *inviting* [aɪnɪm 'baɪtɪn]—which may be confused with the word *uninviting*—and *mixture* ['mɪtʃər]. There are also instances of epenthesis in word initial sC- sequences *speak* [es'pi:k] (twice), *Spanish* [es'pænɪʃ] (twice), *sport* [es'pɔ:rt]. However, as both Jenkins (2000) and Walker (2010) suggest, epenthesis is much less likely to cause intelligibility problems than deletion. Thus, the answer to research question 3 is that Ana Botella pronounces consonants almost always in ways that are either consistent with native speaker practice or with acceptable LFC versions.

5.5. Lexical stress

Lexical stress is correctly placed in all polysyllabic words, with the exception of the words *perhaps*—pronounced ['perhʌps]—and *friendship*—pronounced [fren'dʃɪ:p]. Quantitatively speaking, of the sixty-five polysyllabic words found in the text—Spanish proper names have been excluded, including the repetition of the word *Madrid*), sixty-three were accurately stressed, which represents 96.9% of the total. We can thus answer research question four in the affirmative and state that, generally speaking, lexical stress is correctly placed in Ana Botella's speech.

5.6. Nuclear stress and tone group formation

Nuclear stress and group formation are strongly influenced by a highly emphatic performance. Thus, it proves difficult to tease apart the effect of over-acted performance and that of inadequate word-group formation. In general, nuclear stress is correctly placed, with the exception of a handful of examples of incorrectly formed word groups:

- (1) *I must said* [sic] [falling intonation, end of phrase] *I like to continue our friendship.*
- (2) *you can see, feel and taste* [end of phrase] *the wonder of Spanish...*

- (3) *there is nothing quite like a* [falling intonation, pause] *relaxing cup of...*
- (4) *I hope* [sharply rising intonation, pause] *you remember* [suspensive].
- (5) *In addition* [sharply falling intonation, end of phrase] *to the best prepared plan.*
- (6) *We want to share* | *it* | *with all* | *of you.*

Example 1 is particularly likely to cause intelligibility problems because there is a combination of slips of the tongue—*must said* instead of *must say*, *I like* instead of *I'd like*—and the division into two different tone groups of a verb and its complement clause. Falling intonation reinforces the idea that both phrases are syntactically independent. Sentence 2 might also cause some confusion because a sequence of coordinated verbs—*you can see, feel and taste*—is inadequately separated from its direct object. The most notorious sentence in Ana Botella's speech—on account of her reference to a *relaxing cup of café con leche*—is also an example of erroneous tone group formation (3). The separation of the determiner *a* and the noun phrase *relaxing cup* is, however, less likely to cause intelligibility problems because it does not affect the processing of the overall predicate argument structure. In example 4, the combination of erroneous word-group formation and intonation patterns is likely to lead to comprehension difficulties. Examples 5 and 6 are probably the result of an attempt to produce emphatic speech. Example 5 might impair intelligibility, whereas example 6 is just a word-by-word pronunciation, unnatural but unlikely to cause intelligibility problems. We can now answer research question five by stating that nuclear stress and tone group formation are generally performed in a way that is unlikely to pose a serious threat to intelligibility.

6. DISCUSSION

There is little doubt that, from the point of view of NSE, Ana Botella's speech is far from accurate. All vowel contrasts which do not have a parallel in Spanish are merged; many consonants are also altered to match their Spanish counterparts; no weak forms are used in the appropriate contexts, thus yielding an unnatural rhythm; intonation and word group formation are over-emphatic and occasionally confusing.

A drastically different judgement emerges, though, by considering that her speech should not necessarily be assessed on the grounds of NSE. By approaching Ana Botella's speech from the point of view of intelligibility—as operationalized in the form of LFC features—we suggest that her speech was probably understood by most members of her international audience with little difficulty.

Vowels are the weakest part of her performance. The systematic absence of /ə/ and its replacement by Spanish vowel counterparts—induced by spelling—might cause intelligibility problems. However, we have also observed that /ə/ is most often substituted by /e/; a few instances of NSE /ə/ pronunciation occur when the alternative suggested by the spelling would be, for instance, Spanish /a/. We may speculate that the replacement of /ə/ by phonetically close equivalents, like Spanish /e/, may be less

likely to lead to misunderstanding. As far as quantity is concerned, some pronunciation training seems to have been carried out to try to master long/short contrasts in her speech, albeit with only partial success. We cannot ascertain, though, to what extent the existing length distinctions may suffice to help the listener to correctly categorize these vowel sounds. The long, stressed central vowel /ɜ:/ also fails to show its characteristic central quality, being pronounced as a lengthened version of the Spanish vowel /o/—here spelling also seems to play an essential role in causing this confusion.

The shortcomings of vowel pronunciation are partially compensated for by an essentially native or LFC pronunciation of consonantal contrasts. About 95% of consonants were accurately pronounced; consonant deletion was scarce and mostly respected NSE constraints. Epenthesis to break sC-sequences is contrary to NSE norms, but this is not regarded as a source of intelligibility problems. In addition, there is a majority of voiceless plosives that receive aspiration in the appropriate phonetic contexts.

