

Error analysis of the pronunciation of English consonants by Faroese-speaking learners¹

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Summary

We provide here a brief summary of the most significant errors of Faroese speakers in the production of English consonants, and advice on how these can be remedied. The analysis is based on audio recordings of six informants from Eysturoy in the north of the Faroes. Altogether, a total of 3,547 occurrences of sounds were analysed. Results show that Faroese speakers have problems with certain phonemic contrasts which are very similar to those facing many other non-native speakers of English. However, they also exhibit errors which are less usual worldwide (e.g. pre-aspiration of fortis stops). There are at the moment no textbooks for Faroese learners of English, nor any descriptions of their pronunciation difficulties; this paper is a first attempt at filling that gap.

Keywords: Faroese learners of English, pronunciation problems, consonant articulations, pre-aspiration, error analysis, empirical study.

1. Introduction

This paper provides a brief summary of the most significant errors of Faroese speakers in the production of British English consonants and gives some advice on how these can be remedied. The guidelines below are based on an error analysis of recordings of six informants (Hjøllum, 2011). For English we have chosen the standard variety Received Pronunciation (RP), also termed Southern Standard British English (SSBE) or non-regional pronunciation (NRP). There are numerous descriptions of this accent, amongst others Collins and Mees (2008), Cruttenden (2008), Roach (2004, 2009), Wells (1982). Faroese has no standard variety (see below for more detail on the emergence of Faroese). Descriptions of Faroese can be found in Thráinsson et al. (2004), Lockwood (1951, 1952, 1977). The speakers (one male and five females, age range 25 to 39) all came from the area in which one of the authors (EH) grew up, namely the southern part of Eysturoy in the north of the Faroes (see below). All spoke the dialect of this area, which is locally generally referred to as *Eysturoyarmál*.

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2. The Faroese language

Faroese is one of the minority languages of northern Europe, spoken by fewer than 50,000 people on the Faroe Islands and by about 10,000 outside its borders (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 13; Jacobsen, 2001a: 39). It is one of the five remaining Nordic languages, the other four being Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. All derive from Old Norse, which was spoken throughout Scandinavia and later in the areas where the Vikings lived between the 9th and the 11th centuries (Andreasen and Dahl, 1997: 18-19). After the 11th century, the Nordic languages gradually evolved along different paths owing partly to isolative developments and partly to interaction and communication with neighbouring countries. The languages in the most remote parts of the Nordic area changed most slowly but by the early Middle Ages two branches of Nordic can be distinguished: East Nordic, consisting of Danish and Swedish, and West Nordic, consisting of what later would become Faroese, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Norn of Shetland and Orkney (now extinct) (Jóansson, 1997: 25-26). Around 1400, it is possible to detect the emergence of the Faroese language. Documents preserved from the early 1400s reveal a language slightly different from other Nordic languages in the same period. This indicates that Faroese has existed as an independent language for at least six centuries, even though it was not recognised as such until the late 19th century (Jóansson, 1997: 26).

Political developments in the Middle Ages brought the Faroe Islands under Danish rule, and Danish became the official language after the Reformation until the middle of the 20th century (Thráinsson et al. 2004: 13). Danish has left distinct traces both on everyday language and, for instance, on personal names. In 1948, with the advent of home rule, Faroese was recognised as the main language on the islands.

The written language was launched in 1846. It was devised with an etymological approach based on Old Norse. The spelling has since remained virtually unchanged even though there is a considerable gap between written and spoken Faroese (Jacobsen, 2001: 39; Jóansson, 1997: 26). As stated above, Faroese has no non-regional prestige variety equivalent to British RP or standard educated French ('français neutre'; see Lerond, 1980). Rather, there are a number of regional dialects, the earliest mention of which date back to the 17th century, where major differences were noted between the north and the south. Later descriptions and comments refer to three or even four main dialectal areas (Thráinsson et al. 2004: 339). Today, these dialectal differences remain largely preserved, and recent research has discovered additional variation (Thráinsson et al. 2004: 344).

