STUDENTS’ AND TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF PRONUNCIATION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to discover more about students’ and teachers’ perceptions of pronunciation. Specifically, it investigates attitudes towards the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom and examines teaching and learning goals in this area.

To gain a fuller understanding of the background of pronunciation teaching, literature on the role of pronunciation in methodology through the 20th century is reviewed, exemplifying the changing status of pronunciation instruction. Research into students’ perceptions of pronunciation learning has increased in recent years, though only a limited number of studies focus on learners in an English-speaking country, predominantly Canada and the USA. As yet there is still relatively little literature on teachers’ perceptions of pronunciation instruction, though this is increasing and highlights the need for further research.

This research looks at 26 teachers in three international language schools in South East England, and 70 Pre-Intermediate – Advanced students at one of these institutions. Quantitative and qualitative methods - questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews – are used to gain a better understanding of these students’ and teachers’ perceptions.

The findings signify that pronunciation instruction is valued by students and teachers alike. However, beyond this there are significant differences in their perceptions, particularly with regard to what constitutes pronunciation practice. Furthermore, while most students would like to aim for native-like pronunciation, most teachers’ consider ‘intelligibility’ as the main goal of pronunciation teaching. This in turn affects the amount of error correction, which students indicate is insufficient. Moreover, there is strong agreement among students in this research, whereas teachers’ responses are more varied.

This study concludes by considering the implications of these findings for the students and teachers in this study, for classroom practice and for the teaching profession.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Pronunciation is an area of English language learning which seems to provoke mixed reactions among teachers and students. Therefore, this dissertation aims to discover more about students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the role of pronunciation in the adult EFL\(^1\) classroom.

1.1 Reasons for undertaking this research

My own interest in this area has arisen from my experience of working with adult learners in a private language school in South East England. I have never had much difficulty perceiving phonological patterns, and enjoyed incorporating pronunciation activities in classes when I was first teaching. However, I have noticed more recently that I tend to hold these back to use if there is enough time. This is, in part, a response to the mixed opinions students have expressed regarding pronunciation. While many seem keen to learn more, many others have commented that it is ‘pointless’ or ‘a waste of time’.

Moreover, I have noticed among my colleagues that some enjoy focusing explicitly on pronunciation in the classroom, while others avoid it if possible. Some of them have referred to the fact that while they recognise the benefits of pronunciation work, they ‘worry’ about including it. Perhaps reasons for this may be easily surmised: pronunciation does seem to be a more ambiguous area than, for example, lexis (Scrivener, 2005:284). Pronunciation teaching requires recognition of phonological elements which not all listeners have. Teachers must not only be able to perceive certain sounds or intonation patterns themselves, but illustrate these to learners who may not be able to recognise them easily. However, it sometimes seems as if there is an additional ‘fear factor’ in pronunciation teaching. As Underhill (2012) put it: “students are not really afraid of pronunciation until they meet their teachers”. This area seems to be a worry for both native and non-native speaker teachers.

\(^1\) EFL – ‘English as a Foreign Language’, used throughout this dissertation to represent English learnt by students from different language backgrounds at an International School in an English-speaking country.
1.2 Aims and scope of the research

With the development of the Communicative Approach, the importance of pronunciation has been recognised in academic literature (for example, Brinton, 2012). However, it is not clear how it is approached in practice (Ur, 2012:129) and the extent to which pronunciation has been explicitly dealt with and integrated seems to have depended to some extent upon the teacher (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010:8). Therefore this research aims to gain a better understanding of those teachers’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in their classrooms.

In addition, it seeks to examine students’ attitudes towards pronunciation and its perceived role in English language learning. These students come to study English at international schools in the UK from a variety of different countries and may stay as long as their student visas (if required) allow. Whilst the students have many different reasons for studying English, most plan to study in Higher Education institutions in the UK. In the language school, they study ‘general English’ from Elementary to Advanced level and it is this context which will form the parameters for this dissertation.

Finally, the views of teachers and students will be compared in order to discover whether their perceptions are consistent with each other. Areas discussed will include whether these students and teachers value an overt focus on pronunciation, how they feel about learning/teaching pronunciation and what their goals are in this area.

Thus my research questions for this dissertation are:

1. What are students’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom?
2. What are teachers’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom?
3. Are there any significant similarities or differences between students’ and teachers’ perceptions?

It is hoped that the outcome of this research will improve our understanding of students’ experiences and attitudes towards pronunciation which may, in turn, have an effect on teachers’ approaches to classroom practice. In discovering more about teachers’ opinions and experiences of pronunciation teaching, this research may also have implications for teacher training and development.
1.3 Overview of the dissertation

Following this introductory chapter, I will review literature on the changing role of pronunciation within language teaching over the last century and its current status in academic research; teachers’ perceptions of the role of pronunciation; and students’ perceptions of pronunciation practice. The methodology for this piece of research will then be detailed in chapter 3 and, following its implementation, the findings will be presented and discussed in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 offers conclusions based on the research findings and suggests areas for future research.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

In this chapter I shall start by reviewing the role of pronunciation in language teaching methodology over the last century. I shall then look at how the shifting role of pronunciation has affected pronunciation goals in teaching. Following this, I shall turn to 'perceptions', exploring and critiquing the research into students’ and teachers’ views on pronunciation.

2.1 The role of pronunciation instruction in language teaching methodology through the 20th century

As approaches to, and methods of, teaching language have changed over the last century, so has the role of pronunciation within the field. The importance attached to pronunciation instruction by academic researchers has swung between extremes and consequently so has the place it has been given in the EFL Classroom. Moving away from the Grammar Translation Method of the 19th -20th Century (with no overt focus on pronunciation), phonology was given greater prominence in language teaching in the Direct Method, and later, in Audiolingualism in the 1950s and 60s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:58 & 59). Although not dealt with systematically at first during the era of the Direct Method, the importance of pronunciation became more noticeable with the rise in the study of phonetics and use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:9). In Audiolingualism, which involved imitation of the teacher model, pronunciation was “taught explicitly from the start” (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996:3). The focus of language teaching was on accuracy and thus any deviation from the teacher’s model of pronunciation was considered an error (Brinton, 2012:246).

In the 1970s and 80s, methods such as The Silent Way and Community Language Learning, while revolutionary in respect of minimising teacher-led input, still held to the beliefs of the Direct Method and Audiolingualism regarding the necessity of accurate pronunciation measured according to the teacher’s model (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:88). Therefore, although the methods of dealing with pronunciation might have changed, it was still considered an important element of language learning and teaching.
This belief shifted significantly with the introduction of the Communicative Approach, which emphasised the need to use language in meaningful contexts (Ibid.:161). This approach seemed initially to marginalise the role of pronunciation teaching due to the priority given to the communication of a message rather than accuracy. Meanwhile, ideas of a ‘Natural Approach’ to language learning, notably championed by Krashen in the 1970s and 1980s, proposed that language, including the element of pronunciation, could only be ‘acquired’, rather than learned (Krashen, 1982). Thus pronunciation did not have much support in academic literature at this time. Furthermore, as Jones (2002:179) highlights, the currency of these ideas can be seen in the stark provision of pronunciation activities in language materials of the time.

The move away from explicit pronunciation instruction is highlighted in Brinton’s (2012:247) summary table of the focus on pronunciation teaching through the last century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar Translation (1840s-1940s)</th>
<th>No focus on pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Method and other Naturalistic Approaches</strong></td>
<td>Pronunciation taught via imitation and repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Approaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform Movement (~1890s-1920s)</td>
<td>Use of a phonetic alphabet, sagittal diagrams, tongue twisters, and minimal pair drills; primary emphasis on segmentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiolingualism (~1940s-1960s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicative Approaches</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1970s</td>
<td>Little or no overt focus on pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1980s</td>
<td>Primary focus on suprasegmentals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1990s and beyond</td>
<td>Balanced focus on segmentals and suprasegmentals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 – ‘Summary of the importance placed on pronunciation in selected methods’ (Brinton, 2012)

The table illustrates that pronunciation was not overtly focused on in the early stages of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s, but was viewed as increasingly important in the 1980s, including prioritising suprasegmentals (though consequently underestimating the significance of segmentals). This changed emphasis was, in part, due to the value of research by authors such as Pennington and Richards (1986), who called for more attention to be given to the prosodic features of pronunciation which affect communication. Thus, as CLT evolved, pronunciation came once again to the fore due to its fundamental role in communication.
These pedagogical changes which occurred through the early decades of CLT, consequently affected pronunciation instruction, as detailed by Morley (1991). As research, and indeed practice, concentrated more on communicative rather than linguistic competence; on the functions of language as well as its forms; on language at discourse-level as well as sentence-level; and on students and student-centred classrooms, rather than teachers and teacher-centred instruction, pronunciation once more became a valuable aspect of language learning, now placed in its communicative context. Thus the Communicative Approach engendered a deeper shift in the way researchers in the field viewed pronunciation and this became increasingly evident in the ensuing discussion of the goals of pronunciation instruction.

However, what is less clear is the extent to which this altered thinking affected practice. Morley (1991), Kenworthy (1987), Pennington and Richards (1986), among others, all suggest ways of teaching pronunciation meaningfully, thus showing the renewed interest in phonology as an important element of language learning. However, there seems to be relatively little evidence to show whether this is carried through into the classroom. Morley (1991:481) indicated that practice does not always follow theory. Along with researchers such as Foote et al. (2011), Celce-Murcia et al. (2010:8), have stated that ‘the extent to which pronunciation has been explicitly focused on and integrated seems to have depended upon the teacher’. Therefore it seems that, according to the academic literature at least, pronunciation was once more valued together with vocabulary and grammar, as well as language skills development (Ibid.; Harmer, 2007:248). However, the extent to which this is reflected in classroom practice seems more questionable. This is highlighted in research carried out by Breitkreutz et al. (2001), Derwing and Munro (2005), and Gilbert (2010), all of whom note a continued lack of integration of pronunciation in classroom teaching.

2.2 Changing ideas of appropriate goals and models for pronunciation

With the evolution of communicative pedagogy came an increased awareness of the need to re-evaluate the goals of pronunciation instruction. Enforcement of a native speaker model, as has been illustrated, has not been viewed as an appropriate goal of pronunciation instruction since the emergence of the Communicative Approach in the 1970s. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that, as language is so
diverse, even among native speakers, the concept of ‘a native speaker model’ is indefinable (for example, Morley, 1991 and Pennington, 1996).

In 1987, Kenworthy (1987:3) highlighted the need for ‘comfortable intelligibility’, i.e., helping learners to communicate effectively, without placing undue strain on the listener. While Kenworthy does not explicitly state what constitutes intelligible pronunciation, she does refer to examples of pronunciation features which may cause communication breakdown. Furthermore, and arguably more significantly, she points out that different contexts of learning English affect, not only the goals of pronunciation instruction, but also the relative likelihood of comprehension between speakers and listeners (Kenworthy, 1987:15-16).

If the notion of ‘intelligibility’ is accepted as an appropriate goal for pronunciation instruction, it becomes necessary to analyse features of pronunciation which affect successful communication. In 1986, Pennington and Richards stressed the influence of voice setting and prosody on meaning and thus the importance of including this in explicit pronunciation instruction. Although this article was at the forefront of the development of teaching pronunciation in a communicative context at discourse-level and focusing on suprasegmental elements, it does not explicitly deal with the learning context. As Kenworthy (1987), Morley, (1991), and Timmis (2002), among others, have pointed out, it is essential to provide an appropriate goal for pronunciation instruction according to the learners’ needs. Thus it is necessary to consider who the learners are, their reasons for learning and the context in which they will use English (including who they need to understand, as well as by whom they must be understood.)

This prompts an interesting question as to who should set the learning goals. The argument above does not assume intelligibility must be the only goal of pronunciation instruction, but suggests further considerations if it is. Kenworthy (1987:4), while highlighting the need to take account of varying contexts of learning and using English, does refer to the teachers setting goals for the students. Of course, teachers do need to decide what to include in a lesson and how to integrate it, but this does not mean to say that the teacher should set the learner’s goal of pronunciation. Therefore, while the communicative era brought about a change in thinking which took greater account of learner needs, it appears that it was still for the teacher to determine the learning goals.
Alongside these pedagogical developments, political, economic and social changes on the global stage through the twentieth century have had significant effects on the field of English language teaching. In 2003, David Crystal (2003:14) referred to the changes in language and in global communication as ‘unprecedented’. Even in 1991, Morley (1991:482) talked of a ‘population explosion’ of English language students, especially as adults. These worldwide changes affected the use of English internationally and thus catalysed a reassessment of the goals of English language teaching and which models and variety to teach.

Non-native speakers of English far outnumber native English speakers, as has been highlighted by Kachru (1988 cited in Crystal, 2003:61) and Crystal (2003:67-8), among others. The unprecedented growth in the use of English for communication between non-native speakers has resulted in significant language diversity in different countries and regions. This in turn has prompted calls for official recognition of a different variety of English to be taught from that used by native speakers, known as ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ (ELF) (Jenkins, 2000; 2003; 2007).

The proponents of ELF, such as Jenkins (2000) Seidlhofer (2001), and Walker (2010), suggest this variety of English being taught in contexts where the main use of English is for interaction between non-native speakers. The main discrepancy between this variety of English and native speaker models (though not in fact spoken by all native speakers) is in the field of pronunciation. It has been argued that British English, among other examples of ‘English as a Native Language’ (Jenkins, 2007:1), is not always intelligible for learners and therefore may not be the most appropriate model to provide (for example, Walker, 2010:17, Ur, 2012:128).