Lexical stress placement is also overwhelmingly consistent with NSE practice. As far as nuclear stress placement and tone group formation are concerned, the majority of stresses are correctly placed, although excessive emphasis seems to impair the naturalness of her speech. Apart from some examples where tone group formation interrupts the continuity of syntactic structure, thus rendering it difficult to understand, there is little doubt that suprasegmental factors in her speech were unlikely to impair intelligibility.

Generally speaking, there is little room for doubt that Ana Botella's speech was mostly intelligible for her international audience. As Jenkins (2000) states, intelligibility depends on a variety of factors, with deviations from LFC piling up to reach a critical value that not even accommodation efforts can overcome. In this case, the relative stability of consonantal information, as well as most suprasegmental information, could have made up for the deficiencies in vowel cues. The (otherwise irritating) emphatic, slow speech may have also worked in favor of intelligibility.

Assuming that Ana Botella's speech was communicatively effective, how, then, can we account for the uproar against her performance? Leaving aside questions of political preference, there is substantial evidence suggesting that speakers evaluate public speaking by public figures differently from private exchanges—see, for instance, the contributions in Hernández Campoy and Cutillas Espinosa (2012). Juan Manuel Hernández Campoy and Juan Antonio Cutillas Espinosa (2010a; 2010b) studied the reaction to the local accent of the former President of the Region of Murcia (Spain), as used in public media. They discovered that, rather than attracting ingroup solidarity, she was generally disparaged. The President's use of Spanish was articulate, educated and grammatically standard throughout; crucially, though, non-standardness in pronunciation was seen as inappropriate and unacceptable. In Spain, value judgements about accents are common and rarely disputed. There is a widely accepted idea that there are “right” and “wrong” pronunciations of Spanish, which are closely connected to spelling and the prescriptive role of the Royal Academy of the Spanish

Language. Even Jenkins (2007) commented on Spanish informants being tougher on their appreciation of Spanish-accented English than speakers from other countries.

Reactions to Ana Botella's speech were, therefore, easy to predict. The public embarrassment was not a direct effect of lack of intelligibility, but rather of her perceived use of non-standard L2 forms. Jenkins correctly predicts the crucial role of attitudes in the acceptance of non-native Englishes:

It seems that whether or not ELF accents will be taken up in years to come by NNS teachers (and thence passed on to their learners) will depend in large parts on how they believe ELF is perceived in the wider English-speaking context, and, within that context, the extent to which they believe such accents will enhance their success rather than discriminate against them. (2007, 231)

Jenkins does not consider the impact that non-native accents may have within a given speaker's community. Obviously, this is not relevant for international communication in private; however, it becomes crucial for international communication in public. Using Allan Bell's (1984) terminology, Ana Botella's speech was not only evaluated by the international audience at the event itself but also by a greater majority of *overhearers*. Crucially, Spanish overhearers are, significantly, a numerous and attentive group and the linguistic attitudes of this group of overhearers were not adequately assessed by Ana Botella's advisors. The general public in Spain is not willing to accept a non-native English standard. In much the same way that heavily non-standardly accented Spanish speech in public is received with contempt, Spanish-accented English too is regarded as embarrassing. It seems that L1 conventions on what is acceptable public speech have been transferred to the lingua franca context. A linguistic culture based on normativity, language purity and the role of prescriptive authorities is less likely to acknowledge the acceptability of non-native Englishes.

7. CONCLUSION

Our data suggest that Ana Botella's speech to the International Olympic Committee did not drastically deviate from the basic requirements of intelligibility for international communication, as operationalized in Jenkins (2000; 2002) and confirmed in Walker (2010). Vowel production was probably the weakest aspect from an LFC perspective, with only partial length distinctions and the substitution of /3:/ quality with Spanish /o/. Other than that, all the other aspects of her speech were consistent either with native speaker practice or with an acceptable LFC version. In spite of this, Ana Botella's speech received severe criticism in Spain, to the extent of being considered the epitome of bad English in the press and on social networks alike.

As mentioned before, the Mayor of Madrid had received linguistic counselling and pronunciation training. Unfortunately, her advisors' understanding of local attitudes

toward accented speech—both in Spanish and in foreign languages—was disastrously inaccurate. A sociolinguistically-informed approach would have probably concluded that she should have limited her use of English to international communication in private spheres rather than public venues—i.e., that she should have delivered her public speech in Spanish, with English interpreting provided—thus acknowledging the crucial role of Spanish overhearers. The implications for LFC research are also valuable. In selecting a non-native standard for international communication, the impact on the ingroup should not be ignored. Spanish English has no chance of succeeding as an effective, intelligible tool for international communication in public unless ingroup language attitudes change. These attitudes have undesired side effects. The pursuit of NS perfection may, in this way, actually discourage learners from using English at all. Until more tolerant approaches to non-native accents become commonplace, a reasonable approach for public figures would be to take into account the attitudes (linguistic or otherwise) of the public they represent. This does not necessarily mean they should refrain from using English in public altogether, but rather that they should do so being fully aware of its socio-stylistic implications. The public figures can then make an informed decision regarding whether to use Spanish-accented English or native, standard-accented Spanish.