3. Methodology

Because no study has previously documented the pronunciation errors of Faroese speakers of English, little prior data existed on which to build. Consequently, it was necessary to undertake an empirical study to identify the errors. Audio recordings

were made using the computer recording application *Audacity*,² together with a *Plantronics Audio 50* headset-microphone. Six informants were asked to read aloud a text (modified from Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), providing us with a corpus containing all the sounds to be investigated. In order to discover whether there were any discrepancies in the pronunciation employed when reading as compared to that of spontaneous speech, Informant 1 (the key informant) was also asked to engage in a free speech recording. Results showed that there were very few differences between the two modalities.

Altogether a total of 3547 occurrences of sounds were analysed, which as a whole has given us a reliable impression of some of the characteristics of Faroese-accented English. The procedure was as follows: for Informant 1's reading passage either all (if there were fewer than 100 tokens) or a maximum of 100 occurrences of each sound were analysed; all or 20 occurrences of each sound were taken from the reading passage of each of the five remaining informants; in addition, all or a maximum of 20 occurrences were selected from the key informant's free speech recording. Thus the maximum number of occurrences analysed for any one sound was 220, i.e. 20 (free speech of Informant 1) + 100 (reading passage of Informant 1) + 100 (20 instances from the reading passages of each of the five remaining informants). In some cases there were insufficient occurrences of the sounds to reach the target; nevertheless, the findings are never based on fewer than 23 tokens.³ All occurrences were assigned to one of a number of different categories. For each sound, there was a *correct or native-like* category; remaining categories were allocated differently for different consonant phonemes both as regards number and type. The errors identified for each consonant are summarised below. For more detail, see Hjøllum (2011).

4. General observations on the phonemic system of Faroese

The phonemic inventory of Faroese is similar to the other Scandinavian languages in that it lacks voiced sibilants (Thránsson et al., 2004: 45). In terms of realisation, it is different from, for instance, Danish in having retroflex consonants, often occurring as allophones in the context of /r/. In addition, a palatal nasal and lateral is to be found when these are followed by palato-alveolars. Without question the most notable feature is pre-aspiration, which may be defined as "a period of voicelessness at the end of the vowel, nasal, or liquid preceding the onset of the stop closure" (Ladefoged and Maddieson, 1996: 70). Thus it has "two manifestations: 'preaspiration

² Audacity can be downloaded at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

³ /ʒ/ was the sound that occurred least frequently. It occurred between three and four times for each informant in the reading passage. There was no instance of this consonant in free speech. Note that in the case of the approximants, only the reading passage data for Informant 1 were subjected to analysis (i.e. a maximum of 100 occurrences).

proper'...and 'sonorant devoicing'...whereby a sonorant becomes voiceless before a [+spread glottis] ('fortis') stop" (Hansson, 2001: 157). Pre-aspirated stops are rare in the world's languages (Silverman, 2003), the best known examples being found in Scottish Gaelic, Icelandic and, indeed, Faroese (Ladefoged and Maddieson, 1996: 70).

Pre-aspiration of the Faroese fortis stops /p t k tʃ/ is most noticeable in slow or emphatic speech (Lockwood, 1977: 7). There are some dialectal differences, but in all varieties the spelling **pp**, **tt**, **kk** and **kkj** (representing /tʃ/) indicates pre-aspiration, e.g. in words like *koppur* 'cup', *mitt* 'middle', *rakk* 'reached', *rykkja* 'to pull' in these cases, the preceding vowel is always short. Also, the combinations /p t k/ + nasal (/n, m/) and /t/ + /l/ give rise to pre-aspiration in all dialects. /p t k/ are not pre-aspirated after long, close vowels, but in most dialects, including *Eysturoyarmál*, they are pre-aspirated after long, non-close vowels, whereas they are unaspirated in the southern dialects (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 47-9).

5. Summary of main problems

5.1 Stops

Table 1 shows the stop phonemes of English and Faroese, including some of the most significant allophones (in brackets). Phonetically, Faroese has retroflex stops which occur only optionally in the contexts following /r/, e.g. *hoyrdu* 'heard' [hɔiɹɖʊ] or [hɔiɹɖʊ] (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 43). The fortis stops may be both pre-aspirated and post-aspirated and the lenis stops are typically devoiced.