One of the main goals of ELF is ‘mutual intelligibility’ (Walker, 2010:20), which is of course a necessary criterion of successful communication. However, it is limited as an objective of language teaching. It has been argued that ELF does not allow learners even to aim for, let alone achieve, native-like pronunciation (for example, Timmis, 2002). Whether this goal is perceived as attainable or even desirable is not the main concern here, but whether or not learners should be able to choose this as their aim. Jenkins, among others, has emphasised the need for learner choice (Jenkins, 2004, cited in Walker, 2010:55). While this is of course important, it can then become problematic in terms of choosing a
variety of English to learn. Electing to learn ELF, or any language, is directly related to the reasons and context for learning. However, while a learning context may be static, learners are not. That is to say, a learner choosing to adopt ELF with the aim of communicating with other non-native speakers in a non-native speaker environment may later encounter difficulties if faced with the need to study or work in an English speaking country requiring proficiency in a different variety of English. With regard to pronunciation specifically, this could involve not only difficulty in making oneself understood, but also in understanding the speaker. As Radjadurai (2007, cited in Walker, 2010:18) points out, listening is not passive, but an active process. Thus, learners need an understanding of pronunciation to process and comprehend what they hear (Scrivener, 2005:294).

Whether regarded as necessary, helpful or otherwise, adults continue to come to the UK (and other English-speaking countries) to study English, which is the context for this research. Therefore, while it is important that neither native speaker nor non-native speaker models should be undervalued, what students will hear, and consequently need to understand, is a variety of native speaker English in the UK.

In terms of production, it has been argued that native-like pronunciation is unattainable for the majority of adult learners and thus could have a detrimental effect on learning, due to the negative impact it could have on learners’ (and teachers’) motivation (for example, Morley, 1991). Others, such as Kenworthy (1987), Crystal (1988) and Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) have not so much emphasised that achievement of native-like pronunciation is impossible, but that accent is so bound up in a person’s identity, that many learners are reluctant to modify their pronunciation. However, there seems to be little evidence of this among students coming to study in English-speaking countries, a view supported by Levis (2005:370).

2.3 Students’ perceptions of pronunciation
Over the course of the last two decades, the role of learners’ beliefs and attitudes in language learning and teaching has been perceived as increasingly significant. It is frequently asserted that teachers should teach according to the needs of their students (e.g. Morley, 1991; Pennington, 1996; Scrivener, 2005). Jenkins (2000) and Walker (2010) for example, agree that in ELF, the learner’s needs are central.
Jenkins (2000) proposes that a local variety of English should be taught rather than a native speaker model, if learners require English for international communication with non-native speakers. Likewise, in an EFL setting, teachers need to understand their students’ motivation and learning objectives. This is particularly true of adult learners who have come to an English-speaking country to study and are therefore likely to have important reasons for doing so. As Harmer (2007:84-5) points out, adult learners have expectations and pre-conceived ideas based on previous learning. Therefore, as highlighted by writers such as Harmer (2007:24) and Brown (2009:58), it is important for teachers to gain a deeper insight into their learners’ beliefs and needs. It is clearly beneficial for teachers to better understand their students’ previous learning, motivation and objectives as well as attitudes towards and perceptions of language and language learning, in order to inform classroom practice. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that learners’ own beliefs may affect their success in language acquisition (Cenoz and Garcia Lecumberri, 1999:5; Brown, 2009).

Consequently, research into students’ perceptions and beliefs has increased in recent years. However, as Simon and Taverniers (2011) and Müller (2011) state, research into these beliefs in relation to pronunciation is still quite rare. Nevertheless, there have been various studies, particularly during the last decade, which attempt to deal with this gap in the literature. In 1999, Cenoz and Garcia Lecumberri carried out research among students at the University of the Basque Country and found that while all participants seemed to find English pronunciation (including a variety of accents and models) difficult, they also felt it was important (1999:3). Derwing and Rossiter (2002) researched learners’ perceptions of their language needs with relation to pronunciation (in an ESL setting in Canada), finding that 55% of participants in the study felt that pronunciation constituted a significant problem for them and that 90% would undertake a specialist pronunciation programme if it were available. Other studies have also found that students seem to value the teaching of pronunciation. Tergujeff (2013), in a study carried out in Finland, found that students with a higher level of English (‘upper secondary’ 15-16 year olds) wanted more pronunciation teaching. In these studies the desire for more pronunciation teaching and recognition of its importance to participants seems clear. About half of the research in this area

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2 ESL – ‘English as a Second Language’, used in Canadian and American research in this chapter in the same way that ‘EFL’ is used through this dissertation
investigates the opinions of students learning English in an English speaking country. Most of these constitute a series of investigations by the same group of researchers in Canada, with one study looking at the UK. It would therefore be useful to carry out further research into the perceptions of those who choose to study in the UK as it is still a popular destination for English language students. In 2011, Müller explored how the ‘study abroad’ context has a significant effect on the acquisition of pronunciation. Accordingly, Simon and Taverniers (2011) found that the participants in their research felt that studying in an English-speaking country would have the most beneficial effect on learning pronunciation.

This in turn raises the question of which model of English to provide and teach to such students. The debate regarding native speaker and non-native speaker models has burgeoned in the last 15 years with the growth of English around the world. The ELF argument and proposal of a Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins 2000) highlights this. The main features included in Jenkins’ ‘Lingua Franca Core’ (LFC) are: consonant clusters, tonic stress and segmental sounds. Notably, the LFC does not include weak forms, features of connected speech, sentence stress, word stress or intonation, since these are not considered necessary for intelligibility between non-native speakers (Jenkins 2007:23-4). However, students choosing to study in the UK will hear native speakers, most of whom are entirely unaware of the concept of a separate variety of English as a Lingua Franca, let alone the LFC. In addition, few such students are likely to be aware of it. As some researchers, such as Müller (2011:18) imply, the ‘nativeness principle’ is often ingrained in learners’ ideas and may be hard to alter. Yet as Timmis (2002:249) questions, how far should teachers seek to change their students’ beliefs?

Whilst intelligibility has become the generally agreed goal of pronunciation teaching (for example, Kenworthy, 1987; Morley, 1991; Jenkins, 2000; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Brinton, 2012) recent research (for example, Timmis, 2002; Simon and Taverniers, 2011; Terguieff, 2013) has highlighted that many students still perceive native speaker-like pronunciation as an ideal goal. However, it has also been indicated that alternative models are often adopted as more practical, achievable alternatives (Subtirelu, 2013). In these investigations, the authors seem to use this to demonstrate that intelligibility is the goal of pronunciation teaching. For example, Terguieff (2013:84) noted that the majority of
learners in her study “reported fluency and intelligibility as their main goals in English pronunciation”. However, she then comments that any reference which participants made to native-like pronunciation appeared to be “wishful thinking” (Ibid.:84). Similarly, Subtirelu (2013:279) indicates that in the course of his research, learners’ goals changed over time and with more exposure to the target language, opting initially for native-like pronunciation and later for an alternative model. However, the interviews in his research highlight that this change resulted from pessimism about attaining their true goal, rather than a decisive shift of desired objective (Ibid.:281). If students perceive native speaker-like pronunciation as their ideal, this could be considered their true goal, in the sense of the ultimate ‘place they would like to reach’, even if they do not see it as viable. It might therefore follow that this should act as a frame of reference for the teacher, whose responsibility is arguably to help them to progress towards their ideal. If students are made aware of the difficulty, even potential impossibility of attaining such an objective, and understand that no two people have the same pronunciation, they can still be encouraged to aim for this, using their own variant of this model to express their unique identity.

Other researchers, such as Morley (1991) argue that aiming for native-like pronunciation can be demotivating and thus counterproductive. Therefore, it would be useful to investigate what students coming to an English speaking country regard as important. This may, however, assume homogeneity of student ideals and perceptions. Of course students will vary for a range of reasons. Even students with similar motivation and reasons for study, comparable learning and language backgrounds and common areas of profession or academic interest may differ in their perceptions simply due to the diversity of human nature. Furthermore, as Subtirelu (2013) highlights, learners’ preferences are incredibly complex and even contradictory, and thus may vary even for an individual learner. While this needs to be taken into account when researching students’ opinions, it should not be considered a limitation, but simply a variable of the research, just as it is a variable of day-to-day classroom teaching.

2.4 Teachers’ perceptions of pronunciation

As attitudes towards, and perceptions of, teaching pronunciation have shifted over the last two decades, it seems to have gained prominence in academic literature, yet how far this change translates into practice is questionable. Many writers, including Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) and Gilbert (2010) have commented on the fact that pronunciation work still seems to be viewed as a supplementary rather than
an integral language skill. There may be several reasons for this and some of them may be determined by investigating teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. Baker (2011) undertook some research to investigate teacher cognition relating to the teaching of pronunciation. Most of the participants had undertaken formal pronunciation training and were regular subscribers to a teaching journal (Baker, 2011:270-271). Therefore, although the research provided useful insights into teacher attitudes towards pronunciation teaching, the sample seemed oriented towards a special interest in pronunciation. Thus it would be useful to research further whether teachers generally value an emphasis on pronunciation teaching and if so, to what extent and what the goals of such teaching should be.

Whilst ‘intelligibility’ is frequently cited as the ideal goal of pronunciation teaching (Kenworthy, 1987; Morley, 1991; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), as Macdonald (2002:8) points out, intelligibility can be subjective. Derwing and Munro (2005:385) draw a distinction between ‘intelligibility’ - which they define as the extent to which a listener actually understands an utterance, - ‘comprehensibility’, by which they mean a listener’s perception of how difficult it is to understand the utterance or message, and ‘accentedness’ describing a listener’s perception of ‘how much an L2\(^3\) accent differs from the variety of English commonly spoken in the community’ and it would be interesting to find out how teachers measure intelligibility.

Macdonald (2002) is often cited in the, admittedly scant, literature on teachers’ views of pronunciation. His research, among teachers in Australia on ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) and migrant programmes, worked on the premise that teachers were taken out of their comfort zone when teaching pronunciation and he investigated reasons for this reluctance. The reasons cited by teachers were lack of formal curricula which in turn made integration of pronunciation difficult since it was not a central element of teaching; the lack of a framework for assessment; the uncertainty of how much to monitor and when/what to correct; and a lack of appropriate training (Macdonald, 2002:6-7).

Given these factors, it is of course understandable that teachers may lack confidence when teaching pronunciation, which, a decade later, still seems to be the case (Gilbert, 2010; Baker, 2011; Brinton, \(^3\) ‘L2’ refers to a learner’s second language or language that is not the mother tongue
In Baker’s research among six ESL teachers on various ESL programmes in the USA, it transpired that other difficulties for teachers included the lack of time available to devote to pronunciation teaching and, due to a lack of materials, of translating theory into practice through effective activities (Baker, 2011:286). In addition, many experts, such as Underhill (2005:75), note the difficulty of teaching prosodic features due to their intangibility and a consequent lack of confidence among teachers to deal with this area.

A further problem that has been mentioned in the literature (for example, Burgess and Spencer, 2000; Derwing and Rossiter, 2002) is more specific to the EFL context: teachers have commented on the difficulty of helping learners with pronunciation when faced with a classroom full of students from different language backgrounds and with different needs.

Another element to be considered is the nature of classroom practice. The basic question, which relates to the goals of pronunciation teaching, is simply what to teach. Burgess and Spencer (2000:193) highlighted some of the difficulties teachers faced when dealing with pronunciation. These included selecting relevant features of pronunciation to focus on, the ordering of these features, awareness of the amount of detail required, and the most effective methods to help students progress. As has been mentioned, integration of pronunciation in both a communicative framework and with other skills in a lesson is, in the opinion of many practitioners, difficult (Burgess and Spencer, 2000). Thus it would be interesting to discover whether teachers feel pronunciation ought to be integrated and if so, how this could be achieved. Currently, it seems that little has changed in the last decade with respect to pronunciation teaching, even though materials writers have made a greater effort to integrate pronunciation (Gilbert, 2010). Therefore, it is worth investigating teachers’ perceptions of pronunciation in the classroom, how they feel about trying to implement pronunciation practice, and how they feel such practice relates to the students in front of them.

2.5 Comparing and contrasting teachers’ and students’ perceptions
It has become increasingly clear through this chapter, that it is quite difficult to separate teacher and student attitudes when considering the role of pronunciation in the EFL classroom. If teachers try to teach in accordance with learners’ needs, it follows that students’ perceptions have an effect on
classroom practice. Macdonald (2002:3) suggests that both teachers and students see some value in pronunciation although the extent of this is likely to depend on the learning context and a multiplicity of other factors. Therefore, if teachers feel uncomfortable with the teaching of pronunciation, they may avoid an explicit focus on it, or if they undervalue the need for pronunciation instruction, they might assume their students do not view it as particularly important.

As has been established, there is now no theoretical justification for dismissing pronunciation as an unimportant ‘extra’ relating to language learning (Pennington and Richards, 1986; Morley, 1991; Underhill, 2005; Brinton, 2012). Therefore, in order to better understand if and why pronunciation still seems to be marginalised in the EFL classroom, it is necessary to understand teachers’ and students’ perceptions. As Brown (2009) and Simon and Taverniers (2011) highlight, the two are often noticeably different. Furthermore, as Brown (2009:57) points out, there has been very limited research into this area and so it would be beneficial to investigate and compare students’ and teachers’ beliefs regarding the usefulness and implementation of pronunciation.
Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1 Aims of the research
The aim of this research is to gain a deeper insight into teachers’ and adult students’ perceptions of the role of pronunciation in the EFL classroom in the UK and is guided by the following research questions:

1) What are students’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom?