WORKS CITED

- ABRAMSON, Arthur S. and Leigh Lisker. 1973. "Voice-Timing Perception in Spanish Word-Initial Stops." *Journal of Phonetics* 1: 1-8.
- BELL, Allan. 1984. "Language Style as Audience Design." *Language in Society* 13: 145-204.
- BOERSMA, Paul and David Weenink. 2016. *PRAAT. Doing Phonetics by computer*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam. [Accessed online on December 1, 2016].
- CLARK, Urszula. 2013. *Language and Identity in Englishes*. London: Routledge.
- DETERDING, David. 2012. "Intelligibility in Spoken ELF." *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 1 (1): 185-190.
- . 2013. *Misunderstandings in English as a Lingua Franca. An Analysis of ELF Interactions in South-East Asia*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- DZIUBALSKA-KOŁACZYK, Katarzyna and Joanna Przedlacka, eds. 2005. *English Pronunciation Models. A Changing Scene*. Berlin: Peter Lang.
- FIRTH, Alan. 1996. "The Discursive Accomplishment of Normality. On 'Lingua Franca' English and Conversation Analysis." *Journal of Pragmatics* 26 (2): 237-259.
- GIMSON, Alfred C. (1962) 2001. *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*. 6th ed., revised by Alan Cruttenden. London: Arnold.
- GÖRLACH, Manfred. 1991. *Englishes*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- . 1995. *More Englishes*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- . 1998. *Even More Englishes*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- . 2002. *Still More Englishes*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- HERNÁNDEZ CAMPOY, Juan Manuel and Juan Antonio Cutillas Espinosa. 2010a. "Speaker Design Practices in Political Discourse: A Case Study." *Language and Communication* 30: 297-309.
- . 2010b. "Hypervernacularization and Speaker Design: A Case Study." *Folia Linguistica* 44 (1): 31-52.
- , eds. 2012. *Style Shifting in Public. New Perspectives on Stylistic Variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- HOPKINS, Tometro, ed. 2013. *World Englishes*. London: Bloomsbury.
- HOUSE, Juliane. 2002. "Developing Pragmatic Competence in English as a Lingua Franca." In *Lingua Franca Communication*, edited by Karlfried Knapp and Christiane Meierkord, 245-268. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- JENKINS, Jennifer. 2000. *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- . 2002. "A Sociolinguistically Based, Empirically Researched Pronunciation Syllabus for English as an International Language." *Applied Linguistics* 23 (1): 83-103.
- . 2007. *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- JENKINS, Jennifer, Alessia Cogo and Martin Dewey. 2011. "Review of Developments in Research into English as a Lingua Franca." *Language Teaching* 44 (3): 281-315.
- KACHRU, Braj. 1985. "Standards, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English Language in the Outer Circle." In *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures*, edited by Randolph Quirk and Henry G. Widdowson, 11-30. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- KACHRU, Braj, Yamuna Kachru and Cecil L. Nelson, eds. 2006. *The Handbook of World Englishes*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- KIRKPATRICK, Andy. 2010. *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes*. London: Routledge.
- LAMARCA, Eva and Patricia de Pablo. 2013. "Entrevistamos a Terrence Burns, el gurú que entrenó a Ana Botella para el discurso olímpico." *Vanity Fair*, September 2013. [Accessed online on February 21, 2017].
- MCARTHUR, Tom. 1998. *The English Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- MEIERKORD, Christiane. 2002. "'Language Stripped Bare' or 'Linguistic Masala'? Culture in Lingua Franca Conversation." In *Lingua Franca Communication*, edited by Karlfried Knapp and Christiane Meierkord, 109-133. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- MELCHERS, Gunnel and Philip Shaw. 2003. *World Englishes*. London: Arnold.
- O'NEAL, George. 2015. "ELF Intelligibility. The Vowel Quality Factor." *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 4 (2): 347-358.
- SEARGEANT, Philip. 2012. *Exploring World Englishes: Language in a Global Context*. London: Routledge.

- SEIDLHOFER, Barbara. 2001. "Closing a Conceptual Gap: The Case for a Description of English as a Lingua Franca." *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 11 (2): 133-158.
- . 2010. "Giving VOICE to English as a Lingua Franca." In *From International to Local English—and Back Again*, edited by Roberta Facchinetti, David Crystal and Barbara Seidlhofer, 147-163. Bern: Peter Lang.
- WALKER, Robin. 2010. *Teaching the Pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Received 15 February 2016

Revised version accepted 2 December 2016

Juan Antonio Cutillas Espinosa obtained his PhD from the University of Murcia in 2006. He has been Senior Lecturer at the Department of English Philology of the University of Murcia since 2009. His main areas of research include English phonetics and phonology, forensic linguistics and the sociolinguistic study of style shifting.

Address: Departamento de Filología Inglesa. Facultad de Letras. Universidad de Murcia. C/ Santo Cristo, s/n. 30071, Murcia, Spain. Tel.: +34 868883416.