Table 1. Faroese and English stops (frequent allophones in brackets)

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatoalveolar	Velar
English stops						
Fortis	/p/ [p ^h] [p̚]		/t/ [t ^h] [t̚] [t̪]		/tʃ/ [t̚tʃ]	/k/ [k ^h] [k̚]
Lenis	/b/ [b̚]		/d/ [d̚]		/dʒ/ [d̚ʒ]	/g/ [g̚]
Faroese stops						
Fortis	/p/ [p ^h] [p̚]	/t/ [t ^h] [t̚]		[t̪]	/tʃ/ [t̚tʃ] [t̪tʃ]	/k/ [k ^h] [k̚]
Lenis	/b/ [b̚]	/d/ [d̚]		[d̪]	/dʒ/ [d̚ʒ]	/g/ [g̚]

(Collins and Mees, 2008: 80-4; Thráinsson et al., 2004: 42; Lockwood, 1977: 7-8).

General

Like English, Faroese has a word-final fortis/lenis contrast. For instance, there is a distinction between pairs like *rygg* /rɪg/ [ɹɪŋ] 'back (n.)' and *rykk* /rɪk/ [ɹɪʰk] 'pull' (imp.), and *rødd* /rœd/ [ɹœd̥] 'voice' and *røtt* /rœt/ [ɹœʰt] 'right (f. pl.)' Although the lenis sounds are virtually always completely devoiced, a distinction between fortis and lenis is maintained through pre-aspiration of the fortis consonants. Following the long vowels /i: u:/ and diphthongs ending in [i u], there is no possibility of pre-aspiration. Instead, /p t k/ are aspirated if they occur word-finally, and remain unaspirated medially, e.g. *prik* [pri:kʰ] 'sting, bite' (aspirated after /i:/), *prika* [pri:ka] 'to sting' (unaspirated after /i:/), *prikk* [priʰk] 'dot'(n.)' (pre-aspirated after short vowel).

/p t k/ The Faroese stops have weaker post-aspiration than those of English. Faroese speakers tend to transfer their relatively unaspirated /p t k/ to English both initially and medially, so that the contrast between *pear* - *bear*, *tense* - *dense*; *coat* - *goat*, *lopping* - *lobbing*; *staple* - *stable*; *heated* - *heeded*; *metal* - *medal*; *sacking* - *sagging*, *ankle* - *angle* may be lost. Furthermore, there is a tendency to pre-aspirate these sounds in medial and final position, resulting in realisations such as *happy*, *pretty*, *lucky*, *stop*, *not*, *got* *['hæʰpi, 'priʰti, 'lʌʰki, 'stəʰp, 'nəʰt, 'gəʰt]. This phenomenon is noticeable even though it does not lead to a loss of intelligibility.

Word-finally, a good strategy for learners is to replace pre-aspiration by pre-glottalisation. In addition, it is important to remember that English vowels are shortened before fortis consonants ("pre-fortis clipping", Wells, 2008: 155) but retain full length before lenis consonants.

/t/ is dental rather than alveolar. However, this does not appear to be a significant error since it certainly has no effect on intelligibility. Some speakers pronounce intervocalic /t/ as a brief voiced stop [t̚], e.g. in words such as *better*, *later*, *that is*. Although this feature is heard in British English in high-frequency words, notably in word-final position before a word beginning with a vowel, e.g. *but I*, *that it*, *what a* (Collins and Mees, 2008: 86), it is more characteristic of General American – where it also normally occurs word-internally – than it is of RP. Learners should therefore take care not to employ this feature too frequently.

/b d g/ Faroese /b d g/ are too strongly devoiced to be acceptable in English. This is most noticeable word-finally, where the contrast between *pub* - *pup*, *side* - *sight*, *mug* - *muck* may be blurred. Learners are recommended to

lengthen the vowel before final lenis plosives. Like /t/, Faroese /d/ is dental rather than alveolar but this gives rise to few if any problems.

- tʃ Faroese /tʃ/ is similar to E /tʃ/ and poses few problems except for occasional pre-aspiration word-medially and word-finally in words like *kitchen* *[kɪ^htʃɪn], *pitch* *[pɪ^htʃ] where the preceding vowel is short. As in the case of /p t k/, replacing pre-aspiration by pre-glottalisation can be a useful strategy.
- ɖʒ Faroese /ɖʒ/ is more devoiced than the corresponding English sound (cf. /b d g/ above). Without suitable modification, it may cause a loss of contrast in pairs like *age* – *aitch*. Preceding vowels should be lengthened to avoid the impression of pre-fortis clipping.