2) What are teachers’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom?

3) Are there any significant similarities or differences between students’ and teachers’ perceptions?

By increasing our awareness of these areas, the outcomes of this research may aid teachers’ understanding of students’ expectations and learning goals and in turn, affect classroom practice.

3.2 Research design
Although quantitative and qualitative research have traditionally been regarded as opposing schools of thought, numerous authors, such as Dörnyei (2007), Creswell (2014) and Cohen et al. (2011), have commented that the two should be regarded on a continuum. Creswell (2008:46) points out that quantitative research can include a qualitative element and vice versa. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) set out distinct research designs for mixed methods research. Their rationale is that ‘mixed methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research’, that it ‘provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone’ and that it ‘helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone’ (Creswell and Plano Clark:9).

However, they are very specific about the research designs permitted within mixed methods research, stating that ‘rigorous, high quality studies result from well-designed research procedures’ (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007:73) and that simply using quantitative and qualitative methods without mixing the data itself ‘is simply a collection of multiple methods’ (Ibid.:83). Whether seen as a mixed method design, or a primarily quantitative or qualitative design which includes an element of the other type of
research, it is clear that quantitative and qualitative research can complement each other, as highlighted by McDonough & McDonough (1997), Wallace (1998), Dörnyei (2007) and Bell (2010).

In this research, quantitative investigation will help to provide a reasonably broad understanding of students’ and teachers’ perceptions. However, in order to gain a deeper understanding of individuals’ perceptions and to avoid simplistic over-generalisations or the assumption of homogeneity, qualitative research will also be utilised. ‘Purists’, defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:15) as those ‘who could not mix paradigms’ and thus will not mix methods, may see this as unfavourable. However, in this research it facilitates both depth and breadth of understanding. Creswell and Plano Clark define this as an ‘explanatory’ design (Ibid.:72-3) using triangulation to ‘enhance’ survey findings (Ibid.:64) to increase their validity. This study is therefore underpinned by a ‘pragmatic worldview’, as it is ‘practice-oriented’ and is ‘pluralistic’, combining quantitative and qualitative data to address research questions (Ibid.:23-24, Dörnyei, 2007:30).

3.3 Research instruments

The emphasis of this research is on gaining insight into students’ and teachers’ experiences and perceptions of classroom pronunciation practice. To ascertain more about the range of perspectives, questionnaires were given out to students and teachers – with different questions for each group (Appendices 1 and 2). Questionnaires are an efficient and effective means of achieving an insight into a number of viewpoints, potentially discovering patterns or contrasts. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale format. The statements were formulated based on the research questions themselves, and ideas which had developed from reading relevant literature relating to goals and identity. They dealt with the importance of pronunciation, perceptions of classroom practice and the time spent on it, as well as teaching and learning goals. Most statements required respondents to select one of five categories from ‘strongly agree’ – ‘strongly disagree’; the one which dealt with time spent on pronunciation offered a choice from ‘every lesson’ – ‘never’ and an ‘a’ or ‘b’ question asked whether goals related to intelligibility or native speaker-like pronunciation. Space was available after each question to expand on any answers or add reflections or other comments. Questions to provide an understanding of the demographic were also asked, the aim of which was to investigate potential factors.
influencing students’ beliefs. However, it was soon realised that this was too broad a focus and beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Focus groups and interviews were used to discover more about individuals’ opinions. Focus groups were chosen rather than one-to-one interviews with the students, partly due to the increased amount of data they could yield within a given timeframe and because they could provide in-depth data prompted by group interaction (Creswell, 2008:226; Cohen et al.:436). Discussion questions and prompts were devised (Appendix 3), building on findings from the questionnaires. As Dörnyei (2007:144) observes, a focus group ‘is based on the collective experience of group brainstorming, that is, participants thinking together, inspiring and challenging each other, and reacting to the emerging issues and points’. Furthermore, it is likely to put students at their ease. This is important since, in interviewing students from my own place of work, a one-to-one interview may to them feel more like an assessment of their spoken English, even with the purpose of the research made clear.

Silverman seems sceptical about the use of interviews to establish people’s perceptions (2006:45 & 146), suggesting that it is simplistic to assume a one-to-one relationship between perception and experience, citing Byrne (2004:182 in Silverman, 2006:117) that you cannot access what is in someone’s head. However, this is the case in any research requiring introspection of participants and it is difficult to see that another method would necessarily be more appropriate. Interviews were selected as a relevant method for investigating teachers’ opinions because, as Cohen et al. (2001), Richards (2003), Dörnyei (2007), Creswell (2008) and Bell (2010) all point out, it allows the researcher to explore complexities, and gain more in-depth data as respondents voice their thoughts and interpretations. This method also seemed preferential to case studies, which would make it very difficult to compare similarities and differences between students and teachers. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow flexibility, as highlighted by Nunan (1992:149-50) and McDonough & McDonough (1997:183). Thus while the interviewer can introduce topics and ideas pertinent to the research, the interviewee has the flexibility to change the direction of the interview and add information. An ‘interview guide’ (Richards, 2003:69) was designed, which included further discussion prompts, based on themes emerging from the questionnaire responses (see Appendix 4).
3.4 Research participants and sampling procedures

The research participants were selected in different ways for the different parts of the study. Students were selected using partially purposeful sampling (Dörnyei, 2007:99), that is, utilising ‘convenience sampling’ which Wagner (in Paltridge and Phakiti, 2010:25) describes as using those the researcher ‘has access to’ (i.e. students from the school where I work), but also considering students’ level of English. In a school with 9 classes ranging from Elementary – Upper Intermediate/Advanced, 70 students from Pre-Intermediate and above completed the questionnaire. This ensured that the language used on the questionnaire, already graded as carefully as possible, did not pose a barrier for students. The students principally come from Europe, the Middle East and the Far East and may stay for any length of time from 1 week. However, most students are 18-25 years old and plan to undertake further study in Higher Education in the UK.

The teachers who completed questionnaires were selected using convenience sampling. In order to gain as full an understanding as possible, questionnaires were given to all general English EFL teachers in my own place of work (14) as well as at two other similar schools in the city (11) with the same teaching context. This is important to maintain the validity of the study, or its credibility as Brown and Rodgers (2002:242) refer to it. Although a relatively small sample, this reflects the smaller population (compared with student numbers).

Focus group students were selected based on level and confidence to speak. Bloor et al. (2001:7 & 22) as well as Creswell (2008:226) point out that when carrying out focus group research, it is useful to select respondents from pre-existing social groups who have sufficiently different (though not dichotomous) opinions. Therefore, 12 respondents from the same classes and/or friendship groups, from a variety of different cultural backgrounds were selected. An ‘Intermediate’ group consisted of 2 male and 4 female students - 1 Italian, 1 Arabic, 1 Thai, 1 Chinese and 2 Japanese; and an ‘Upper-Intermediate/Advanced’ group, all of whom were female, comprised 1 Japanese, 1 Korean, 1 Angolan and 3 Spanish students.
The teachers were again selected using convenience sampling. As Silverman (2006:20) explains, authenticity is often prioritised over sampling issues in qualitative research due to its exploratory nature. To get the richest data possible, teachers of different levels, with varying amounts of experience were selected for interview. Although ideally, teachers with different attitudes towards pronunciation would be selected, this could not be guaranteed as the previously completed questionnaires were anonymous.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Permission was sought from Directors of Studies and teachers to give out questionnaires in classes. Although the offer of personally explaining the questionnaire and the purpose of the research was made, all the teachers preferred to administer the questionnaire themselves. To minimise any threat to confidentiality and reliability, written instructions were given to each teacher, explaining the purpose. Every teacher was aware of the need to ensure students understood, but not to look at any student responses. All questionnaires were taken from and put back into a plain brown envelope and students were assured of anonymity and that their teachers would not see the information. Overall this approach seemed advantageous as the teachers, who already have rapport with their students and an understanding of their ability, were able to explain and administer the questionnaire appropriately.

Likewise, permission was obtained from Directors of Studies at the different schools to distribute questionnaires among teachers, all of whom participated voluntarily. The teachers were assured of confidentiality when completing questionnaires.

Anonymity was assured in writing at the top of the questionnaires and was respected. However, as Bell (2010:49) points out, ‘confidential’ and ‘anonymous’ are not interchangeable terms, since the former indicates that the respondent’s identity will be protected in the research; the latter means that the researcher is unaware of the respondent’s identity. (Had the term ‘confidential’ been used, this could have been used to ensure the sample for the focus groups reflected a range of opinions.)

The purpose of the research and assurance of confidentiality was given to every participant in the focus groups and interviews, all of whom took part in the research voluntarily. All interaction was recorded and participants were made aware of this in advance before signing a consent form (Appendix 5).

3.6 Research procedure
The questionnaire was piloted with two students who were about to leave the school and thus would not be involved in the study. Feedback from these students suggested that I needed to provide a clearer idea of the purpose of the study assurance of anonymity.

The amended questionnaire was piloted with three more students who had studied general English but were studying on an ‘Access to Higher Education’ programme at that time. One question, relating to their main pronunciation goal elicited the same response from everyone, despite seeming differences of opinion emerging elsewhere in the questionnaire. In light of this, a further question was added to differentiate between ‘ideal’ goal and ‘main’ goal. Although there need be no difference between the two, these terms were used to simplify the language of the questionnaire and gain a better understanding of students’ feelings about their pronunciation goals. Once questionnaires had been completed, these were organised according to their respective classes.

The teachers’ questionnaire was piloted with the two Directors of Study and a teacher trainer and valuable feedback was provided relating to the wording of questions, particularly about the response category ‘neither agree/nor disagree’. Possible re-phrasing of the category as ‘not sure’ was considered but this did not seem appropriate for some of the questions.

On closer examination, it was apparent that respondents’ concerns about this category were for different questions. The concerns seemed to relate more to their own mixed feelings about answers to the question, which was highlighted in their comments. Therefore, I retained this category and administered the questionnaires among my colleagues. The questionnaire was also emailed to Directors of Studies at two nearby schools (see 3.4 above), with the purpose of the research made clear.

Having previously completed questionnaires, focus group participants would have started to reflect on their experiences and opinions of pronunciation learning. Therefore, rather than providing a ‘focusing exercise’, the students were asked to discuss specific questions. In the pilot focus group (conducted with short-term students), the researcher and participants all sat together and to prompt discussion, some nomination was used. This proved ineffective since students did not often speak unless directly spoken to and rarely responded to one another. Therefore, in the two focus groups used in the research, the
participants sat together and the researcher apart. The researcher only prompted conversation if clarification was required or when students finished discussing an issue.

Teachers were interviewed on a one-to-one basis, using a semi-structured interview format. They had also completed the questionnaires prior to interviews. Perhaps because teachers consciously reflect on their practice, or perhaps because all of the teachers were known to me, discussion developed naturally and teachers developed themes without extra prompting.

3.7 Data analysis
The results from the Likert scale questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics (Brown and Rodgers 2002:122), tabulating the results to show the range of answers for each question (presented in Chapter 4, but also attached in Appendices 6 and 7). The raw data was then calculated as percentages and the additional comments were scanned for common themes and anomalies.

The focus group and interview audio recordings were transcribed and then coded and analysed for salient themes (samples from the transcripts are attached in Appendices 8 and 9). An effort was made to analyse the data in its context and use this in interpretation. Furthermore, ‘deviant cases’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996:47 & Silverman, 2006:276), that is to say, those which did not seem to fit, or perhaps even contradicted, common themes were also analysed and interpreted to gain a fuller understanding of the participants’ perceptions. The data from each section was compared in order to gain a broader perspective and to integrate the methods as effectively as possible.
Chapter 4
Findings and Discussion

In this chapter the findings from each area of the research will be considered in turn. First, the results from the students’ questionnaires will be presented in a table and reviewed; then the same will be done with the teachers’ questionnaires. The qualitative data will then be discussed, highlighting the salient themes arising from the student focus group discussions and the teacher interviews respectively.

4.1 Data from the students’ questionnaires

The findings from the students’ questionnaires (Table 4.1 below) comprise three broad components: the value of pronunciation practice; classroom experience of pronunciation practice; and students’ pronunciation goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qu. number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Anomalies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I think practising pronunciation is useful.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>28 (41%)</td>
<td>39 (57%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I think working on pronunciation will help English people to understand me</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>30 (43%)</td>
<td>39 (56%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I think working on pronunciation will help me to understand English people.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>37 (54%)</td>
<td>27 (39%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I like practising pronunciation in class.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>43 (61%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>23 (33%)</td>
<td>25 (36%)</td>
<td>12 (17%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When I speak English, I prefer to sound like someone from my country than an English person.</td>
<td>16 (23%)</td>
<td>31 (44%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>One of the reasons I came to study English in the UK was to learn British pronunciation.</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>12 (17%)</td>
<td>34 (49%)</td>
<td>20 (29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sounding like a native speaker of English is important to me</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>31 (44%)</td>
<td>24 (34%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I would like my teacher to correct my pronunciation mistakes even if he/she can understand me.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>22 (32%)</td>
<td>41 (59%)</td>
<td>1 = ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Some lessons</th>
<th>Most lessons</th>
<th>Every Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>33 (48%)</td>
<td>16 (23%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 11    | My main goal in pronunciation is… | 27 (39%) | 43 (61%) |
| 12    | My ideal goal in pronunciation is… | 22 (31%) | 48 (69%) |

23
4.1.1 Perceptions of the value of pronunciation practice

The extent of agreement between students on the value of classroom pronunciation practice is striking, as can be seen from the answers given for questions 1-3. 98% of students responded that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that ‘practising pronunciation is useful’. In addition, there was almost complete unanimity (99%) that working on pronunciation would help the participants to be understood (question 2), suggesting this is the major reason that students consider pronunciation useful. Whilst the overwhelming majority of students also agree that working on pronunciation will help their ability to understand English speakers, it is interesting that here the scale of agreement changes. In response to question 3 there was a significant downward movement from ‘strongly agreed’ (39%) to ‘agreed’ (54%) and an increase of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ responses. Therefore, students in this survey evidently consider pronunciation practice as more useful for making themselves understood than for understanding others, although it is possible that students are less aware of the potential for ‘pronunciation practice’ to aid understanding of English speakers.

