


Does Training Influence EFL Practitioners' Pedagogical Approaches and Techniques to Teach Pronunciation in Spanish Secondary Schools? A Survey Study

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Abstract: Although researchers generally agree that pronunciation instruction benefits students' communicative skills in the second language, some teachers keep avoiding it in class. In fact, many of them claim that they lack the necessary training to teach pronunciation effectively. This study aims at investigating how training in pronunciation and pronunciation teaching affects EFL teachers' pronunciation practice in secondary schools in Spain. Thirty-eight teachers took an online survey from May to October 2023. Percentages were provided and Fisher's exact tests were run to examine the use of both pronunciation theory and practice in the classroom. Results reveal that both general pronunciation and pronunciation teaching training encourage the introduction of theoretical explanations. Besides, teachers tend to introduce innovative methods and feedback more when receiving specific training in pronunciation teaching, although practice seems to be present even if no training was received. These findings should be interpreted as a first step to understand the current situation of pronunciation instruction in the Spanish EFL classrooms to improve teacher training programs and guarantee an improvement in students' communicative skills.

Keywords: English as a foreign language; pronunciation instruction; pronunciation teaching techniques; teacher professional development.

ES ¿Influye la formación en los enfoques y técnicas pedagógicas utilizados por los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera para enseñar pronunciación en las escuelas secundarias españolas? Estudio mediante encuesta

Resumen: Aunque los investigadores generalmente coinciden en que la enseñanza de la pronunciación beneficia las habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes en la segunda lengua, algunos profesores la evitan en clase. De hecho, muchos afirman carecer de la formación necesaria para enseñar pronunciación eficazmente. Este estudio tiene como objetivo investigar cómo la formación en pronunciación y su enseñanza afecta la práctica de la pronunciación del profesorado de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en centros de secundaria en España. Treinta y ocho profesores participaron en una encuesta en línea entre mayo y octubre de 2023. Se proporcionaron porcentajes y se realizaron pruebas exactas de Fisher para examinar el uso tanto de la teoría como de la práctica de la pronunciación en el aula. Los resultados revelan que tanto la formación general en pronunciación como la formación en enseñanza de la pronunciación fomentan la introducción de explicaciones teóricas. Además, los profesores tienden a introducir métodos innovadores y retroalimentación con mayor frecuencia cuando reciben formación específica en la enseñanza de la pronunciación, aunque la práctica parece estar presente incluso sin formación. Estos hallazgos deben interpretarse como un primer paso para comprender la situación actual de la enseñanza de la pronunciación en las aulas españolas de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE), con el fin de mejorar los programas de formación del profesorado y garantizar una mejora en las habilidades comunicativas del alumnado.

Palabras Clave: Inglés como lengua extranjera; enseñanza de la pronunciación; técnicas de enseñanza de la pronunciación; formación docente.

FR La formation influence-t-elle les approches et les techniques pédagogiques utilisées par les professeurs d'anglais langue étrangère pour enseigner la prononciation dans les établissements secondaires espagnols ? Étude par enquête

Résumé : Bien que les chercheurs s'accordent généralement à dire que l'enseignement de la prononciation est bénéfique pour les compétences communicatives des élèves en langue seconde, certains enseignants continuent de l'éviter en classe. Nombre d'entre eux affirment même ne pas avoir la formation nécessaire pour enseigner efficacement la prononciation. Cette étude vise à analyser l'impact de la formation et de l'enseignement de la prononciation sur la pratique de la prononciation des enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère dans les établissements secondaires espagnols. Trente-huit enseignants ont répondu à une enquête en ligne de mai à octobre 2023. Des pourcentages ont été fournis et des tests exacts de Fisher ont été réalisés pour examiner l'utilisation de la théorie et de la pratique de la prononciation en classe. Les résultats révèlent que la prononciation générale et la formation à l'enseignement de la prononciation encouragent l'introduction d'explications théoriques. De plus, les enseignants ont tendance à introduire davantage de méthodes innovantes et de feedback lorsqu'ils reçoivent une formation spécifique à l'enseignement de la prononciation, bien que la pratique semble être présente même en l'absence de formation. Ces résultats doivent être interprétés comme une première étape pour comprendre la situation actuelle de l'enseignement de la prononciation dans les classes d'anglais langue étrangère espagnoles afin d'améliorer les programmes de formation des enseignants et de garantir une amélioration des compétences communicatives des élèves.