5.2 Fricatives

Table 2. Faroese and English fricatives (frequent allophones in brackets)

	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Glottal
English fricatives							
Lenis	/v/	/ð/	/z/		/ʒ/		
Fortis	/f/	/θ/	/s/		/ʃ/		/h/
Faroese fricatives							
Voiced	/v/					/j/	
Voiceless	/f/		/s/	[ʂ]	/ʃ/		/h/

(Collins and Mees, 2008: 88-90; Thráinsson et al., 2004: 42; Lockwood, 1977: 7-8)

General

The fricative phonemes of English and Faroese are shown in Table 2, along with their main allophones. All English fricatives, except /h/, occur in fortis/lenis pairs. This is not true of Faroese, which like most Scandinavian languages has no voiced sibilants, but only voiceless /s ʂ ʃ/. Furthermore, English has two dental fricatives, /θ ð/; although these existed in Old Norse, they are absent from Faroese (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 45). Finally, although Faroese /j/ is traditionally classified together with the fricatives, it is often more like an approximant (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 45-46) and therefore causes no problems when used for English /j/.

- /f/ Similar to English /f/ and poses no problem.
- /v/ No significant problems except for the high-frequency word *of*, which is almost invariably pronounced with /f/.
- /θ/ Replaced by /t/, causing confusion between pairs such as *thought* – *taught*, *through* – *true*, *tenth* – *tent*, *faith* – *fate*. The dental place of articulation should not be difficult as it is familiar from Faroese /t d/, but replacing the complete closure by a stricture of close approximation proves to be very difficult. Faroese learners should articulate the sound by moving the tongue-tip *behind* the upper front teeth (i.e. *post*-dental rather than *inter*-dental), making sure there is no closure.
- /ð/ Replaced by /d/, causing potential confusion between *they* – *day*, *worthy* – *wordy*, *breathe* – *breed*. There are few minimal pairs, but replacement by /d/ is distracting. Even more so than in the case of /θ/, learners should ensure that the articulation is post-dental, since an inter-dental place of articulation may produce friction which is too strong to be acceptable for English; in fact, English /ð/ is often realised as an approximant (Collins and Mees, 2008: 88). In initial position, it is also regularly subject to manner assimilation (where it mainly occurs in grammatical words, e.g. *the*, *this*, *them*, *there*), /ð/ being replaced by /l/, /n/ or /s/ in sequences such as *in the*, *all the*, *what's the* /ɪn nə, ɔ:l lə, wɒts sə/ (Collins and Mees, 2008: 117). This can be a useful strategy to adopt for learners who find it difficult to avoid making a stop consonant. Note that the consonants /n l s/ are here prolonged so that a clear difference is maintained between, for instance, *in the* [ɪn: ə] and *in a* [ɪn ə]. As in the case of the other lenis consonants, it is important to lengthen the vowel before final /ð/.
- /s/ Similar to English /s/ and poses no problems.
- /z/ Since Faroese lacks /z/, learners replace English /z/ by /s/, losing contrasts such as *zoo* – *Sue*, *fuzzy* – *fussy*, *lose* – *loose*. Given that most minimal pairs occur in final position, it is important to concentrate on this context. As in the case of the stops, the best approach is to lengthen the vowel before word-final /z/.
- /ʃ/ Similar to English. No significant problems.
- /ʒ/ Replaced by /ʒ/, so that there is no contrast between *confusion* and

Confucian, and *pleasure* sounds like plea[ʃ]ure, *usual* like u[ʃ]ual, and *beige* like bei[ʃ]. Learners should attempt to add voicing. There are very few minimal pairs and the error rarely causes a breakdown in communication. The sound occurs overwhelmingly in medial position, which is where learners should concentrate their efforts.

/h/ Similar to English counterpart and poses no problem.

5.3 Nasals

Table 3. Faroese and English nasals (frequent allophones in brackets)

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Retro-flex	Palatal	Velar
English nasals	/m/ [m̥]			/n/ [n̥]			/ŋ/
Faroese nasals	/m/ [m̥]			/n/ [n̥]	[ɳ]	[ɲ] [ɲ̥]	[ŋ] [ŋ̥]

(Cruttenden, 2008: 206-14; Thráinsson et al., 2004: 42; Lockwood, 1977: 7-8).

