

Phonetic Norm or Pronunciation Standard? A Perspective of Research on Foreign Polish Pronunciation

The present paper serves as a voice in the discussion on the issues of pronunciation norm(s) and standard in Polish with reference to phonetic research. The notion of norm(s) and standard seems to be multi-level, unstable, fragmented and constantly changing. As there exists no new dictionary of Polish pronunciation and a number of phonetic guidelines seem to be outdated and/or not based on actual empirical research, while conducting the study of foreign Polish pronunciation (within the framework of articulatory phonetics), the author needed to evaluate the question of the selection of the reference ground, i.e. certain standard to which the results, namely non-native articulatory patterns, should be compared. The article aims to answer the question what could possibly serve as this reference point and how it should be selected. Taking into consideration a selection of existing relevant publications concerned with phonetic norm, pronunciation standard and communicative acceptability, the article discusses their (in)applicability in this kind of research, pointing to the terms such as e.g. ‚glottodidactic norm‘, ‚pronunciation norm‘ and ‚developmental norm‘. Phonetic dictionaries, guidelines (rulebooks) and examination standards are mentioned in the course of the argument. Investigations lead to the conclusion that phonetic research may be conducted without referencing to any norm or standard but its outcomes are more functional and applicable if such comparison ground is carefully selected. Due to the absence of one source that could serve as a point of comparison, certain synthesis should be prepared, taking into consideration language change (generational variation), regional variation, sociolinguistic factors and certain pronunciation standard based also on communicative acceptability rather than prescriptive account not backed up with empirical data.

Keywords: pronunciation standard, phonetic norm, communicative acceptability, foreign Polish pronunciation, articulatory phonetics

Phonetische Norm oder Aussprachestandard? Eine Perspektive der Forschung zur Aussprache des Polnischen als Fremdsprache

Die vorliegende Arbeit dient als Beitrag zur Diskussion über Fragen der Aussprache-Norm(en) und des Standards im Polnischen, die in der phonetischen Forschung präsent sind. Der Begriff der Norm(en) und des Standards ist offenbar vielschichtig, instabil, fragmentiert und einem ständigen Wandel unterworfen zu werden. Da es kein neues Wörterbuch der polnischen Aussprache gibt sowie eine Reihe von phonetischen Richtlinien veraltet zu sein scheinen und/oder nicht auf tatsächlichen empirischen Forschungen basieren, muss bei der Untersuchung der Aussprache von Polnisch durch Ausländer (im Rahmen der artikulatorischen Phonetik) die Frage der Auswahl der Referenzgrundlage bewertet werden, d.h. eines bestimmten Standards, mit dem die Ergebnisse, nämlich die artikulatorischen Muster von Nicht-Muttersprachlern,

verglichen werden sollten. Der Artikel zielt darauf ab, die Frage zu beantworten, was als dieser Referenzpunkt dienen könnte und wie er ausgewählt werden sollte. Unter Berücksichtigung bestehender relevanter Publikationen, die sich mit phonetischen Normen, Aussprachestandards und kommunikativer Akzeptanz befassen, diskutiert der Artikel deren (Un-)Anwendbarkeit in dieser Art von Forschung und verweist dabei auf Begriffe wie z. B. „glottodidaktische Norm“, „Aussprache-Norm“, „Entwicklungsnorm“ usw. Im Verlauf der Argumentation werden phonetische Wörterbücher, Richtlinien (Regelwerke) und Prüfungsstandards erwähnt. Untersuchungen führen zu der Schlussfolgerung, dass phonetische Forschung ohne Bezugnahme auf Normen oder Standards durchgeführt werden kann, ihre Ergebnisse jedoch funktionaler und anwendbarer sind, wenn solche Vergleichsgrundlagen sorgfältig einbezogen werden. Da es keine einzige Quelle gibt, die als Vergleichsgrundlage dienen könnte, sollte eine Synthese erstellt werden, die Sprachwandelmechanismen (Generationsunterschiede), regionale Unterschiede, soziolinguistische Faktoren und bestimmte Aussprachestandards berücksichtigt, die auch auf kommunikativer Akzeptanz basieren und nicht auf normativen Angaben, die nicht durch empirische Daten gestützt sind.