4.1.2 Classroom experience of pronunciation practice

Students’ opinions of classroom practice were sought in questions 4, 5, 9 and 10 and their views on this aspect are less emphatic than those on the value of pronunciation practice. These questions generated a wider range of answers and there is a higher proportion of students answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’, particularly in response to question 5, ‘I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class’.

81% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they liked practising pronunciation (question 4) and only 3% did not. In contrast, only 53% of the students felt they would like more time spent on pronunciation practice which indicates that most students perceive there is already sufficient provision for this, although it may be that students feel that the quality rather than the quantity is the important factor. 33% were unsure whether or not they would like more pronunciation practice in class, suggesting ambivalence or perhaps an alternative option. For example, one student commented that (s)he would like a specific pronunciation class.
One might expect a high but inverse correlation between the responses to questions 5 (more pronunciation practice in class) and 10 (how often they feel they practise pronunciation in their classes). At the extremes there is: 14% of respondents disagreed with the statement in question 5 which broadly mirrors 12% (8 students) who considered they practise pronunciation every lesson. Similarly, 17% (12 students) strongly agreed they would like to spend more time on class pronunciation work and 17% felt they ‘never’ or ‘not often’ practised it in class.

11 of the 12 students who strongly agreed they would like more pronunciation felt they only practised pronunciation in ‘some lessons’ or ‘not often’. A notable feature is that the 1 student who selected ‘never’ as his/her answer, was in the same class as a student who chose ‘every lesson’. Furthermore, the 8 students who practised pronunciation ‘every lesson’ were all in different classes. These incongruities highlight the widely differing perceptions students may have of what constitutes ‘pronunciation practice’.

4.1.3 Students’ pronunciation goals

Questions 6-9, which relate to students’ pronunciation goals, produced the widest range of answers. However, these cannot all be taken at face value. The statement for question 6, ‘when I speak English, I prefer to sound like someone from my country than an English person’ seems to have caused some confusion among students. Just 1 of the 13 who agreed with this statement showed a clear wish to sound like someone from his/her country when speaking English. Among the others, 8 reported that sounding like a native speaker of English was important to them and 4 selected ‘to sound more like a native speaker’ as both their ‘main’ and ‘ideal’ goals in pronunciation, indicating possible misunderstanding.

Nevertheless, a clear majority (78%) responded that native speaker-like pronunciation is important to them. Of the 2 students who strongly disagreed, one commented that ‘British English is not more important than American English’ and another made a similar observation. It is interesting that they chose to contrast the UK and the USA, rather than inferring a contrast between studying in an English speaking country as opposed to their home country.)

Despite the range of responses to questions 6-8, the response to correction (in question 9) is unequivocal. Although 4 students indicated that they did not aim for native-like pronunciation (question
8), only 1 disagreed with the statement in question 9 that ‘I would like my teacher to correct my pronunciation mistakes even if (s)he can understand me’. Furthermore, although 11 students were ambivalent about aiming for native speaker-like pronunciation, over half of these strongly agreed that they would like their teachers to correct them even if they could be understood. There is clearly a strong desire for correction (91%) regardless of error type. In fact question 9 generated the highest number of ‘strongly agree’ answers. This perhaps indicates that students do not discriminate between types of mistakes in the same way as their teachers and that the distinction between mistakes which affect intelligibility and those which ‘do not sound native-like’, is one that is only significant to education professionals.

Finally, it can be seen clearly from questions 11 and 12 that the majority of students wished to sound more like a native speaker of English than simply to be understood. This can be further analysed in Figure 4.1 below:

![Pie chart showing combinations of students' main and ideal pronunciation goals](chart.png)

**Fig. 4.1 Combinations of students’ main and ideal goals**

2 of the 10 respondents (15%) who claimed that both their main and ideal goals were to be understood even if they retained their accents, commented that they would like to be understood by native speakers, and another observed that sounding like a native speaker would be ‘perfection’.
The concept of ‘main goal – to sound like native speaker, ideal goal – to be understood’ is quite surprising, which may be due to confusion over the terms ‘main’ and ‘ideal’.

3 of the 31 students (or the 44%) whose main and ideal goals were to sound more like native speakers commented that being understood is essential, but that native-like pronunciation is important in order to be understood by English people.

**4.2 Data from the teachers’ questionnaires**

The findings from the teachers’ questionnaires are also considered in the same categories i.e. the value of pronunciation, classroom experience and the goals of pronunciation instruction. Within each of these areas, two types of question were asked. Those about the value and the goals of pronunciation practice address both teachers’ views and what they think students’ perceptions are. Questions about classroom experience examine teachers’ attitudes towards pronunciation instruction as well as their views of its implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qu. number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Anomalies *% calculated accordingly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I think focusing on pronunciation is useful for my students.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>12 (46 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I think most of my students want an explicit focus on pronunciation.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td>8 (31%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I think students coming to study in the UK want to sound like native speakers.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
<td>13 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel comfortable dealing with pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I use published pronunciation materials to focus on particular areas of pronunciation with the whole class.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>15 (58%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td>3 (12 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I try to integrate pronunciation work throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>10 (38%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have a clear idea of what pronunciation features to focus on.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>10 (40%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I only correct pronunciation mistakes if they interfere with communication.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>8 (31%)</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>How often do you practise pronunciation in your classes?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>7 (27%)</td>
<td>15 (58%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>What proportion of your students do you think would like to retain their accents when they speak English?</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>15 (65%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To help students to be intelligible (without worrying about accent) To help students to sound more like native speakers
4.2.1 Teachers’ perceptions of the value of pronunciation practice

Although the majority of teachers agreed that pronunciation practice is useful for students, their responses to questions 1 and 2 were less emphatic than those of the students. It is interesting that 2 of the 26 teachers surveyed indicated that they were unsure whether pronunciation practice was useful. Furthermore, 12% felt that their students did not want an explicit focus on pronunciation and 31% were unsure. Given the overwhelming agreement of students on the value of pronunciation, these responses seem surprising. Some teachers commented that an ‘explicit’ focus may be ‘intimidating’ or ‘demotivating’. This indicates that there may be confusion over terms such as ‘explicit’, a possibility considered further in section 4.4.

4.2.2 Classroom experience of pronunciation practice

Questions 4-8 and 10 address how teachers feel about the teaching of pronunciation and what they think they do in practice.

While the majority felt comfortable dealing with pronunciation in class, 20% were unsure or did not feel comfortable. The 2 who disagreed with the statement commented:

“I feel that I know very little about teaching pronunciation” and;

“Pronunciation is the area I feel most uncomfortable with.”

Given that 81%, however, indicated that they felt comfortable dealing with pronunciation in class, it is interesting that 44% were less than certain about which features of pronunciation to focus on in a lesson. While this could signify a lack of confidence, it may suggest that teachers do not give this much thought in advance, simply addressing pronunciation issues incidentally; or that they feel able to correct some mistakes but not all. This is supported by several comments which point out that dealing with pronunciation in multi-lingual classes can be challenging, with much depending on the nationalities of the learners. It is interesting that all these comments related to the learners’ language backgrounds rather than to any particular features of English pronunciation. It therefore seems that the concept of particular features of English affecting intelligibility, as exemplified in Jenkins’ Lingua Franca Core (Jenkins, 2000) is not something which teachers in the UK consider much, even if ‘intelligibility’ is the main goal. Thus teachers’ perceptions of the concept of ‘intelligibility’ seem based on whether they (who are
predominantly native speakers operating in a language learning environment) can understand what their students are saying, rather than on particular features of English pronunciation.

Only 19% felt that sufficient time was spent on pronunciation practice whereas 47% wished to spend more time on it. Given that most teachers felt comfortable working on pronunciation, it is unclear what prevents so many teachers from spending as much time as they would like on pronunciation. One teacher commented that it is a ‘shame pronunciation practice becomes marginalised’, but did not suggest why; another that it is hard to spend enough time on it when working from a coursebook; and yet another that (s)he would like to feel better able to respond to specific pronunciation problems as they come up. The range of responses and comments on this question support Celce-Murcia et al.’s (2010) argument that pronunciation practice in class depends very much on the teacher.

66% of teachers stated that they deal with pronunciation frequently (most or all lessons) which is a little surprising given the proportion of teachers who felt they would like to spend more time on it. This perhaps indicates that teachers’ concerns are based on a lack of clear framework or lack of confidence about how to deal with pronunciation and how much time to spend on it, as highlighted by Macdonald (2002) and Baker (2011). Another noteworthy aspect of these answers is the disparity between teacher and students perceptions of time spent on pronunciation. Proportionally, considerably more teachers (58%) than students (23%) think they practise pronunciation ‘most lessons’.

It might be surmised that if pronunciation is dealt with predominantly by error correction throughout the lesson, students might not realise that they actively focus on pronunciation. However, as 77% of teachers report using published pronunciation materials in their lessons (question 5), this would be surprising. It is more likely that there is a significant difference between student and teacher perceptions of pronunciation practice, particularly as teachers’ views appear far less consistent than students’.

4.2.3 Teachers’ goals in teaching pronunciation

As in 4.2.1, this section considers what teachers feel students’ goals are in pronunciation and teachers’ objectives in teaching it. It is immediately noticeable that once again teachers’ opinions vary widely, as can be seen from the responses to questions 3, 9, 11 and 12. In answer to the statement in question 3 (that ‘students coming to study in the UK want to sound like native speakers’) a majority (58%)
believed most students would like to sound like native speakers, whereas 42% were unsure or disagreed. This contrasts starkly with the 78% of the 70 students for whom sounding like a native speaker was important and had a bearing on their decision to study English in the UK.

The responses to question 11, however, on students’ desire to retain their own accents when speaking English, are fairly reflective of students’ opinions. Nevertheless, 3 teachers did not answer this question, one commenting that (s)he did not feel that students actively considered this. What is perhaps most surprising is that one teacher felt that most students wished to retain their L1\(^4\) accents when speaking English. However, this teacher also added that (s)he did not feel students had reflected on this.

The teachers’ approach to error correction provided the widest range of answers. In response to the statement in question 9 (‘I only correct pronunciation mistakes if they interfere with communication’) 43% agreed that they only correct mistakes relating to intelligibility, while 35% disagreed. It may be inferred that the remaining teachers perhaps felt that this depends on the student (since they selected ‘neither agree nor disagree’). It is worth noting that over half of those who agreed also recognised that most students coming to study in the UK wished to sound like native speakers. Therefore it seems these teachers, while recognising this desire among students, still prioritise intelligibility or feel that over-correction may de-motivate (as one teacher commented).

The diversity of opinions for this question seems inconsistent with the overwhelming agreement shown regarding the goals of pronunciation teaching. This is unequivocally demonstrated in response to question 12 (‘my main goal in teaching pronunciation is…’). The main objective for 88% of teachers is to help students to be intelligible (without worrying about accent). One teacher added that while higher level students may be able to aim for a more native-like pronunciation, asked ‘what is a native accent?’.

Although this question is valid, and one which has been asked frequently in academic literature (for example, Morley, 1991; Pennington, 1996), neither teachers nor students seem to have any difficulty distinguishing, for example, a Spanish or Arabic accent. Therefore, perhaps the question of what constitutes a native accent becomes less relevant in this context where it is contrasted with the student’s L1 accent.

\(^4\) L1 – First language or mother tongue
Of the 12% whose main goal was to help students sound more like native speakers, 1 teacher commented that it depends on the students’ objectives and that if it is not important to them, then intelligibility is the main goal. Another added that while (s)he did not want to ‘take’ students’ accents away from them, this goal was valuable for enabling students to make themselves understood and for ‘listening skills’. The first part of this comment seems almost to offer an excuse for having chosen this goal, even though the teacher explains its relevance. This demonstrable gap between students’ and teachers’ goals does beg the question: why is there such a marked difference between teachers’ and learners’ declared goals?

With emphasis on the need for intelligibility in pronunciation, criticism of native speakers who ‘impose’ their accents on learners (for example Jenkins, 2000; Walker, 2010), as well as debate over what constitutes a native accent (referred to by some participants in this research), it is possible that some teachers in the UK feel that it is not ‘politically correct’ or ‘academically sound’ to state that they aim to help students achieve a more native-like pronunciation. However, a more likely explanation is that most teachers feel that aiming for native-like pronunciation is unrealistic.

4.3 Focus Groups
This section discusses the findings from the two focus groups using the same categories as the questionnaire data. However, ‘attitudes to correction’ merited its own discussion within the section on classroom experiences.