Mots-clés : Anglais langue étrangère ; enseignement de la prononciation ; techniques d'enseignement de la prononciation ; développement professionnel des enseignants.

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1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, several research studies have advocated for the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction in both the English as a second (ESL) and foreign (EFL) language classrooms, especially to improve students' communication skills (Darcy et al., 2012; Derwing, 2008; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Isaacs, 2009; Levis, 2005, 2018; Nagle, 2024; Saito, 2012; Scola & Darcy, 2015, among others). However, research does not seem to filter down to the English class and many practitioners still avoid teaching it today (Burns, 2006; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Isaacs, 2009; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Levis, 2005; MacDonald, 2002; Nagle et al., 2020).

Spanish EFL teachers are not an exception. Students in Spain are supposed to reach a B1 level of a second language (L2) - for most of them, English- when they finish secondary education. According to the Spanish educational curriculum, that implies being able to actively interact with other people in the target language with sufficient fluency, precision and spontaneity (LOMLOE, 2020). Besides, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) highlights the importance of the students' phonological control to communicate globally, and points out that a B1 learner is expected to be "generally intelligible; [considering that] intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message (...)" (Council of Europe, 2020, p.134).

Not teaching pronunciation to EFL students might directly affect their ability to communicate in the target language and their general learning outcomes, as they cannot benefit from pronunciation explanations and practice during their schooling years (Delicado Cantero & Speed, 2015; Scola & Darcy, 2015). Some researchers have investigated teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards pronunciation instruction and found that some practitioners do not know how or what to teach due to a lack of training (Baturkmen, 2012; Breitreutz et al., 2001; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Macdonald, 2002). However, more in-depth investigation should be carried out to examine how teachers implement their beliefs and knowledge efficiently in class (Baker, 2014; Darcy et al., 2020; Nagle, 2024).

Studying the extent to which training affects teachers' choices about introducing pronunciation in their lectures and how they approach pronunciation teaching can help understand the current condition of pronunciation in the English classroom and, consequently, identify where there is room for improvement by

comparing their practices with research evidence. In fact, this could help design better teacher training courses that focus on instructors' needs to teach pronunciation effectively (Baker, 2014; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Buss, 2016; Nagle et al., 2020).

This study belongs to a broader project concerning EFL teachers' pronunciation state in secondary Spanish education. After analyzing teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards pronunciation instruction (Quesada Vázquez, 2024), this article aims at examining how training on pronunciation and pronunciation teaching might influence English teachers' pronunciation practices in the classroom, both in terms of theory and practice.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. The teaching of pronunciation: what and how

Determining how pronunciation instruction in the classroom should look like has never ceased to be a pedagogical issue. Several researchers have suggested different approaches and techniques (Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Darcy et al., 2012; Darcy et al., 2020; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Gilbert, 2008; Levis & Echelberger, 2022; Saito, 2012; Sicola & Darcy, 2015), but there is still no consensus on the aspects that are more effective to teach and how to do it (Darcy et al., 2012; Munro & Derwing, 2006; Wang, 2022). One of the main problems often mentioned is time: as there is not enough time to teach every aspect of pronunciation in class, it is important to determine which aspects are more efficient to be taught.

One way of doing so is by evaluating the 'functional load' of the different pronunciation aspects according to intelligibility and comprehensibility criteria (Munro & Derwing, 2006). As differences in pronunciation depend on how close the target language and the students' mother tongue (L1) are, the functional load of a pronunciation feature can be very high in one context, but very low in another. For instance, Japanese learners of English might find it very difficult to distinguish between /r/ and /l/ due to the phoneme inventory of Japanese, but this should not be a problem for Spanish speakers, who have both sounds in their language.

Darcy et al. (2012) advocate that proficiency level should also be considered when introducing pronunciation into the classroom. They think that low-level students do not have enough command of other linguistic aspects of the language, such as grammar or vocabulary, to work on phonetic awareness, but they should be able to produce and perceive some pronunciation features. On the other hand, mid-level students should be able to understand pronunciation explanations, which will help them adopt a more intelligible pronunciation in the target language. Finally, high-level students should aim for accuracy, and more complex nuisances must be tackled at this stage. However, they claim that pronunciation should be present within the curriculum at every level to help students familiarize with it as soon as possible, which will ease the learning process when reaching higher stages. They, together with other researchers such as Levis and Echelberger (2022), also insist on the fact that pronunciation should be integrated as part of the curriculum together with other linguistic aspects, such as grammar or vocabulary.