Schlüsselwörter: Aussprachestandard, phonetische Norm, kommunikative Akzeptanz, Aussprache des Polnischen als Fremdsprache, artikulatorische Phonetik

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1. Introduction

Language norm(s) of Polish have been a matter of interest to both researchers representing various fields (e.g. prescriptive linguistics, lexicography, foreign language teaching, speech therapy and empirical phonetics), native and non-native users of the language. Certainly, reasons for this interest are varied and the problems associated with the issue differ. The notion of norm, including also phonetic, pronunciation norm, is consequently subject to discussion. This interdisciplinary concept is also multi-level and difficult in terms of establishment and codification. In the text concerned with the issue of children's speech acquisition, Krajna states that "[t]he problem is that once described facts are no longer subject to verification, but they have become points of reference"¹ (Krajna 2005: 35, transl. A. D.). It seems to be a valid point also when one encounters the question of pronunciation norm(s) and/or standard of Polish in general.

The present paper² is concerned with the discussion of the notions of norm and standard in Polish pronunciation with relevance to the research conducted on Polish as a second language³. It deals with the problem of the selection of the comparison basis in the analysis of non-native articulation. Such reference ground depends on the goal

¹ In the original: „Problem w tym, że raz opisane fakty przestały podlegać weryfikacji, a stały się punktem odniesienia“ (Krajna 2005: 35).

² The paper is based on the presentation delivered during the conference “Problemy i zadania współczesnego językoznawstwa XXI” which took place April 10th–13th, 2025 in Karpacz.

³ The terms “second language”, “foreign language” and “SL” are used interchangeably in the text. By non-native pronunciation of Polish the author understands the pronunciation of the speakers whose first language is not Polish.

of the study, kind of linguistic data taken into consideration, and methodology linked to the question how this data is aimed to be analysed. In this case, due to the purposes of the study the author has conducted to date⁴, the context of qualitative data analysis within the framework of articulatory phonetics was adapted. One of the questions asked is on what grounds can one decide what fits into phonetic norm of Polish (cf. Lorenc 2016: 7–8) (another layer: as second/foreign language) since the notion varies geographically, age-wise (cf. Sołtys 2015) and situationally (cf. Dunaj 2006: 162, Rogozińska 2023: 509). It is unstable, not fully specified (cf. Kamińska 2016: 104) and often not backed up with adequate research or even inconsistent with actual utterances (cf. Kamińska 2016: 104).

This contribution should be treated as a voice in the discussion rather than a proposition of a definite solution to the problem. First, some terminological insights into phonetic norm (and, consequently, error) are presented, together with selected publications on the topic. This section is followed by a discussion of the notions of norm and standard and their relevance (or irrelevance) to research on non-native pronunciation

2. Codification of the phonetic norm(s) in Polish

As the aim of this text is not to conduct detailed survey on the definitions of all of the types (for this kind of review cf. e.g. Kaleta 2009, Sołtys 2015, Grochala 2015, Kamińska 2016), levels and aspects of linguistic norm, only the ones relevant in the following discussion were listed below. Phonetic norm (and, consequently, the notion of error) has been a point of interest of a number of researchers representing different disciplines, especially prescriptive linguistics, empirical phonetics, SL teaching and speech therapy. For this reason, the terminology mentioned in the present paper comes from those fields as the notion is interdisciplinary in nature. Codification of phonetic norm seems to be mostly fragmented, fluent and often not based on empirical research.

Taking this into account, the present section references selected terms and literature relevant to the author's research and to studies of Polish as a foreign language more generally. While trying to establish or even search for rules, codification of pronunciation norm in Polish, one may come across certain types of publications such as:

- pronunciation/phonetic dictionaries, i.e. “Słownik wymowy polskiej PWN” (Karaś/Madejowa 1977), “Podręczny słownik poprawnej wymowy polskiej” (Lubaś/Urbaczyk 1990) or “Słownik wariantowości fonetycznej współczesnej polszczyzny” (Madelska 2005);
- textbooks, both academic and utilised in foreign language instruction, relevant to certain proficiency levels in Polish as a SL;

⁴ The author is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation on the pronunciation of Polish consonants among native speakers of German, conducting a qualitative analysis within the framework of articulatory phonetics.