4.3.1 The value of pronunciation practice
Corroborating the findings of the questionnaires, all the students in the focus groups valued pronunciation practice and several gave examples of communication breakdowns resulting from pronunciation difficulties:

“I went to the café and I ordered cappuccino, but I have got cup of tea...(laughter)....twice!”

and: “I wanted to ask where is the, where is the tower. Towel? Towel. But she couldn’t understand me so I was very shocked.”

In most cases, as in these examples, students reported instances of struggling to make themselves understood, but in only one example did the difficulty involve not understanding the native speaker:

“He asked me um: ‘what is your er, your phone?’ type, your type of phone, something like that, erm, Samsung or iPhone. I- I ca- I couldn’t understand and I asked him for 5 times. So finally I asked him to write it.”

Since students mainly recalled occasions when their own pronunciation impeded communication, this corroborates the questionnaire results that students perceive pronunciation study to be more useful for their own speaking rather than for understanding others.

It is therefore unsurprising that almost half of the students mentioned the effect of pronunciation on their confidence. One student explained that when English people didn’t understand her, it made her ‘hesitate to speak’ and several other students from both levels agreed.

Five students referred to the teaching in their home country focusing on writing, and grammar rather than oral communication. These students confirmed that their previous lack of pronunciation practice has had a negative effect on their confidence. Thus in both groups, pronunciation was considered an essential aspect of language learning which needed to be focused on in the classroom.

Furthermore, several commented on the difficulty of learning pronunciation, pointing out that incorrect pronunciation can completely alter the meaning of a word. This supported the view that it should be given classroom attention, particularly since, as several students pointed out, it is not an area in which they can make much progress by self-study.

4.3.2 Students’ classroom experience and expectations
Students in both groups agreed that they would like more pronunciation work within their lessons but the preferred approach differed significantly between the two groups. Most students in the Intermediate focus group were keen to have separate pronunciation classes. This was exemplified by a perceived current lack of pronunciation instruction received:

“when we have new word, teacher teach us about pronunciation, but that’s all.”
Another student in this group, although attaching significance to pronunciation, stressed the need to avoid becoming fixated on it, commenting:

“let this matter for the time and you, you don’t want to, you don’t want to er, make yourself tired about learning pronunciation.”

Nevertheless this student also expressed disappointment at not having had more pronunciation instruction, particularly as he was nearing the end of his course, and said that he would also have liked to attend a specific pronunciation class, suggesting:

“every week, one lesson to pronunciation.”

While these views almost seem contradictory, it is interesting that the student was able to reconcile them within himself, thus supporting Subtirelu’s point that even one student may hold a variety of complex and apparently paradoxical opinions (Subtirelu, 2013).

At the higher level, only one student said that she would be keen to have a specific pronunciation class, while four others were more interested in having pronunciation integrated throughout their lessons, including discrete pronunciation slots. They suggested: correction throughout the class; a specific slot at the beginning of the lesson, but not too long; and to have

“practice um, in pronunciation and everything, but not just teaching pronunciation.”

Although most students at the higher level appear less interested in specific pronunciation instruction classes, previous learning experience rather than level seems to play a much greater role, a consideration highlighted by Harmer (2007). The one student in the higher level group who wanted a separate pronunciation class had experienced and enjoyed this when learning French in France and consequently thought:

“when I came here, I expected like this kind of class but, no, so I a little disappointed.”

Likewise a student in the Intermediate group had had a similar experience and said that “it was very effective” and that she would like something similar in the UK.
However, another student in the higher level focus group who had had a negative experience of pronunciation classes commented:

“It was, er one hour, er, but I don’t think that the, this way was useful because we had to study the phontics, you know? The symbols….to know how to use them, but I think that it was a waste of time because you study these symbols but are useless”.

This same student emphasised the need just to ‘practise’, but said:

“I don’t know how to do, but not a pronunciation class only”,

thus highlighting the negative effect this previous experience had on her perception of pronunciation classes.

The effect of previous learning on the students’ perceptions can also be seen with regard to practice activities. One of the reasons given in the Upper-Intermediate/Advanced group for the need to integrate pronunciation was to avoid:

“focusing on just like: ‘say this word’, ‘bla bla bla’ ‘say this word’, ‘bla bla bla’.”

This student’s perception of explicit pronunciation practice, each time she mentioned it, seemed to be entirely based on de-contextualised drilling exercises. When this group was prompted to think of other activities, a 15 second silence followed, after which three students said they had never “studied” or didn’t “know” any pronunciation activities and the only pronunciation ‘practice’ they could recall was essentially correction. In the Intermediate group, on the other hand, students suggested: repetition, imitation, singing songs, listening, learning phonetic symbols and learning pronunciation rules, in addition to teacher correction.

However it is delivered, whether integrated with other skills and exercises, given in discrete teaching slots, or via separate pronunciation classes, all of the students indicated that they wanted a better idea of the ‘rules’ of pronunciation, specifically to highlight any corresponding spelling and pronunciation patterns.

4.3.2.1 Attitudes to correction

The aspect of students’ expectations which provoked a deal of discussion, and indeed agreement, was the desire for correction. Every student commented that they wanted to be corrected and, as in the
questionnaire responses, most wanted to be corrected regardless of whether or not they could be understood:

“you keep saying the same word wrong and nobody corrects you, you think that it’s correct”.

One student from each group said that they did not know if they made pronunciation mistakes and if so what these were.

The conversations in both groups indicated that students perceive ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ pronunciation or ‘good’ and ‘bad’, as in the following examples:

“I would like to, I would like them to correct me if I don’t er, have the great pronunciation”; and

“I like when someone correct me a word that I say badly”.

However, teachers (as shall be discussed in section 4.4) seem to focus on mistakes which impede intelligibility, rather than simply ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Yet, based on both the focus group discussions and the responses to the student questionnaires (in section 4.1.3), it is doubtful whether students discriminate between types of error in this way.

4.3.3 Students’ pronunciation goals

In line with the questionnaires, the majority of students in the focus groups stated that they wished to sound like native speakers of English. The three who did not state this goal, wanted to understand and be understood by native speakers, and one of them explained the wish to be able to hold conversations fluently on deep topics with native speakers.

Half of the students explained that intelligibility comes first, but that you can then ‘improve’ this and ‘speak perfectly’.

Even where intelligibility is the main goal, the students prioritised communication with native speakers in the UK although two students mentioned the need to be understood by people around the world, when travelling or for international business purposes.

Students in both groups commented that teachers, due to their professional understanding and their exposure to foreign accents, were better able to understand them than other native English speakers.
This prompted widespread agreement from others in the groups who felt that it was easier to be understood (and to understand) in the classroom than outside it:

“The teacher understand because he she listen many different pronunciation and is understand the meanings. The English people no”.

In discussing whether their goals were for more native-like pronunciation or to be understood, one student summarised: “it’s both. It’s not one or the other. It’s just both.”

All were adamant that they did not actively wish to retain their own accent when speaking English, a couple going as far as to say they ‘hate’ their L1 accent when speaking English. Therefore despite explanations that students wish to retain their accent because of its reflection of a person’s identity (e.g. Dalton & Seidhlofer, 1994; Jenkins, 2007; Walker, 2010) the students in this research give the opposite impression. This may be reflective of their choice to study in the UK, but some also pointed out that although it can be difficult to understand native speakers of English, it is also very hard to understand non-native speakers from other language backgrounds.

4.4 Teacher interviews
In the following sections, the information gleaned from the interviews with teachers will be divided into the same areas as the questionnaires. ‘Perceptions of pronunciation and of student attitudes’ are included within section 4.4.2 on ‘classroom experience’ and error correction is discussed alongside teachers’ goals in section 4.4.3.

4.4.1 The value of pronunciation practice
All five teachers interviewed agreed that pronunciation practice in the classroom is useful. The two main reasons for this view were that the students need to be understood and that they need to understand native English speakers in the UK:

“If they’re living here, they need to be understood outside the classroom”; and

“It’s not just them producing it, it’s learning to understand it”.

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4.4.2 Classroom experience

Although all the teachers agreed on the value of pronunciation, ideas on its implementation varied. Nevertheless, all five felt it should be integrated throughout the lesson:

“it’s part of everything, umm, so I- so I- I include it”; and

I deal with pronunciation “as it comes up”.

However, experiences varied as to the kind of pronunciation practice that was given. Two teachers emphasised correction. Two others talked about the use they made in class of reading aloud, though both seemed to feel that perhaps this was not well thought of:

“quite often, I know it’s a very old-fashioned thing to do, but we have, you know they read a little bit from the- a text, and I say: ‘right, we’re going to read and I’m going to check your pronunciation’.”

and: “I do sort of a lot, sort of dictations with them, um, I get them to read aloud to each other, so yes it’s quite um, it’s sort of quite, perhaps it’s not sort of very EFLish”.

It is interesting that while both teachers feel that this method may be regarded critically within the profession, they still felt it had value. Even more interestingly, students in the focus groups also gave this as a specific example of a useful method of pronunciation practice.

One of these teachers, who taught lower levels, also highlighted the value of making pronunciation ‘physical’, to make it as visual as possible. This teacher, along with another who predominantly taught lower levels talked about drilling new vocabulary. One explained:

“I would be emphasising sen- probably um, well possibly both word stress and sentence stress depending on whether I was drilling some words or drilling some phrases.”

This teacher talked about incorporating her own pronunciation ideas when drilling vocabulary, which prompts the question of whether such practice is predominantly viewed as ‘pronunciation’ or ‘vocabulary’, or whether the teacher even compartmentalises it in this way. If pronunciation is so much a part of the lesson that it is not perceived specifically as ‘pronunciation’ this may of course affect whether students feel that they are in fact practising pronunciation.
Only one teacher said that she made use of the phonemic chart in lessons, which seemed to affect, even constitute, her view of ‘focusing on pronunciation’ since much of the discussion centred on this. This perception was most marked when she stated:

“I think I’ve been lax, I mean I, I always correct pronunciation and um, I quite often use the chart to explain the difference between minimal pairs for example, and do the symbols, um, but I mean there may be some days where you know, there- it hasn’t been, the pronunciation hasn’t been, well the chart hasn’t been used.”

These different interpretations of various terms among teachers became increasingly noticeable as the interviews progressed. One teacher wanted to clarify that she had correctly understood pronunciation to incorporate suprasegmentals. Two others indicated that they understood ‘explicit’ pronunciation instruction to mean a whole lesson devoted to it and, similarly, another teacher seemed to feel that to ‘focus’ on pronunciation involved either whole lessons or discrete teaching slots.

Evidently, teachers seem to treat, and even perceive, pronunciation practice quite differently. This reflects the findings in the questionnaires, highlighted in the varied responses to questions 4-8 about classroom experience. Therefore, students’ varying perceptions of pronunciation practice may be shaped by their diverse experiences with teachers, particularly given the variety in teacher views as to what constitutes pronunciation practice.

It is interesting that one teacher drew a direct comparison between desire for an explicit focus on pronunciation and students’ level:

“I’ve had individuals maybe say that ‘I want to do pronunciation’ um, but maybe that comes more when they get to a really high level um ‘cause the ones sort of int. level, they just keep- want the communication don’t they’.”

It must be noted that this teacher had recent experience of teaching Advanced classes which included students keen to achieve a more native-like accent. However, most seemed to consider that pronunciation could get ‘better’ at a higher level:

“leave the refining of their pronunciation skills to the more advanced kind of, until they get to the more advanced kind of levels”; and
“if they get to you know, Upper-Int, or if they’re doing an e- a Cambridge exam, they want to get their accent because their language is so good, that’s what’s left to work on, kind of the icing on the cake”.

However, this view is a little surprising since a clear majority of teachers believed pronunciation is integrated throughout the lesson at each level. (In the teacher questionnaires 84% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ this was the case.) Moreover, it is well-known that ‘unlearning’ acquired pronunciation is problematic, hence the difficulty of learning the pronunciation of a second language.

4.4.2.1 Perceptions of pronunciation and of students’ attitudes

Two of the five teachers admitted that they felt nervous dealing with pronunciation, because they do not feel that they have sufficient knowledge and would like a better understanding:

“it’s not the area that I feel confident in, umm and that has been, since my C- like on my CELTA, it was the area that I found most difficult actually including in my lessons”; “I feel a little bit ina- inadequate with pronunciation”

Nevertheless, all teachers recognised that students valued a focus on pronunciation, although there were one or two caveats, such as:

“I think that they enjoy it but not, not for too long”.

Overall, teachers perceived that their students had a positive attitude towards pronunciation practice, as shown in the following example:

“They really enjoy it and you, you er, they enjoy it because you can see they’re doing it”.

One teacher, although she said she likes working on pronunciation, did have some reservations about student reactions:

“I think I need to spend more time, I would like to but I’m worried that um, you know, they might think, well, you know: ‘What are we doing? Are we learning English or not?’”

Yet in both focus groups and the questionnaires students agreed that they would like more pronunciation practice and specific activities. This does lead one to question whether the cause of such apprehension is lack of teacher confidence or misunderstanding of students’ objectives and goals.
While teachers realised students’ value pronunciation practice, not all of them wished to deal with it overtly. This was particularly notable when one teacher said:

“the best I think is for it to be integrated, um, so that they, they don’t really, they don’t realise that they’re you know practising it”.

This teacher did go on to explain the need to spend some more time focusing on pronunciation sometimes. Others said that they avoided discrete teaching slots, seeming to believe that ‘integration’ of pronunciation is the opposite of ‘overt’ pronunciation practice:

“I don’t really so much like the idea of having a slot of pronunciation, um, but I do like the idea of trying to integrate the pronu- the pronunciation into, in- into the lesson as much as possible.”