Nevertheless, even if many experts agree on its effectiveness (Darcy et al., 2012; Derwing, 2008; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Isaacs, 2009; Levis, 2005, 2018; Nagle, 2024; Saito, 2012; Sicola & Darcy, 2015), pronunciation teaching keeps being questioned nowadays. Saito (2012) investigated how fruitful the introducing pronunciation in the classroom really is by examining the results of fifteen quasi-experimental studies. All of them showed significant improvement except for two. He also observed that students who benefited from language-focused instruction within meaning-oriented settings showed improvement in both controlled and extemporaneous speech, while those who received decontextualized language practice tended to improve only in controlled activities. Besides, learners revealed more lasting results when explicit pronunciation was carried out in a communicative context, an approach encouraged by several researchers in the field (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Isaacs, 2009; Sicola & Darcy, 2015).

Lee et al. (2014) compiled 86 quantitative studies that examined the effectiveness of pronunciation teaching in the last 32 years. They observed, again, that those students who received pronunciation instruction improve more than those who did not. Besides, the improvement reported by the more recent studies was higher compared to previous research. They concluded that this improvement might be a consequence of testing a wider variety of features and techniques in recent years. The number of classroom-based studies in the field is still limited, though (see Dewing & Munro, 2015, for a review), and many times teachers do not have access to them: practitioners usually decide what and how to teach based on their beliefs, knowledge, training, and curriculum limitations, which tend to have no research foundations.

2.2. Pronunciation in teacher training programs

Teachers tend to complain about having received scarce training in pronunciation, especially in pronunciation instruction (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Macdonald, 2002; Quesada Vázquez, 2024; Sicola & Darcy, 2015). Burgess and Spencer (2000) claim that there is a dependency between the knowledge of phonology and that of pronunciation teaching methodology that directly affects teachers' practices in class. In fact, it is worth bearing in mind that many English practitioners are not always English graduates; some are professionals of different backgrounds who have taken a course in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and had limited phonological knowledge when they started their English-teaching studies.

Sicola and Darcy (2015) argue that one of the main problems is that "TESOL training programs incorporate little to no pedagogical training around pronunciation" (p. 472). They add that, in these programs,

pronunciation tends to be tackled briefly from a theoretical point of view, but there is a lack of hands-on activities. It is true that this method provides a better understanding of English pronunciation, but it offers no help to teach it. Neither do they receive any guidelines on how to assess pronunciation, which is another concern for teachers, especially when their command is limited.

Indeed, it seems that teachers tend to feel ill-equipped and not confident enough to teach pronunciation (Burns, 2006; Couper, 2016; Darcy et al., 2012; Foote et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Isaacs, 2009; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Levis, 2005; MacDonald, 2002; Nagle et al., 2020; Quesada Vázquez, 2024; Sicola & Darcy, 2015). Many survey studies conducted in different countries around the world reveal that L2 practitioners request more and better pronunciation training, especially on how to teach it (Burns, 2006; Burri et al., 2017; Burri & Baker, 2021; Buss, 2016; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Huensch, 2019a, 2019b; Kirkova-Naskova, 2013; Macdonald, 2002; Nagle et al., 2018; Quesada Vázquez, 2024; Saito, 2012; Walker, 1999). However, there is a limited number of studies that have looked at the pedagogical practices that teachers really implement in their classes and how training is related.

Burgess and Spencer (2000) distributed 50 questionnaires among different institutions offering courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The purpose was to examine the phonological features that were taught and practiced, the way these were practiced, and the main difficulties that learners experienced. Results showed that teachers paid special attention to intonation, vowel reduction, and stress, together with segmental features. Rhythm was not always present in the classroom. Teachers usually addressed pronunciation issues as they arose and tended to teach it integrated with other skills. As for students' concerns, they found suprasegmentals particularly difficult, and they also struggled with perceiving similar sounds between the L1 and the L2, and producing unfamiliar sounds.