General

Whereas English has three nasal phonemes /m n ŋ/, Faroese has only two, /m n/, although there are several phonetic variants or allophones resulting from devoicing and assimilation (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 3). The English nasals are normally voiced throughout, except when /m n/ follow /s/ in initial clusters, where they become partially devoiced [m̥ n̥], e.g. *smoke*, *snow* (Collins and Mees, 2008: 94). Devoicing of Faroese nasals is more extensive and is accounted for by the sonorant devoicing rule, namely that nasals are devoiced before fortis plosives, e.g. *vanta* [vaŋta] 'to lack', *eymt* [eɲt] 'painful/sore' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 53), as well as before /s/, e.g. *heimsins* [høiɲsɪŋs] 'world's' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 50). Furthermore, following voiceless or aspirated consonants, /n/ is partially devoiced e.g. *asni* 'donkey', *knoða* 'to knead' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 53). All Faroese nasals are also devoiced in final position after voiceless consonants as for instance in *vatn* 'water' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 53).

In addition, Faroese has both a retroflex variant, [ɳ], which occurs sporadically after /r/, and the palatal allophones [ɲ], [ɲ̥], which result from /n/ assimilating to the following palatalised consonant, as in *leingi* ['lɔiŋɲɜi] 'long', *beinki* ['bøiŋtʃi] 'bench' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 45, 53). Finally, Faroese [ŋ ɲ̥] occur only as allophones of /n/ before velar stops. The velar stop triggering the realisation of /n/ as [ŋ] may in a few cases be deleted, as in *longd* [lɔŋɔ] 'length' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 45).

/m n/ Similar to their English counterparts, although learners should take care

not to devoice the English sounds preceding the fortis plosives, /t/, /s/ and /z/. Realisations like *[ʌŋ'tɪl], *['sʌŋθɪŋ], *['ə'pɪərəŋs] for *until*, *something*, *appearance* sound comic to an English ear. Learners should make /m n/ voiced in all contexts. It is not difficult to do so, as voiced nasals do occur in Faroese.

/ŋ/ Preceding /k/, /ŋ/ lacks voicing, so that *drink*, *wrinkle* are realised as [driŋk, 'riŋkl]. Speakers pronounce **g** following /ŋ/, usually resulting in [ŋg], but sometimes in [ŋk]. As a result, the contrast between /ŋ/ and the sequence /ŋk/ may be lost (*thing* – *think* and *sang* – *sank* being identical), and *anything* may sound like *['eniθŋg] or *['eniθŋk]. (In our data, *long* was heard only as *[lɔŋg].)

–*ing* is sometimes pronounced with /n/, so that *talking* sounds like ['tɔ:kɪn]. This occurs in numerous English varieties but is stigmatised.

5.4 Approximants

Table 4. Faroese and English approximants (frequent allophones in brackets)

	Bilabial	Dental	(Post-) alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar
English central approximants	/w/		/r/ [ɹ] [ɹ̥]		/j/	/w/
English lateral approximant			/l/ [l] [ɫ] [l̥]			
Faroese central approximant			/r/ [ɹ] [ɹ̥]	[ɹ] [ɹ̥]		
Faroese lateral approximant		/l/ [l] [l̥]		[ɭ]	[ʎ] [ʎ̥]	

(Collins and Mees, 2008: 90-94; Thráinsson et al., 2004: 42; Andreassen and Dahl, 1997: 27-30).

General

/w/ is not considered a part of the Faroese phonemic inventory, but Faroese does have glide insertion where [w] occasionally occurs medially in words such as *mugu* 'have to (pl.)' [mu:wɔ], *róði* 'rowed' [ɹɔu:wɪ] (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 38).

/r/ is post-alveolar in English, whereas it is alveolar in Faroese. The place of articulation of /l/ also differs in the two languages, being alveolar in English, but

dental in Faroese (Table 4). The Faroese sonorant devoicing rule described above for nasals also applies to /r l/. In addition, /r l/ have sporadic retroflex variants, e.g. *hoyrt* 'heard' [hɔi.ɹ̥t] and *hoyrn* 'hearing' [ˈhɔi.ɹ̥n]. Furthermore, /l/ has a voiceless and voiced palatal allophone, which occurs before palato-alveolar affricates, e.g. *kjálki* [ˈtʃʰɔɮtʃi] 'jaw' and *telgja* [ˈtʰɛɮɰʒa] 'carve' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 42, 45-46). As a result, Faroese speakers may pronounce words like *culture*, *Belgium* with a palatal lateral (though there were no examples in our corpus).