These responses seem to highlight teachers’ varying perceptions of student attitudes and of pronunciation practice itself. This may in turn affect students’ views of pronunciation practice and may help explain why teachers seem to feel that more time is spent on pronunciation in class than students perceive (as evidenced in the questionnaires and the focus groups).

4.4.3 Goals and correction

All of the teachers seemed to recognise students’ desires for native-like pronunciation, explaining:

“it’s not sufficient for them to just communicate, they want it to sound like a native speaker”.

When asked if they had any experience of their students wishing to retain their own accent, none of the teachers had and some seemed quite surprised by the question, asking for repetition and even checking if they had correctly understood.

In relation to students’ pronunciation goals, one teacher explained:

“a lot of students do have that [sounding like a native speaker] as a, as a, as- as a goal but as I say, I think th- I think their expectation undergoes an adjustment and tha- for me, I think it’s a good adjust- a healthy adjustment, because I wouldn’t want them focusing overly on pronunciation if er, it wasn’t impeding communication too much.”

All of the teachers gave the impression that they mainly wanted to ensure students were intelligible and could communicate effectively. This therefore affects the attitude to correction; teachers stated that in determining whether and when to correct, they mainly considered whether or not they could understand
the student. However, none of them referred to any particular elements of language that affected intelligibility (for example, as highlighted in Jenkins’ Lingua Franca Core), though one referred to sentence stress and /θ/ and /ð/ (notably absent from the LFC) being “a key sound or sort of signature sound of, of, for English people”. Overall, teachers seem to assess intelligibility based on their own ability to understand an individual student’s pronunciation, as mentioned in section 4.2.2, based on the questionnaire findings. However, as noted by focus group students, teachers have an understanding of their pronunciation and accents and thus understand far more than other native speakers outside the classroom. This is somewhat borne out by teachers’ comments that the features they focus on depend on the students and their nationalities.

The difficulty of ‘mastering’ pronunciation and its potentially de-motivating influence cannot be denied and it may be that over time this affects students’ expectations (as indicated by the teacher quoted above), but it is worth considering whether teachers (who tend to emphasise intelligibility) have an effect on their students’ ambitions. There is evidently a difference between learners’ expectations and classroom experience, as well as significant variation among teachers in their perceptions of pronunciation instruction, issues which will be explored in the following chapter.
Chapter 5

Implications and Conclusion

This research into students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in English language learning has considered three research questions. These questions will therefore be used as a framework for discussion of the findings from this study. The consequent implications which arise from this will be considered in section 5.2, with reference to ‘the students and teachers in this research’, ‘classroom practice’, and ‘the teaching profession’. Suggestions for future research are then proffered and a final conclusion drawn from this research.

5.1. Outcomes from the Research Questions

5.1.1 What are students’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom?

The students involved in this research view pronunciation practice as important. The findings from the questionnaires and focus groups also highlight that most of these students seek a greater, more overt focus on pronunciation in class. Given students’ opinions that not enough time is currently spent on this area during lessons, two conclusions might be drawn. One is simply that the amount of time spent on pronunciation practice in class does not meet students’ expectations; the other is that students do not perceive certain pronunciation oriented activities as constituting pronunciation practice.

Students’ pronunciation goals are a significant factor. Overall, the majority of students indicated that their goal was to sound like a native speaker of English. However, some qualified these remarks, explaining that ‘perfecting pronunciation’ (working towards a more native speaker-like model) might follow later, a view perhaps caused by loss of motivation when faced with the difficulty of acquiring native-like pronunciation. However, the belief that this target becomes more achievable with a certain level of proficiency was a view shared, possibly even conveyed by teachers (though this requires further research; see section 5.3.2).

5.1.2 What are teachers’ perceptions of the place of pronunciation in the EFL classroom?

Almost every teacher involved in this research confirmed that they felt pronunciation was valuable for their learners and that it was particularly important for students to make themselves understood and to
understand native speakers while living and studying in the UK. Furthermore, teachers agreed on the need to integrate pronunciation practice throughout a class.

However, attitudes towards dealing with pronunciation were more heterogeneous. Some teachers referred to feelings of apprehension, alluding to insufficient knowledge and training, while others appeared to approach it enthusiastically. Several indicated that they would like to spend more time on pronunciation in class, but there was no clear unitary reason for this. The diversity of teachers’ opinions may relate to their perceptions as to what constitutes ‘pronunciation practice’, as demonstrated by ambiguity in teachers’ comments on the questionnaires as well as in the interviews.

As with the students, it is important to be aware of teachers’ goals in pronunciation teaching to better understand their perception of its place in the classroom. Almost all of the teachers in this study identified ‘intelligibility’ as their main goal of pronunciation teaching, but defined it by their own ability to understand their students’ pronunciation. This may be because they feel that aiming for a native speaker model is unrealistic. Alternatively, it may be that teachers do not feel sufficiently knowledgeable about pronunciation and thus are not adequately equipped to deal with problems and consequently avoid emphasis on it.

5.1.3 Are there any significant similarities or differences between students’ and teachers’ perceptions?

Participants in this investigation agreed that focusing on pronunciation in class was valuable. Here the similarities ended. Students’ and teachers’ respective goals for pronunciation learning were significantly different. Some teachers explained that they did not want to deprive learners of their identity by trying to cultivate native-like pronunciation.

The majority of students, on the other hand, stated that their ultimate ambition was to sound more like a native speaker of English. Significantly, the students, whether or not they agreed on native-like pronunciation as their main goal almost unanimously agreed that they did not want to retain their own L1 pronunciation when speaking English, which teachers recognised. Indeed suggestions that learners may wish to retain their accent as a display of their identity (for example in Walker, 2010) is directly contradictory to the ambitions of students in this research.
Moreover, the teachers’ goals for pronunciation instruction affect the extent of correction. The majority stated that they only correct pronunciation mistakes which impede communication. However, the vast majority of students expressed the wish for more pronunciation correction regardless of whether they could be understood. This highlights a possible discrepancy between teachers’ and students’ perceptions of errors. Where the former distinguish between mistakes which affect intelligibility and those which do not (but perhaps sound less like a native speaker), the latter seem only to recognise ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’.

5.2 Implications of the research

5.2.1 Implications for teachers and students in this research

While teachers and students tend to agree on the fundamental value of pronunciation, there are clear differences between students’ and teachers’ perceptions. This underlines the need for more effective communication between teachers and students.

There is no question that students’ needs and expectations must be taken into account when teaching, as highlighted by Morley (1991), Timmis (2002) and Scrivener (2005) among many others. This research suggests it is even more pertinent with adult learners who bring their previous learning experiences, and consequent expectations, with them into the classroom. The striking disparity between teachers’ and students’ pronunciation goals illustrates the need for teachers to seek and listen to their students’ opinions.

5.2.2 Implications for classroom practice

If teachers ascertain the real ambitions of students and respond to their opinions, there will inevitably be some effects on classroom practice. While these may vary between teachers, based on the responses in this research, likely outcomes may include more time spent considering corresponding spelling and pronunciation patterns in English (the ‘rules’ of pronunciation and spelling as students termed it). Furthermore, since most students wished for more pronunciation practice, but perceptions of what constituted ‘pronunciation practice’ varied, the inclusion of more discrete teaching slots and correction may be required.

5.2.3 Implications for the teaching profession
The prospect of more slots of overt pronunciation teaching or of a focus on spelling and pronunciation patterns may fill some teachers with foreboding given their apprehension towards dealing with pronunciation. As Macdonald (2002) highlights, a lot of teachers feel that their initial teacher training did not adequately prepare them for this. Therefore, it seems that more attention may need to be given to pronunciation teaching in teacher training. However, since the teacher training for many EFL teachers in the UK consists of a short, intensive course, it may be that continuing professional development in this area or a specific post-qualification course would be of more value.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

5.3.1 Perceptions versus practice

Since perceptions of pronunciation practice vary, further research, such as a combination of observations and follow-up discussions may provide useful insights into interpretations of ‘pronunciation practice’. This may also help to gauge teachers’ understanding of terminology in this area.

In order to better understand the gap between learners’ and teachers’ stated objectives for pronunciation, it would be worth investigating whether there is a difference between practice and perception; for example observing teachers’ use of correction and comparing it with their views on correction of mistakes which impede intelligibility.

5.3.2 Pronunciation goals

Another consideration from the conclusions drawn above relates to attaining a better understanding of students’ pronunciation goals once they are studying in the UK. A longitudinal study would therefore be valuable, such as that undertaken by Subtirelu (2013) in the USA. Furthermore, it would be worth investigating factors influencing students’ ambitions in order to discover whether teachers’ perceptions of difficulty have a noticeable effect on students’ learning objectives.

5.3.3 Factors which affect perceptions of pronunciation practice

Another useful element of research would be to discover whether there is any pattern relating to students’ beliefs, based on, for example, learning background, nationality, age or motivation.
It would also be interesting to discover other factors which influence teachers’ feelings towards pronunciation. Why do some feel uncomfortable about it? Why do they not spend as much time on it as they would like? More specific research into the experiences and effects of teacher training is necessary to identify whether there is a need for a supplementary course to provide further grounding in knowledge of pronunciation rules or patterns and how to teach pronunciation effectively.

5.4 Conclusion
The place of pronunciation in the EFL Classroom has altered dramatically in teaching methodology over the last century. This research, was a small-scale study conducted among students learning English in the UK, where they would need to communicate with native speakers, and the findings must be seen in that context. A similar study conducted in a different setting, e.g. an ELF context, might well yield different results.

This investigation demonstrates that the value of pronunciation study is undisputed, but that there are significant differences between students’ and teachers’ perceptions about its place in the classroom. These involve different attitudes towards correction as well as perceptions of what constitutes pronunciation practice which in turn stem from the different goals of students and teachers. Only with increased understanding of this area, will it be possible to address these differences in order to implement more effective pronunciation practice in the classroom, to the benefit of students and teachers alike.
Bibliography


**Appendix 1: Student questionnaire**

**The role of pronunciation in the EFL Classroom**

This questionnaire is for research purposes only and the aim is to gain a better understanding of what adult EFL students in the UK think about studying pronunciation. The questionnaire is anonymous and any information you provide will remain confidential.

Please tick one option for each sentence. If you are not sure, or if you think it depends, you can tick ‘neither agree nor disagree’. If you would like to add any extra information to your answer, please write comments below the question. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think American pronunciation is easier to understand than British pronunciation.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:** I can understand my teacher, but it’s difficult to understand other English people, for example, in shops and restaurants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think practising pronunciation is useful.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think working on pronunciation will help English people to understand me.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think working on pronunciation will help me to understand English people.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I like practising pronunciation in class.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When I speak English, I prefer to sound like someone from my country than an English person.</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the reasons I came to study in the UK was to learn British pronunciation.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounding like a native speaker of English is important to me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like my teacher to correct my pronunciation mistakes even if he/she can understand me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you practise pronunciation in your classes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every lesson</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most lessons</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some lessons</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not often</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My main goal in pronunciation is: (please choose ONE option)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) to be understood even if I keep my accent</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) to sound more like a native speaker of English</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My main goal in pronunciation is: (please choose ONE option)

a) to be understood even if I keep my accent

b) to sound more like a native speaker of English

Comments: ____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Nationality: ______________________________
Class level: _____________________________
Age (please tick): 20 and under ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 50 and over ☐
How long have you been studying at your school? ____________________________
Please state why you are studying English (for example: to help me find a job/to go to university in the UK etc.)
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in the results, or if you have any questions, please contact me: xxxxxx
## The role of pronunciation in the EFL Classroom

Please note this questionnaire is for research purposes only and is aimed to gain a better understanding of teachers’ perceptions and experiences of teaching pronunciation in the EFL classroom. Any information you provide will remain anonymous.

Please tick only one option for each sentence. If there is anything you would like to add or explain for any of your answers, please write comments below the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think focusing on pronunciation is useful for my students.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think most of my students want an explicit focus on pronunciation.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think students coming to study in the UK want to sound like native speakers.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable dealing with pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use published pronunciation materials to focus on particular areas of pronunciation with the whole class.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to integrate pronunciation work throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have a clear idea of what pronunciation features to focus on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

I only correct pronunciation mistakes if they interfere with communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every lesson</th>
<th>Most lessons</th>
<th>Some lessons</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

How often do you practise pronunciation in your classes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every lesson</th>
<th>Most lessons</th>
<th>Some lessons</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

What proportion of your students do you think would like to retain their accents when they speak English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Not many</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

My main goal in teaching pronunciation is:

(please choose ONE option)

| a) to help students to be intelligible (without worrying about accent) |
| b) to sound as more like native speakers |

Comments: ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Nationality: __________________________ How long have you been teaching? __________________

Have you undertaken any courses in addition to your initial teacher training (eg. PG.Dip TESOL)? If so, please state: ________________________________________________________________________________________

Type of course currently teaching (eg. General English, ESP etc.): ______________________________________

Level(s) currently teaching: ______________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in the results, please do not hesitate to contact me: xxxxxxxxxx
Appendix 3: Questions and prompts for Focus Groups

1. Why did you choose to study in the UK?
   → As opposed to another English-speaking country, or as opposed to studying in your own country?

2. Do you think pronunciation is an important part of your language learning?
   → How much of your class time? Relevance? Why?

3. Do you feel positive about learning English pronunciation?
   → Enjoyable or unattainable challenge?

4. What is your main goal for pronunciation?
   → Would you like to sound like you are from your country? Intelligible to whom?