Baker (2014) investigated five English language practitioners teaching in the same North American intensive English program by means of interviews, class observations and student's satisfaction surveys. They had all obtained a master's degree in TESOL, but not all the programs had pronunciation training: three of the teachers had received a full course on pronunciation pedagogy, two of them a course that mixed pronunciation, speaking and listening instruction, and the other teacher did not receive any pronunciation training. She observed that those teachers who received a pronunciation instruction course used a wider range of techniques to teach pronunciation in the classroom. She also noticed that all the participants in the study tended to use controlled practices rather than guided and free activities, which tended to include repetition drills, visual identification, production practice and explanations.

To the author's knowledge, no studies have been conducted that investigate which pronunciation features are taught in the EFL classrooms of Spanish secondary schools, and how training might affect their teaching practices. Along these lines, this study aims at examining how training influences EFL teachers' choices in terms of pronunciation instruction in secondary schools in Spain. To this end, the following research questions are stated:

RQ1. How does training affect English teachers' choices when introducing pronunciation theoretical concepts in Spanish secondary schools?

RQ2. How does training affect English teachers' choices when introducing pronunciation practice in Spanish secondary schools?

3. Method

3.1 Procedure

An online survey was designed and administered via Outlook Forms. Before distributing the questionnaire, it was first validated by five professors from different Spanish universities whose research expertise is English pronunciation teaching. Once the suggested modifications were made, the survey was sent to the students of the Master's Degree in Bilingual Education at Nebrija University to conduct a pilot study. Unfortunately, most of the postgraduates that academic year were teaching in primary, not secondary schools, so only two students replied. Therefore, the survey was opened to the general public in order to reach a wider population. Data was collected for six months (from May to October 2023) through snowball sampling and social media posting (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn).

3.2. Instrument: The survey

The questionnaire consisted of 47 questions distributed in four different sections: background, beliefs, training, and teaching. Due to the extent of the survey and the diversity of the results obtained, findings were divided and examined in different studies. Quesada Vázquez (2024) aimed at correlating the results obtained in the beliefs and the training sections. This article will focus on correlating the results obtained in the teaching and the training sections. Particularly, it will analyze questions 37 and 39 of the teaching section (see Appendix 1) although answers to questions in the background section will be used to outline the participants' profile (see Quesada Vázquez, 2024). Most of the statements in both questions under study were adapted from Nagle et al.'s (2020) study, except for statements 2, 6, 10 and 11 in question 37 on theoretical concepts, and statements 5, 6, 16 and 17 in question 39, which were designed by the author.

3.3. Participants

Forty-three secondary school teachers took the survey, but five of them had to be discarded from the analysis: they were not EFL teachers, but practitioners teaching other courses in English. Hence, the study examines the replies of 38 respondents.

Thirty-six participants were Spanish and two of them were British. Regarding gender, 30 of them were female, seven male and one person preferred not to say. The average age was 42.29 years, and the mean of teaching experience was 15.46 years. Participants came from fifteen of the 52 provinces in Spain: six of them came from Madrid, four from Asturias, four from Murcia, four from Seville, three from Badajoz, three from Navarra, two from Barcelona, two from La Coruña, and one from Albacete, Alicante, Granada, Guadalajara, Huelva, Jaén, Las Palmas, Tarragona, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Zaragoza.

Participants taught in different types of institutions. Thirty participants were teaching at just one type of institution: 47% of the participants were teaching at a public school, 18% at a private school, 5% at a charter school, and 5% at a bilingual school. On the other hand, eight of them were working at two different institutions: 11% were teaching at both a public and a bilingual school, 8% at a private and a public school, 3% at a charter and a bilingual school, and 3% at a private and bilingual school.

Regarding the level of education in which they were teaching, many participants had experience in more than one level. The subjects under study had more experience at the last two courses of compulsory secondary education (twenty respondents stated they were teaching 3rd and 4th of ESO students), followed by experience at the first level of compulsory education (eighteen of them were teaching at 1st of ESO) and the first level of non-compulsory education (fifteen were teaching at 1st of Bachillerato).

3.4. Data analysis

To examine the effect of training on teachers' choices of theoretical concepts and practical techniques adopted, a general overview of their choice is first presented. Then, percentages according to the instruction received are displayed. Finally, several Fisher's exact tests are run to determine the significance of the association between the different training received by the teachers and their teaching approaches.