- certification/examination standards and teaching programmes, also relevant to certain proficiency levels in Polish as a second language, i.e.: “Programy nauczania języka polskiego jako obcego Poziomy A1–C2 (2016)” (Janowska et al. 2016), “Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 14 lutego 2025 r. w sprawie egzaminów z języka polskiego jako obcego” (Dz.U. 2025/217);
- prescriptive publications based either on certain established state of the use of language or not, e.g. pronunciation guidelines, e.g. “Prawidła poprawnej wymowy polskiej” (Klemensiewicz 1930), “Zasady poprawnej wymowy polskiej” (Dunaj 2006);
- descriptive studies based on empirical, oral data analyses (e.g. Lorenc 2016).

They clearly differ from one another as they serve different purposes: dictionaries register (mostly) normative, standard utterances, second language textbooks aim to transfer knowledge suitable for certain proficiency levels, academic handbooks describe both theory and use of language, examination standards and teaching programmes state certain requirements for each proficiency level, prescriptive publications such as normative guidelines provide the rules of pronunciation seen as, broadly speaking, correct, and descriptive studies aim to depict actual usage of language. Each of the groups of publications deals with widely understood problems of norm and standard on different levels and in various dimensions. In terms of the codification and discussion on norm in Polish pronunciation, one may encounter notions such as⁵:

- orthophonic norm (,norma ortofoniczna’, cf. Kamińska 2016);
- developmental phonetic norm (,rozwojowa norma fonetyczna’), descriptive norm (,norma opisowa’) and postulative norm (,norma postulatywna’) (cf. Krajna 2005);
- standard pronunciation (,wymowa standardowa’, cf. Dąbrowska/Dobesz/Pasieka 2010);
- model norm (,norma wzorcowa’), colloquial norm (,norma potoczna’) (cf. Grochala 2015), functional norm (,norma użytkowa’, cf. Grochala 2015, Dąbrowska/Pasieka 2015), linguistic norm (,norma lingwistyczna’, cf. Skura 2018);
- pronunciation norm (,norma wymawianiowa’, cf. Sołtys 2015);
- glottodidactic norm (,norma glottodydaktyczna’, cf. Grochala 2015, Skura 2018).

The category of norm implies also the existence of mistake and error (also interference associated with language transfer):

- linguistic error (,błąd językowy’, cf. Kaleta 2009, Dąbrowska/Pasieka 2015, Skura 2018);
- phonetic error (,błąd fonetyczny’), pronunciation error (,błąd wymowy’) (cf. Kowalewski 2015, Dąbrowska/Pasieka 2015, Biernacka 2019);

⁵ Translations of the terms were proposed by the author, original, Polish terminology was quoted in brackets.

- foreign error (błąd cudzoziemski, cf. Dąbrowska/Pasieka 2015);
- glottodidactic error (błąd glottodydaktyczny, cf. Grochala 2015, Dąbrowska/Pasieka 2015, Kowalewski 2015);
- phonetic-phonological interference (interferencja fonetyczno-fonologiczna), foreign accent (obcy akcent), substitution (substytucja) (cf. Biernacka 2019).

The number of terms listed above suggests the fragmentation and multileveled structure of the notion of language/linguistic norm (including pronunciation norm and resulting concepts of errors). They all adhere to certain aspects of correctness and standard, taking into consideration different aspects of such standards. These are either:

- an interface of orthography and phonetics (orthophonic norm),
- development in the process of language acquisition with reference to a specific age group of children (developmental norm, etc.),
- different levels/layers of norm associated with:
 - situational acceptability (model, colloquial, functional norm along with linguistic error or phonetic, pronunciation error)

or

- a group that is assessed in a certain way, specifically foreign speakers of Polish (glottodidactic norm and, consequently, foreign error, glottodidactic error, interference, substitution, etc., but also, once more, phonetic, pronunciation error) in contrast with the native speakers (pronunciation norm, model norm, etc.).

As researchers of second language learning and teaching are engaged in an ongoing discussion on normativity and error, one of the accounts proposes to abandon the notion of glottodidactic error (błąd glottodydaktyczny) in favour of linguistic/language error (błąd językowy), the same publication deals also with foreign error (błąd cudzoziemski) as not all linguistic errors should be considered glottodidactic errors (Dąbrowska/Pasieka 2015: 26). Another one of the notions mentioned does not adhere strictly to the adult non-native speakers of Polish as Krajna's account concerns children's acquisition of language (Krajna 2005). However, the concept of descriptive norm (norma opisowa) and postulative norm (norma postulatywna) (Krajna 2005: 34) may be applicable while researching foreign speakers of Polish in the process of language learning since a student (similarly to a child, even though different mechanisms are involved in the process) engages in the process of learning a language and is heading towards a certain projected level of proficiency. It is valid more in language instruction than in phonetic research though.