5. Can you identify any areas of pronunciation that might cause problems when you are communicating?
   → Certain vowel sounds/consonants/word stress/intonation/linking?

6. How important do you think focusing on pronunciation is to help you understand native speakers?

7. Would you like the teacher to correct your pronunciation
   → When? How much? On what basis?

8. Can you think of any useful pronunciation activities you have done in class?
   → Correction when mistakes happen? Slots of pronunciation work? Do you think you get better at pronunciation by practising speaking, without focusing on pronunciation specifically?

*Is there anything else you would like to talk about that I haven’t mentioned?
Appendix 4: Interview Guide

1. Do you think it is useful to focus on pronunciation in the classroom?

2. Do you think you include a lot of pronunciation work in your lessons?
   ➔ Do you feel comfortable dealing with pronunciation?

3. Do you think students coming to the UK are interested in sounding like native speakers of English?
   ➔ Do you think any of your students actively wish to retain their accents?

4. Do you feel your students want to focus on pronunciation?

5. How do you decide if and when to correct students’ pronunciation mistakes?
   ➔ How do you qualify what is a mistake as opposed to an accentual difference?

6. How do you identify which features of pronunciation to focus on?

7. How do you work on pronunciation in multi-lingual classes?
   ➔ Do you use published pronunciation activities/discrete teaching slots?

8. Do you feel you integrate pronunciation work throughout your lessons? How?

9. Would you like to spend more time on pronunciation? If so, what do you feel stops you?

10. Do you think your training adequately prepared you for teaching pronunciation?
Appendix 5: Consent Form

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of students’ perceptions of the role of pronunciation in the adult EFL classroom in the UK.

I confirm that I willingly take part in this research carried out by XXXXXXX for an MA dissertation at XXXXX University. I understand that the information I provide will remain confidential, that the discussion in which I am taking part is recorded solely for research purposes and I consent to the recording of this discussion. The researcher has agreed that I may have access to the research findings.

Signed: _________________________________
Appendix 6: Results from student questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Anomalies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>‘I think practising pronunciation is useful.’</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>28 (41%)</td>
<td>39 (57%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>‘I think working on pronunciation will help English people to understand me’</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>30 (43%)</td>
<td>39 (56%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I think working on pronunciation will help me to understand English people.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>37 (54%)</td>
<td>27 (39%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I like practising pronunciation in class.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>43 (61%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>23 (33%)</td>
<td>25 (36%)</td>
<td>12 (17%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When I speak English, I prefer to sound like someone from my country than an English person.</td>
<td>16 (23%)</td>
<td>31 (44%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>One of the reasons I came to study English in the UK was to learn British pronunciation.</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>12 (17%)</td>
<td>34 (49%)</td>
<td>20 (29%)</td>
<td>1 = ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sounding like a native speaker of English is important to me</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>31 (44%)</td>
<td>24 (34%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>‘I would like my teacher to correct my pronunciation mistakes even if he/she can understand me.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>22 (32%)</td>
<td>41 (59%)</td>
<td>1 = ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>How often do you practise pronunciation in your classes?</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>33 (48%)</td>
<td>16 (23%)</td>
<td>8 (12%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My main goal in pronunciation is...</td>
<td>27 (39%)</td>
<td>43 (61%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My ideal goal in pronunciation is...</td>
<td>22 (31%)</td>
<td>48 (69%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question number</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Anomalies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I think focusing on pronunciation is useful for my students.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I think most of my students want an explicit focus on pronunciation.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td>8 (31%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I think students coming to study in the UK want to sound like native speakers.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
<td>13 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel comfortable dealing with pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (12 %)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I use published pronunciation materials to focus on particular areas of pronunciation with the whole class.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>15 (58%)</td>
<td>5 (19%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I would like to spend more time on pronunciation work in class.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>9 (35 %)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td>3 (12 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I try to integrate pronunciation work throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>12 (46%)</td>
<td>10 (38%)</td>
<td>1 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have a clear idea of what pronunciation features to focus on.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>10 (40%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I only correct pronunciation mistakes if they interfere with communication.</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>8 (31%)</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
<td>9 (35%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>How often do you practise pronunciation in your classes?</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>7 (27%)</td>
<td>15 (58%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>What proportion of your students do you think would like to retain their accents when they speak English?’</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>15 (65%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 = no answer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My main goal in teaching pronunciation is...</td>
<td>23 (88%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8: Excerpt from transcript of focus group discussion

1  S1  For me, I think it’s very important (. ) because I found a problem (. ) when I [speak  
S2  ^mm^  <laughs> [laughs  
All  [laughs  
S1  with the native speaker (. ) They didn’t understand me.  
5  S3  ^yes^  
All  <laughs> (yes/mm/yes)  
S2  Yes.  
S4  Maybe y- you mean, you mean something (. ) and the people here, English  
S1  ^yes^  
10  S4  people [er: (. ) No, no, no (2) [thought, thought another thing.  
S1  [yeah  
S2  [Sorry?  ^Sorry?^[Can you repeat?  
All  <laughs> (yes/mm/yes)  
S3  Yeah.  
15  S4  Yeah, no, no, they- they- they think another thing.  
1-3  Yes.  
S1  A- a- and give me another thing!  
S4  Yeah  
1-3  Yeah  
20  S2  Or ‘sorry? Can you repeat please?’ <laughs>  
S3  <laughs>  
S1  Or sometime, like last time er f- first day that I went to um, to er: to, to UK, I- I  
went to er: telephone shop (. ) I would like to buy a SIM card (. ) an- and [I tol- I  
S3  ^ah^  [mm  
25  S1  told him that: “Oh, I would like to buy a SIM card (. ) please” and he asked me (. )  
S3  ^mhm^  
S2  ^mm^  
S1  Um “what is your f- er, your phone type? Your [type of phone” something [like  
4&5  [Mm  
30  2-4  [mhm  
S1  that. What erm, er Samsung (. ) or iphone?  
S4  ^mhm^
But I couldn’t understand and I asked him for five times, so finally I asked him to write it!

<laughs>

They said f- /fɜːn/ they’re not, they didn’t say /fɔːn/ like this

They said /fɜːn/ they’re not, they didn’t say /fɔːn/ like this

The /fɜːn/

Ah.

Mm, and there’s, there is the big problem here in England: they use er, th- er, English people here, they use er, the: phrasal verb. You can’t understand phrasal verb, you need long time to er to understand er, phrasal verbs.

Maybe, they, they mean, when they- when they use the l- the er:: the er, phrasal verb they meaning something and you didn’t understand something because you: because you need to practise with English people if you know, just er, y- you don’t- you don’t know- you don’t need just to stay at home and studying [verb, you can’t learn this, you need to practise with English people if you know, just er, you don’t need just to stay at home and studying. [verb, you need to stay.] Phrasal verbs.

English people and also and also you can’t find er, English people, they have er, or they have free time to practise English with you. No they have er, they have [mm, yes] mm, yes

[no, no] [mm, yes]

[mm]

work, or they have something else [else] and we: just we speak with er, with

another nationality: they speak, they er learning with you and this

won’t use the- a lot vocabulary er, may- maybe you- you will er, you will er,

improve yourself but, but it need long time.
S1 think for, for pronunciation (. ) it takes [time.
S5 ^yeah, yeah^

70 S2 [It's important [speak with the native (. ) er
S4 [yeah
S1 ^yes^
S2 people. [Yes, because-
S1 [Yes, yes, it’s important because you know, actually I- I bought the, er, a
75 3-4 [Yes
S1 book with a CD to [practise my [pronunciation (. ) but you know, it didn’t, it’s,
2&5 [laughs>
S4 <laughs>
S3 [oh, oh.
80 S1 didn’t (. ) rea;llly work because sometime um, I don’t know that, er, that I say (. )
S3 ^mhmm^
S1 is correct [or not.
S3 [mhm.
S2 [or not
85 S4 [yeah yeah yeah.
S1 But um, if u:m, if we- we er, study (. ) in class, the teacher can correct directly
S5 ^mm^
S1 (3) I think it’s better.
S2 ^yeah^
S5 [Yeah.
90 3-5 ^mhmm, yes^
S6 [mm mm.
S1 ^yeah^
S6 [you know the- BBC, that is the very standard pronunciation (. ) And, and er, if
S1 [I agree ^yeah^
S5 (3)
S6 you- if you want to: stu- study the local (. ) like local- local people speaking, you
95 S2 ^mm^
S1 ^mhm^
S6 have to spend lot- a long time (3) to listen, to listen a lot [a lot of er, a lot of-
1&3 ^mm mm^
100 S2 [this kind of, a lot of
S2 (inaud.) a lot of BBC.
S6 Yes.
Mm.

But I think this- this good chance to get here (.) because all the teachers from English (.) maybe if you didn- if you- if you don’t find the opportunity to stud- to

er, to- to practise your English with er, with- with students, or with English people (.) you can practise your English with er, with the student he- with the teachers here.

Mm, yes

Mm mm mm yes. I heard, um, mm, for me (.) [also er-

[is easy because you have <laughs>

<laughs>

[No:

[Yes.

English friends. <laughs>

No no no. <laughs> Um, pronunciation is very important and I heard er, the word, er, I cannot pronounce (.) mm but (.) mm, I cannot (.) [hear.

[ah::.

Do you understand?

[N- n-

[Mm, pardon?

I- I cannot hear the word [which I cannot pronounce (.) [mhmm

[ah::.

[If- if you cannot er, notice (.) the- the- how to er: the word pronounce (.) for example, for me (.) I
cannot erm, er, find the different betwe- between ‘want’ [and ‘won’t’

[won’t <laughs>

[mm yes <laughs>

[yes, similar

I think it’s the same! [Won- won

Yes, or cheap and [chip is the [same

[ye::s

[mhm

[but you know
Mm, mm.

So I, now- now yeah, I cannot pronounce if I cannot, er, distinguish the different between the word (.) could be the same thing.

^mm::^ Um, I went to:: the café and I ordered ‘cappuccino’ but er, I have got (.) ‘cup of tea’.

<laughs> Twice!
Appendix 9: Sample transcription of teacher interviews – Teacher A

1 R Ok, I’m just going to ask you about um your ideas about pronunciation teaching and it’s just to reflect how you feel about it, what you think you do. It’s not about good practice or right or wrong, it’s just to get an idea of teachers’ perceptions.

5 T Ok

R So firstly do you think it’s useful to focus on pronunciation in the classroom for the students we have here?

T I do because if they’re living here they need to be understand outside the classroom and I think if you let them continue with pronouncing words incorrectly, when they leave the classroom they’re not going to be understand.

10 R Mm

T Um, however, I don’t think it’s always necessary to focus on perfect pronunciation. It’s just so that it’s (2) um (3) can’t think of the [word (]

15 R [I-

T understandable.

R Yeah.

T Um, and it’s very rare I have to say that I do a whole lesson just on pronunciation.

R So when you do pronunciation, do you do it as like “now I’m doing some pronunciation”? [or do you- Right, ok.

20 T [no. I think um (3) I tend to think that model and drilling is probab-, well, when I say model and drilling it’s not always drilling as a whole class and then you know, everyone together and then I quite often just ask a student to repeat a word um or: I- I give them a word that’s similar to help them pronounce it um but I don’t say: “let’s do pronunciation”. [I don’t think I’ve ever said that [ever

25 R [mm ^hm^ yeah

a::nd so do you (2) think that you include a lot of pronunciation in your lessons?

T I something think that I don’t include enough um, because I’m, I have to say,
I’m not 100% confident teaching it (.) because I’ve always found that when I (2) say something over and over again I almost start to (. ) sound strange in my head (. ) um so I sometimes feel that I’m (. ) not teaching them (. ) exactly how it should

^mm^ be said (. ) um so I do worry about it, I don’t, it’s not the area that I feel confident in (2) um: and that has been (. ) since my C- like on my CELTA it was the area that I found most difficult (. ) actually including it in my lessons (2) um and all the way through.

Why do you think you don’t feel confident with it? Do you think that’s (. ) because of lack of preparation on CELTA o do you think it’s (. ) difficult for you to hear or:-

I think- I think sometimes I find it very difficult to hear (2) um, (2) like you know sometimes when you do those exercises (. ) where you, you can feel, you know, can you feel where your- your tongue is [or, or your jaw dropping and, I find it very difficult to sort of, feel that [so therefore I don’t feel confident (. ) um]

[yeah passing it over to the students (. ) um: I’- I’m (. ) very aware that because I don’t feel confident about it, I don’t want to give them anything that might (. ) be incorrect (. ) u:m so: I mean for me, I also (. ) have never been 100% confident ^mm^ using the phonemic chart in the lessons (. ) um I think that’s just one of those things that you kind of (. ) you know you have (. ) you have things that almost are your (. ) nemesis in a way, um and I don’t know why (. ) [it’s just one of the- one

[mm area that has been my- you know, problem um (. ) I do thinks, you know, for example if they have the word ‘cough’ [and they’re saying /kəʊf/ and I’m like [mhm

T “it’s ‘cough’ like ‘coffee’” and then they get it right (. ) [that sort of thing. I tend [mhm
to-obviously that could then lead to problems with spelling but it’s, you know (.)

^mm^ it- it works quite often.

So do you think not wanting to use th- phonemic chart (.) or anything e- or worrying about not being able to feel (.) where your mouth goes or tongue or whatever that (.) that affects how you feel about teaching pronunciation as a whole or do you think it just affects (.) using those particular techniques?