4. Results

Participants claimed to teach different theoretical concepts and practice them employing a wide variety of techniques. Figures 1 and 2 summarize the answers obtained to questions 37 and 39 of the questionnaire. As displayed in Figure 1, only five practitioners asserted not introducing any theoretical pronunciation concepts in their classrooms. Twenty-eight out of the thirty-eight participants stated that they explain the differences in Spanish and English between individual sounds. Besides, 19 also claimed that they include verbal explanations of how different parts of the mouth are used to produce different sounds. However, they do not tend to include diagrams or pictures to illustrate it, since only six participants said they use them in their lectures. Even with that, it seems that participants tend to teach mainly segmentals.

Indeed, suprasegmentals do not appear to be as present in the EFL classroom: 18 participants stated that they explain stress, and only 16 of them intonation, despite considering it the most important factor to teach (Quesada Vázquez, 2024). Rhythm is way less present in class, with only six participants claiming they explain it to their students, which is not surprising since it was considered the least important feature to teach (Quesada Vázquez, 2024).

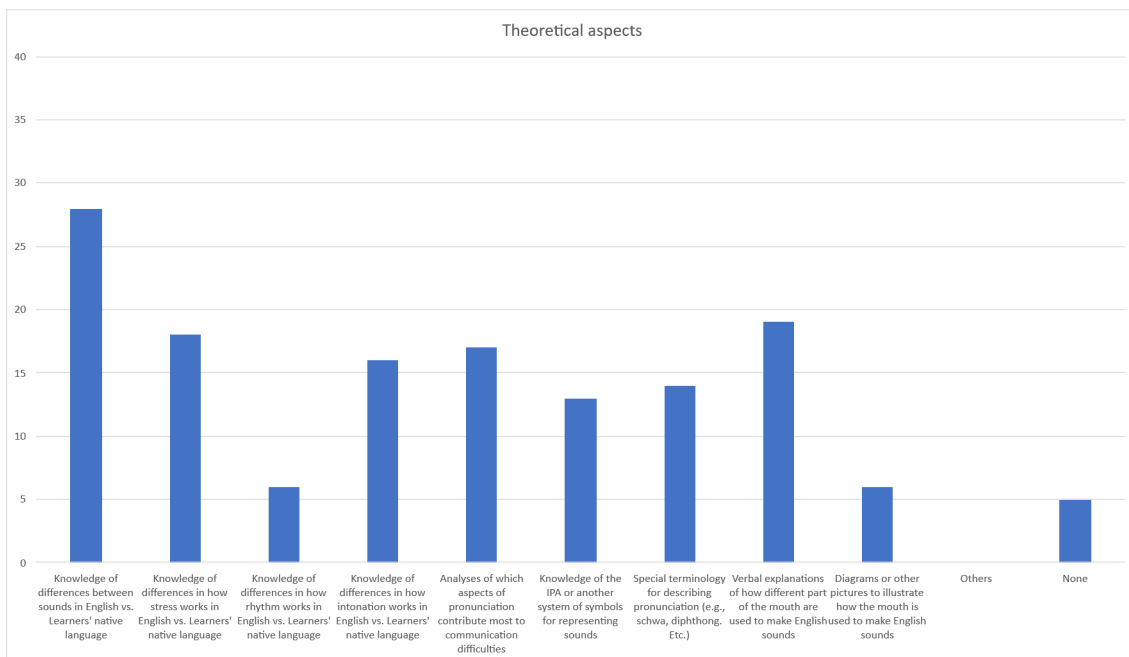
On the other hand, approximately half of the participants declared analyzing the aspects that contribute most to communication difficulties among EFL Spanish learners ($N = 17$), using IPA symbols to represent sound ($N = 13$) and introducing special terminology to describe concepts ($N = 14$). Overall, the pronunciation taught in class seems mainly based on verbal explanations of individual sounds.

As for the techniques used to practice pronunciation, all the teachers asserted to practice pronunciation in class. Figure 2 shows that teachers tend to use more traditional methods, such as practicing producing and perceptually distinguishing words that contain similar sounds, chosen by 32 and 28 participants respectively, and providing explicit correction of students' English pronunciation, reading aloud passages and using word repetition grills by repeating after a given model, employed by 29 of the respondents. Conversely, they do not tend to use more innovative methods, like shadowing, IPA transcription and kinesthetic approaches (e.g., tapping or clapping), as the number of participants that use them in class decrease dramatically (7, 7, and 8 respectively).

Regarding assessment, only four respondents claimed to test the students' production skills and ten of them the perception ones, so pronunciation is not generally assessed. Besides, teachers do not tend to discuss with students about their attitudes towards pronunciation or analyze their goals to guarantee an improvement, as only seven and three respondents respectively chose these options.