One of the issues present in the publications relating to norm and standard is regional variation of Polish pronunciation, adhering mostly to so-called Warsaw pronunciation (wymowa warszawska) in contrast with Kraków-Poznań pronunciation (wymowa krakowsko-poznańska) (mainly in terms of sandhi voicing and [ŋ] before velar vowels, cf. e.g. Dunaj 2006, Osowicka-Kondratowicz 2016). The authors of the introductory chapters of the most comprehensive Polish pronunciation

dictionary completed to date (Karaś/Madejowa 1977), obviously, also touched the problem of speech codification and variability. It was though suggested that proposed phonetic rules should be objective, meaning they need to incorporate both all variants of the norm and their place in language (Godyń 1977: XXII). Variation in speech (concerned mainly with sandhi voicing and the opposition of Warsaw and Kraków-Poznań articulation) was also noticed, leading to the conclusion that these kinds of variants should be considered equal/equivalent in terms of their correctness (Zajda 1977: XXVII).

Apart from regional differences in Polish pronunciation that make it difficult to establish a supraregional standard, pronunciation, like other aspects of natural language, undergoes numerous changes. Osowicka-Kondratowicz (2016) pointed out dimensions such as generational differences, influence of the English language, letter-by-letter pronunciation⁶, withdrawal of assimilations, sandhi (voicing), changes within the scope of palatal and palatalised sounds, changes within the scope of nasal vowels, inter-word phonetics (assimilations, etc.) or changes in prosody (cf. also Kamińska 2016). These problems of articulatory variability are disregarded in certification requirements for all proficiency levels in Polish as a foreign language (cf. Janowska et al. 2016: 34, 63, 98, 132, 145, 181; Dz.U. 2025/217).

3. Norm(s) and standard in foreign pronunciation research

One of the first questions a researcher of foreign pronunciation may pose is the question of the choice of reference point in the analysis which may lead to the problem of norm and standard. In the following sections, taking into consideration previously presented literature (and terminology), the author is going to discuss what and why certain conceptions do not seem to be applicable in this kind of phonetic analyses.

While conducting her research of the pronunciation of nasal vowels and a lateral consonant in Polish, Lorenc (2016: 7) posed a similar question: what is the pronunciation norm and on what grounds it is established. This issue is still valid in a different type of studies, namely in the analyses of Polish as a SL. It is therefore necessary to consider what aspects such codification should involve. Lorenc (2016: 10), as her account takes the perspective of speech therapy studies, linked pronunciation norm with biological one. Dąbrowska and Pasięka (cf. 2015: 25), from the perspective of language teaching, on the other hand, mentioned adhering to the high and the functional norm (‘norma wysoka’, ‘norma użytkowa’). Sołtys (cf. 2015: 97) pointed out lack of precision in defining pronunciation norm (cf.

⁶ What seems worth noting, also Godyń, in the introductory chapter of the pronunciation dictionary published in 1977, made a similar observation which suggests that such a tendency has been present in the use of language for a significant period (Godyń 1977: XXI). In the preface to the same dictionary, also changes in the pronunciation of nasal vowels were mentioned (Karaś 1977: VII).

regional differences, sociophonetics and variability). Biernacka (2019: 188) mentioned some important identity-based issues related to non-native articulation as features suggesting belonging to other linguistic community contribute to the image of the relations between native speech and SL. Finally, Dąbrowska, Dobesz and Pasięka (2010: 80), from the perspective of second language teaching, postulated to teach correct, neat and not overly simplified pronunciation but they also noted that since variability of pronunciation is present in language, it is hard to decide what the actual standard is.

In the previous part, three pronunciation dictionaries were recalled, out of which the most comprehensive one (Karaś/Madejowa 1977) is still the most extensive scientific publication of this kind. Unfortunately, due to having been published almost fifty years ago, it does not contain a number of lexical items which are currently in use, as well as, certainly, current tendencies in pronunciation. What is more, even in the introductory chapters of the publication, there appears a mention of the issue that is still present in contemporary codifications: the studies present outdated state of language, lacking information about newer variants (Karaś 1977: VII) which poses a substantial problem since variants should be considered in such publication (Godyń 1977: XXII).