I’d like to say I think it’s just using those particular [techniques um (.) because (.)

[ok when I do teach, I find that I’m getting them to say it correctly (.) just by repetition (.) u::m and getting them to repeat it (.) i- almost like m- model and drilling sometimes with an individual student [just going backwards and forwards until

[mmh
they've got it things.

And do I think mainly it's I feel that my pronunciation technique teaching technique could be better with those aspects of it, with you know, ^oh right^ chart and you know, telling them how to use their mouths those techniques could be better. If I said that, a lot of students don't know the chart so would it really, you know, using it that much, would it really be that beneficial? I don’t know.

Ok. I think most students want to sound like I would say an English person, well, they say English. I think a lot of students don’t think that their level of English is good unless they have good pronunciation,
nicate, they want it to sound (2) like a native

^mm^ speaker. I’ve had students say to me: “I want to sound like a native speaker” (.)

um, bu- u- you know, as- as I- as- as you know (2) we have one accent [but we, you

R

T

know, there’s n- n- the northern accent, there’s the Welsh, there’s the American, um (. so from my point of view, as long as they’re understood (. and they can communicate, do they need to sound like a native? Bu::t, a lot of them- that’s what they want (. that’s what they want.

R

T

^mm^ Mm.

That’s what I’ve found any[way.

R

T

[yeah. So (2) what (. I wonder then, is when, if you think your students want to sound like a native speaker (. w-, how do you respond to correcting them? Do you feel, do you still only correct what you think they need to be intelligible or do you think you [correct any (inaud.) that are-?

[no:: I- I think I do- I mean I- with the model and drilling, I’m saying it (. and I’m a native speaker and I’m getting them to say it like me (2) um, although having said that, when I’ve had

R

T

good. I think

R

T

Japanese students maybe (. that I haven’t understood what they’re saying (. I jus- um just have to get it to a point where you can understand them (. whereas a lot of some

them ^mm^ don’t students who you know what they’re saying already (. you can help them perfect (. i-it.

R

T

sufficie That make sense?

R

nt for[Yeah.

them [It’s almost like on a scale I guess.

(.) to Depending where they’re at.

just Yeah.
Yeah.
So if they’re a student that really struggles with pronunciation, maybe your aim is different from a student who’s actually pretty good and could get to that level.

Mm, ok. Um and, do you think any of your students actually actively want to keep their accent? (2) Have you ever [had a student…

[I don’t think I’ve ever had a student that has either said that or seems to think that. I don’t think. I’ve never had a student that says: “I want to sound Spanish when I’m speaking English”.

Mm.

Um (2) I’ve had students that aren’t bothered about sound- about keeping their own accent. I’ve had students that want to communicate and don’t mind if they’ve got an accent like Spanish or or whatever accent behind it (2) but I’ve never had students actually say: “I want to keep my accent” (2) [does- They don’t mind (2) um it’s not a problem for them but it’s not that they prefer it.

Mm.

Yeah?

Yeah. Yeah. No no- that’s basically what I wanted to find out. U::m ok (2) and (2) do y-, still thinking about students’ expectations, do you think that a lot of your students want to focus on pronunciation explicitly?

(2) Um (2) I- <hhh> (.) N- no. I- We:ll, I’ve found that a lot of students have mentioned it but not (2) they haven’t seemed to put that sort of- the number
one thing just that’s what’s left [to work on, kind of the icing on the cake.

I haven’t want I keep-

had athe class commu

where nicatio

they’ve n don’t said: “I they (.)

just want that’s-
to doum, pronuncia wherea

tion”. s if Mm. they

Um (.)

I’ve had (. you

individual know, s maybe upper-
say that. int or if “I want to they’re do doing

pronuncia an e- a

tion” (.) Cambri

but maybe dge that exam, comes they

more want when they (. to

get to get a

really their high level accent

(2) un because ‘cause the their ones sort langua

of int ge is so level, they good,
also- it’s not just they need the pronunciation so that they can understand people.

Mm.

Um they need- they need a level of pronunciation to be able to understand English people, because otherwise they’re like: “What are you saying?” <laughs>

I- yeah, so it’s not just them producing it, it’s learning to understand it isn’t it.

[I think]Mm.

so I guess. So (inaud.) sorry I don’t know (inaud.) <laughs>

because <laughs>

they probably given me an idea, but how do you decide if and when to correct their pronunciation mistakes?

Or do you just do it as-

As and when um I think it’s just, for me, it’s almost like an integral part of the lesson so if you’re- if they’re doing a writing exercise, they’re doing a writing exercise. If they’re doing a speaking exercise, they’re doing a speaking exercise and if it’s in groups, then I might, you know, if there’s one group that I’ve listened to and there’s a problem, I might help that group or at the end if there was a-

something that particularly everyone was struggling with, I might say: “ooh-“, you know, I might write the word on the board and say w-, you know, “can you tell me what that word is”. [So that I can hear what they’re saying] um but it’s but then not-

it surprises me ‘cause they’ll say it perfectly and I’m like: “so why when you were speaking did you not say it well” because I think when they’re talking very the- they’re trying to communicate they’re communicating, they’re not trying

^ok^
to say it perfectly (. ) but when you speci- specifically ask them one word in like (. ) a- a solitary word, they’ll (. ) say (. ) (inaud.)

R <laughs> Ah ok (. )

T U:m (3) a:nd (. ) what about if you do (. ) decide to (. )

R ^maybe?^

T sort of (. ) well, do you ever decide to focus on, like you said you deal with pronunciation as and when it comes [up, do you ever think (. ) “ok, no I think we’re going to focus on this aspect of pronunciation today (. ) and if you do, how do you decide (. ) what features to focus on?

R (2) Mm:: (3) um: let me think about that one. Er-

T Or even in a mingle or something, if (. ) if something comes up, how do you decide whether or not to draw attention to it?

R Um::, I think- if it’s (. ) if it’s a- an individual (. ) if they’re doing mingling, yeah (. ) if they’re, if they’re- a mingling activity and I can hear one student saying something (. ) and I’ve hear them a couple of times say it incorrectly (. ) then I might just /say/ you know, get their attention, say it to them (. ) individually or go up to them and say it individually. If there’s something that is proble- seems problematic for a lot of the- or the whole class, then in the class feedback at the end (. ) I might bring it up together with the grammar and the vocabulary. I might (. ) you know, if there’s a specific word or something (. ) um and I might ask them you know, say: “you say it. You say it.” <points> I don’t know, say: “Kanako and (. ) Carlos and (. ) Jorge” and then all together (. ) model and [drilling really, but as I said, I do (2)

R [mm

T I th- I do include pronunciation, but I think (. ) because I (. ) don’t specifically say: “right, I’m going to do that pronunciation” (. ) I don’t always think of it as (. )

R [mm

T [pronunciation (. ) um so I know I include it because I quite often (. ) get the students

R [yeah.
to r-^yeah^ repeat words back to me and^yeah^ say it to each other (.) but I don’t (.) sort of think (.) this is pronunciation (.) so I think it’s just kind of cu- it- it’s part of everything ^yeah^ (2) u:m so I- so I- I include it (.) but I- because I don’t (.) think "that’s a
I think for me it probably depends on the level of class of student. Right, ok.

Because if they’re 2 I mean I’ve recently taught some here (.) a couple, you know some girls in (.) who’d advanced (.) and I think from them, it’s 2 be to try and perfect it (.) whereas 2 lower down, it’s probably 2 more (.) so that they can be understood (.) um: (.) because you know if someone says a word and I don’t know what they’re saying (.) what’s the point of them saying that word? Um (.) so if mean (.) that they can- but some- you know if they can, if- after, you know, model and they drilling it for a bit, they get there (.) and they can get to (.) where we are then great, but if not, it’s just to be understood.

And I think it depends on the student (.) and obviously different nationalities (.)

Or do you mean they just, make (.) it’s (.) not just, make (.) it’s (.)

I don’t know, a Chinese student that really struggles with a word so you just want them to make sure that they can say it, and be understood (.) whereas

if you have, I don’t know, um (.) I don’t know, a Spanish student (2) and (.) they say it well, you could get it so that they’re almost perfect so I think it just depends

So, if um (.) you think s- they’re
(.) yeah?

^mhm^ Yeah, ok. Thank you. Um and (.) ok, how do you find working on pronunciation in multi-lingual classes? Do you find it easy or difficult to (.) um (.) deal with different students having different (2) [problems

with pronunciation?

I don’t think that’s a problem because you can (.) again, if you’ve got um, pair activities or minglings, you- or- or even if it’s a whole class activity, you can (.) go up to an individual student (2) and when you’re monitoring a mingling activity,

^mm^ you can (.) you know, if there’s a Japanese student that’s saying ‘recent’- ‘recentry’ (2) um then you can help them individually while everyone else is getting on with

^hm^ <laughs>

it (.) ‘cause a Spanish student or Italian student doesn’t have that problem [so

there’s no point (.) focusing on that sort of point with twelve students when it’s only (.) a problem that two of them have.

Mhm.

Um, so I don’t think it’s a problem really (.) um and I- and in- in a way I think it’s

^ok^ quite nice (.) because if a- I’ve taught a lot of mono-ling- mono-lingual classes (.) um (.) mainly Spanish (.) mono-lingual classes, and (2) they (.) are almost like: “well, my partner can understand me, but of course your partner can understand you because they’ve got the same native language (.) whereas h- a mu- multi-lingual class here, they make more of an effort to be understood, because it’s harder (.) um, so if you’ve got two Spanish together, they’ll be like: “I said it” and I said:

^mm^ “well, your partner understood you, but I didn’t.”
Mm. the
So it’s pronunciation because the I think, the partner gets has that better.
accent as well, so they’d say it the same way whereas if you’ve got a Spanish and a (.) Japanese (2) they have to make [more of] and therefore [yeah an effort (.) and therefore
you don’t- I’m saying ‘Spanish’ just because that’s what I’ve had more experience
pronunciation think: “well, everyone- I’m everyone’s understanding me.”

Yeah, so multi-lingual actually makes them, I’m like: “well, yes, but not really um, they’re understanding you because they (.)
made (.) ye- so multi-lingual actually makes them make more of an effort in a way, multi-lingual, even if none of, you know, obviously they’re all (.) none of them are native English speakers, but a multi-lingual class can actually help each other, I think.

Mm. So, bearing in mind you’ve already sort of said that you integrate it in your lessons and things, but also taking you back to the beginning a little bit, where you said perhaps you don’t do enough, would you like to spend more time on pronunciation in your lessons?

Because if it helped them. Yeah.

Um (.) I mean I’ve heard people say you shouldn’t just focus on, you shouldn’t just have an hour- a um, an hour and a half lesson on pronunciation ‘cause there’s no point um and you should try and mix it with other stuff, which I do already.

And which, also perhaps means that when you know, 315
think that sometimes (2) I- I do the pronunciation, but maybe don’t keep it
going enough because (2) I’m a little bit uncomfortable with it, to be honest.

Ok.

Um (.) I mean you hear people say model and drilling can sound patronising
sometimes (.) and I think it can (.) although when I’ve done it and I’ve
persevered

[^mm^]

with it, they seem to quite like it, [the students (.) um, so I think- I think I would

[^mhm^]

[^yeah^]

Yeah, yeah. So you’d sort of (.) [see it

through

[^so^][I’d still-

a bit more.

Yes, [exactly, exactly (.) and I’d (.) yeah, I’d persevere with it a bit more.

[yeah, ok.

So that comes down to how comfortable you feel with it, do you think that your
teacher training (.) adequately prepared you for dealing with pronunciation?

Um, when I did my CELTA (.) and the Diploma (.) I found that- I found the
pronunciation sections (.) almost the most interesting because it was quite new (2)

[^mm^]

um: I think it (.) the CELTA, it was um (2) it was a start because I’d taught before
[but I hadn’t taught it (.) how I saw it on the CELTA (.) a:nd (.) I think it was a
start

[^mm^]

but I think (.) the problem is (.) you have it on the CELTA (.) and then, you’re let
go (.) and I think pronunciation for me, and I imagine for quite a few people, is
the

[^mm^]

sort of thing that it would be very helpful to have (.) almost like a- you know, a
regular (.) workshop (.) um, because, grammar I can look up in my grammar
books

[^mm^]
(.  u:m,
vo- an-
things like, it-
you know, exercises,
I can-, but, I think pronuncia-
tion is, if someone gets you involved and gets you excited about it, I find, you know, it kind of spurs you on a bit. and I think pronunciation is one of those skills that— (2) it’s active isn’t it [it’s- it’s- you need to do it to practise it.
[yeah
Mm.
And there’s very little that you can do sort of on your own. So, for me I think if there was anything that I could choose to have training on regularly, it would be pronunciation. If there was anything that I could choose to have training on regularly, it would be pronunciation. I think there’s a pronunciation lesson and therefore maybe I feel a little bit inadequate with the pronunciation but then I know that I include it throughout lessons and it would be that. Hanco I don’t know which is better.

Mm, sock. Ok. almost Mark 380 like, even Hanco a post-ck’s CELTA talk. extension every kind of-time I on go to
Um, you know, I don’t know, maybe neither’s better, neither.”

Mm, yes.

Um, so is it better to have a whole lesson just on pronunciation? Or is it better to just sort of include it as you know, every lesson that, as you go along? I don’t know. Um, but I don’t think there’s anything else that I can think of. I’ll probably think afterwards of something to say.

Well, you can always tell me and I’ll quickly point the dictaphone at you!

<laughs>
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