/j/ Although classified as a fricative in Faroese and an approximant in English, Faroese /j/ is similar to the English counterpart, and in articulatory terms causes few problems. However, some speakers have problems with the distribution of this sound and use Yod-dropping (Wells, 1982: 206-8) according to the pattern found in General American, so that words like *tune*, *duke*, *news* are said without /j/.

/w/ Replaced by /v/, causing confusion between *wet* - *vet*. Learners are recommended to add lip-rounding starting from the GOOSE vowel, e.g. *west* → [u] + /est/.

/l/ As we have seen, /l/, is subject to the sonorant devoicing rule (cf. /m n/ above), which means that *help*, *false* may be realised as *[hɛɻp, fɔ:ɻs] (no examples in our data). In most other contexts, English clear /l/ is replaced by Faroese /l/, which is slightly too dark (and also dental rather than alveolar). It causes no breakdown in intelligibility, but sounds characteristic of accents of English (e.g. Scottish or American) other than British RP.

/r/ *Distribution*
Orthographic <r> is sounded in all contexts in Faroese, similar to rhotic varieties in English (Wells, 1982: 75-6). Our data show that this pattern is transferred by Faroese speakers to their English. For RP, learners are recommended to delete /r/ in coda position, e.g. *four*, *first*.

Articulation

The Faroese /r/ has several variants, the most common being the approximant [ɹ], but trilled [r] may also occur. The retroflex allophone occurs sporadically adjacent to /t d s l n/, which in these contexts are realised as retroflex. /r/ is voiced before /l n d/, e.g. *koyrlar* [kʰɔi.ɹ̥lar] 'whips (n.)', *hoyrn* [hɔi.ɹ̥n] 'hearing (n.)', *hoyrði* [ˈhɔi.ɹ̥ði] (also [ˈhɔi.ɹ̥ði]) 'heard', but in accordance with the sonorant devoicing rule, it is voiceless

before /t s/, e.g. *hoyrt* [hɔi̯ɹ̥t] (also [hɔi̯ɹ̥t]) 'heard' (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 45-46).

Although Faroese /r/ is alveolar rather than post-alveolar, the difference in place is auditorily scarcely perceptible. Faroese /r/ is devoiced before fortis plosives, e.g. (Thráinsson et al., 2004: 53), as well as before /s/, as in the examples *hoyrt*, *vers* above. If this pattern is transferred to English, *heart*, *horse* may be incorrectly devoiced, e.g. *[hɑ:ɹ̥t, hɔ:ɹ̥s], and even realised as retroflex consonants e.g. *[hɑ:ɹ̥ʈ, hɔ:ɹ̥ʂ]. However, these pronunciations are rare and usually /r/ causes few problems.

6. Conclusion

In the analyses, we found examples of phonemic, allophonic and distributional errors. The most salient distributional feature was rhoticism, which is appropriate for rhotic accents such as General American but might prove distracting for RP though not affecting intelligibility. Examples of phonemic errors included replacing /θ/ by /t/, /ð/ by /d/, /z/ by /s/, and /w/ by /v/, all of which contribute to a foreign accent, but are not necessarily the tell-tale signs of a Faroese speaker specifically, as these are errors heard from many non-native speakers worldwide. The allophonic errors, on the other hand, show some features that are very uncommon, e.g. devoicing of nasals and approximants /l, r/, dark and dental pronunciation of clear /l/ and perhaps most saliently the pre-aspiration of fortis stops.

This survey of consonants has shown that there are enough features that are typically Faroese in the English of Faroese speakers for it to be worthwhile to consider their specific language-learning problems. Since most Faroese people speak Danish, many students from the Faroe islands attend universities in Denmark without this causing any communication problems, but they are not *native* speakers of Danish and therefore do not have a Danish substratum. Consequently, textbooks aimed at Danish or other Scandinavian learners of English are far from ideal for these students. We have made a first attempt at describing Faroese learners' difficulties with the consonants of English, but more systematic research is also needed on the vowels and on supra-segmental features such as stress, rhythm and intonation.

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