French stereotypical accent and pronunciation learning: Recalling implicit knowledge

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L2 accent imitation in the L1 (e.g., Pepe Le Pew) considered:
- Effective pedagogical approach, helping Spanish L1 learners increase VOT of L2 English /p, t, k/ (Everitt, 2015)

Stereotypical accents are:
- Perceptually salient (Kristiansen, 2003-92), i.e., more likely to be noticed and acquired (Schmidt, 1990)
- Familiar to the learner, through exposure in media from a young age (Lippi-Green, 1997) ➔ Tap into pre-existing knowledge

French /ʁ/:
- More friction than target (Schmidt, 1990)
- Discovery and Perceptually salient (Kristiansen, 2003:92), i.e., more likely to be the case

Word /ʁ/ (i.e., degree of friction) will be improved?
- Familiar to the learner, through practice with stereotypical accent

Overall, practice with stereotypical accent does not significantly help pronunciation improvement of French /ʁ/ and reduce aspiration (VOTs) of /p/, /t/, and /k/? 

Which /ʁ/ (i.e., degree of friction) will be improved?
- More friction than target

Method

Participants & Treatment
- 8 intermediate students enrolled in French pronunciation course + 6 French native speaker controls:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Practice model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical Accent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>English NS actors speaking English with stereotypical French accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Accent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>French NS speaking French</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ French NS Control</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>French NS Control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-in-class 20-minute sessions over 3 weeks. Explicit pronunciation instruction about:
- French /ʁ/ + Aspiration of initial /p, t, k/. Comparison between French and English
- Practice in class and at home

Tests & Instruments
- Pre-test - post-test + 1 narrative + 1 dialogue both read in French

Sounds
- 14 words featuring initial /p, t, k/ + 12 words with /ʁ/ involving several degrees of friction:

Results

More friction in Group S for Intervocalic & Init/Fin/Be/tVoicedC ➔ towards target pronunciation

Discussion & Conclusion

- Overall, practice with stereotypical accent does not significantly help pronunciation improvement of /ʁ/ and /p/, /t/, and /k/.
- However, more awareness of friction for /ʁ/ pronounced with subtle friction? ➔ Towards more target-like pronunciation?

Recommendations
- Increase number of participants and tokens (avoid cognates)
- Introduce and study one pronunciation feature at a time
- Is this approach better suited for lower proficiency levels?
- For a comprehensive diagnostic of /p/, /t/, and /k/ (duration of aspiration and degree of muscle tension), use both VOT measures and rater judgments
- French /ʁ/ is notoriously difficult to acquire, /p/, /t/, and /k/ already acquired at the intermediate level ➔ Check with vowels and intonation

Graphic representation of pronunciation data and analysis.