One of relatively more recent – if one takes into account that guidelines such as e.g. Klemensiewicz (1930) are also cited, not without a reason though – accounts on the rules of Polish pronunciation, namely Dunaj's "Zasady poprawnej wymowy polskiej", also point out that since articulation in Polish is varied, one should clearly state what is being codified, i.e. what is treated as a reference point (Dunaj 2006: 162). As it is not the purpose of this paper, the rules listed by Dunaj were not stated here. What is worth mentioning though is the starting point of his descriptions which makes for yet another argument why norm codifications are hard to apply as reference in the research of foreign pronunciation. Dunaj (2006: 162–163) based his list of rules on orthography as, according to him, it is the most standardised relevant dimension. Graphical representation in most cases is secondary to articulation, especially in the process of language acquisition by young children, also young non-native speakers who did not yet learned how to write. Even though in some cases orthographic representation may trigger certain patterns of pronunciation (e.g. graphemic-phonemic interference), this approach may be difficult to apply in phonetic research.

In SL instruction, not only at the phonetic level, the notion of glottodidactic norm is relatively widespread. However, as Dąbrowska and Pasięka (2015: 25) suggested, even if there exists a norm for each linguistic proficiency level, it is difficult to grasp as the levels are distant from one another while this norm changes along with the process of language learning, implying the existence of intermediate levels. This kind of norm is treated as a theoretical construct (Dąbrowska/Pasięka 2015: 42). Glottodidactic norm is difficult to employ in the analysis of foreign pronunciation as it is designed to fit certain proficiency levels, e.g. what would be perceived

as an error (in terms of language learning process) at advanced levels could be perfectly acceptable among beginners or intermediate-level speakers. What is more, if one aims to assess the speaker with accordance to this norm (or these level-specific norms), they encounter yet another obstacle. As language proficiency requirements are defined for completed stages (A1–C2), the question arises of how to evaluate students' (or former students') performance when their linguistic competence falls between these levels (cf. Dąbrowska and Pasięka 2015: 25, as mentioned above). For example, should a person who has not yet achieved all the goals required for the B1 level be assessed based on B1 or A2 requirements? What is more, those requirements are subject to interpretation, e.g. programs characterising requirements for each A1–C2 proficiency level in Polish, even though listing a number of grammatical and communicative features and aspects of linguistic subcompetence, discussing phonetic issues state that students representing the A1 and A2 proficiency levels should “pronounce vowels correctly”⁷ (Janowska et al. 2016: 34, 63, transl. A. D.), C1 and C2: “articulate their statements correctly”⁸ (Janowska et al. 2016: 145, 181, transl. A. D.) without any specification (more specification on vowel articulation is delivered in the description of the B1 and B2 levels though, cf. Janowska et al. 2016: 98, 132) or explanation what is the reference standard for correctness. This leads also to the problem of certification requirements defined accordingly to the proficiency levels, some of them legally binding in perspective (cf. Dz.U. 2025/217). Studies on non-native pronunciation do not necessarily need to deal with those requirements to obtain relevant results. The notion of glottodidactic norm (and error) may be considered though as a diagnostic, didactic reference point rather than comparative grounds for the foreign patterns of pronunciation. Even though its name along with basic principles might suggest its applicability, it seems irrelevant in this kind of phonetic research as empirical phonetics does not necessarily aim to assess the extent to which the rules and mechanisms prescribed for a given level of proficiency have been mastered by non-native speakers.

Requirements for obtaining a C2 proficiency level certificate in Polish specify that examinee's articulation does not need to be free of the influences of their native language, such influences should not decrease the level of communicative ease and fluency (Dz.U. 2025/217: 112, 127). Another dimension relevant in researching non-native pronunciation is the notion of social acceptability. An utterance of language by a non-native speaker can be communicative, comprehensible and unacceptable by a native speaker of this language at the same time though. As Cirko suggests, “[a]n acceptable text is a text that does not violate the recipient's expectations in a certain communicative space. [...] first, there is no simple translation between the codified

⁷ In the original: „[...] poprawnie wymawiać samogłoski” (Janowska et al. 2016: 34, 63).

⁸ In the original: „[...] poprawnie artykułować swoje wypowiedzi” (Janowska et al. 2016: 145, 181).

norm and acceptability, [...] attempts in establishing universal norm for the whole (hypothetical) communicative space are doomed to fail [...]”⁹ (Cirko 2009: 267, transl. A. D.). Depending on some extralinguistic circumstances, error may either evoke a negative reaction and rejection of the utterance or quite the opposite (cf. Cirko 2009: 183, 260–261). In this context, it seems crucial to recall the notion of foreignness in native speakers’ perception triggered by visible patterns in the communication acts (Cirko 2009: 226).

While conducting phonetic research on Polish as a SL, one can focus only on the realisation of selected sounds, sound clusters, application of certain processes, list the observed phenomena in accordance with selected articulatory (or, in case of different frameworks, e.g. acoustic) properties, infer existing tendencies or patterns and do not go beyond those findings. However, if one’s aim is to broaden the scope of their research and its outcomes, expand them to more practical grounds such as SL instruction, lack of consideration of the aspects related to the broadly understood pronunciation standard can lead to insufficient results. The reference point should not be disregarded but rather carefully selected. Taking into account both various approaches to phonetic norm, standard, error, communicative acceptability and the framework of articulatory phonetics in general, the author proposes to, firstly, establish pronunciation patterns based on the empirical data. The analysis should certainly involve relevant phonetic features (depending on the scope of a particular study) in order to reveal tendencies characteristic to the group of speakers. As norm (also glottodidactic norm) seems irrelevant as a reference point, certain broad standard should be selected. It should represent supraregional pronunciation, involving basic, most widespread dialectal differences as well as sociolinguistic factors (and, in case of the speakers with speech impairments or deficits, possibly speech therapy measures) and language evolution (cf. e.g. voicing sandhi and [ŋ]: Warsaw and Poznań-Kraków pronunciation, articulation of nasal vowels and realisation of palatal consonants).

It is difficult to discuss standard, not to mention norm, when there exists no actual, current pronunciation dictionary as the most thorough one was published almost fifty years ago (cf. Karaś/Madejowa 1977). In this case, and due to non-existence of a comprehensive study of native pronunciation, there is a need for critically evaluated synthesis of the previously conducted research and dictionaries, with reference to the standard pronunciation of contemporary native speakers of Polish and creation of a descriptive, not prescriptive account as a reference point for future phonetic studies on foreign articulation.

⁹ In the original: „Tekst akceptowalny to tekst nienaruszający oczekiwań jego odbiorcy w danej przestrzeni komunikacyjnej. [...] nie ma po pierwsze prostego przełożenia między skodyfikowaną normą a akceptowalnością, [...] próby ustalenia uniwersalnej normy dla całej (hipotetycznej) przestrzeni komunikacyjnej skazane są na niepowodzenie [...]” (Cirko 2009: 267).

4. Conclusions

A number of theoretical publications discussing phonetic norm are prescriptive in nature and/or do not adhere to the current usage of language due to either outdatedness or lack of empirical background. Empirical data are valuable due to their objectivity and multi-faceted, detailed nature (Rogozińska 2023: 511). This is the reason why codifications not grounded in studies of actual pronunciation seem to be irrelevant as a basis for comparison in phonetic research.

The choice of the reference ground should depend on the purpose of the study, the adapted framework, type of data, etc. Even though glottodidactic phonetic norm can be appropriate in SL teaching, marking which aspects of Polish pronunciation should be introduced at which proficiency level, it seems irrelevant as a comparison basis for non-standard realisations in purely phonetic research.

Selection of the accurate standard for this kind of studies should take into account both regional, dialectal differentiation and current changes in pronunciation patterns (generational differences). Regional variability of articulatory tendencies and dialectal differences in speech is relevant not only regarding the choice of a reference point in research of Polish as a SL. Apart from the questions posed in the discussion on the applicability of norm in this kind of studies, also questions of comparison ground in the studies of bilingual pronunciation may arise as those speakers' phonetic realisations may be influenced by their ancestors regional speech features even more. It seems though to be a topic for yet another, separate analysis.

Stating pronunciation patterns in terms of selected phonetic features without comparing them to any (native) standard, even though adequate, may be insufficient to derive practical conclusions and implications from the study. In case of the examination of non-native Polish pronunciation with the use of articulatory, qualitative analysis, it seems more valid (or even crucial) to adhere to the notions of phonetic standard and communicative acceptability as a reference basis, rather than to the concept of phonetic norm, and to take into account descriptive findings instead of prescriptive guidelines.

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