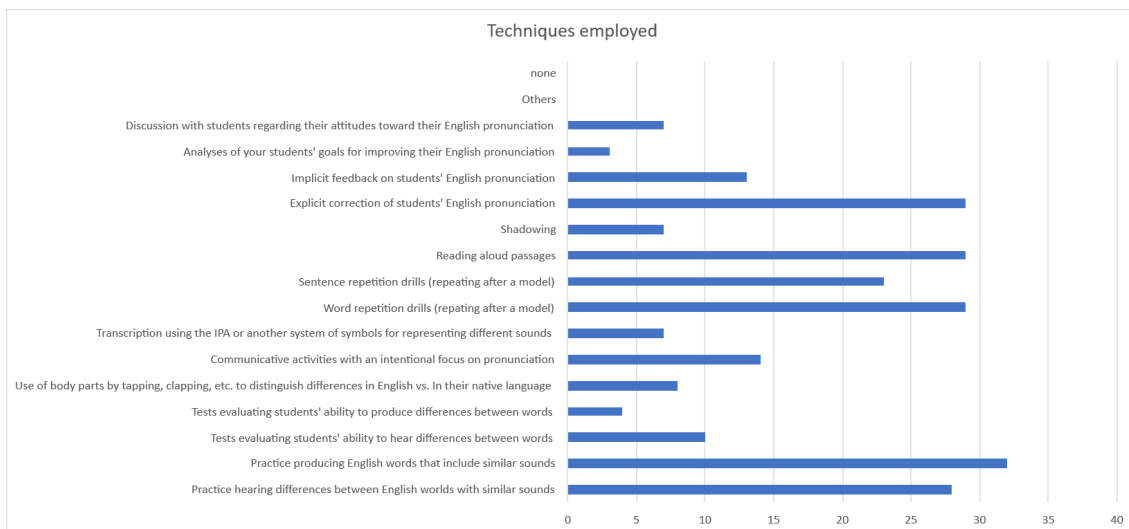
In order to examine the extent to which teacher training affect the subjects' choices, both theoretical aspects and practice techniques were examined according to the training teachers had previously received: for each of the items under analysis (i.e., theory and practice), results were first examined according to two main parameters: on the one hand, whether the teachers have received general pronunciation training or not (PT vs. NPT); on the other hand, whether they have received specific training in pronunciation instruction or not (PIT vs. NPIT). Then, results were redistributed in four different groups that took into consideration both types of training: group one (G1) included those teachers who had received both types of training, group two (G2) those trained just in general pronunciation (i.e., phonetics and phonology), group three (G3) those trained just in pronunciation instruction, and group four (G4) those who had not received any type of training.

Figure 1. Theoretical concepts in question 37 applied by the respondents



Source: own elaboration

Figure 2. Techniques employed in question 39 by the respondents



Source: own elaboration

Table 1 displays the percentages of teachers that introduce the different theoretical concepts described in question 37 according to whether they had received training in phonetics and phonology. As a matter of fact, there are many more respondents who had received general pronunciation instruction ($N = 30$) than participants with no knowledge of English pronunciation ($N = 8$).

The percentages of practitioners who introduce the different items suggested is higher when they have been trained in general pronunciation. Besides, only 7% of those trained stated that they do not introduce any of the items suggested in their lectures, whereas 38% of those who did not receive training do not include theoretical pronunciation concepts in their sessions.

Knowledge of differences between sounds in English compared to the ones in the students' mother tongue is included by both groups of teachers, although 80% of the PT group include it in their lectures, while only 50% of the NPT group do it. This is the only item that is taught by half of the teachers in the NPT group, since in the rest of the cases only a quarter or sixth of the respondents introduce some of the remaining options. As for the PT group, more than half of the teachers claimed that they also teach differences between the target and the students' native language in terms of stress and intonation (57% and 50% respectively), analyze the aspects that contribute more to communication difficulties (53%), and use both verbal explanations (57%) and diagrams (53%) to show students how the mouth is used to produce different sounds. By far, the item that teachers do not tend to explain and compare between languages is rhythm (17%).

Table 1. Percentages of respondents that introduced each of the theoretical concepts in question 37 distributed by general pronunciation training

Theoretical aspects	PT (N = 30)	NPT (N = 8)
Knowledge of differences between sounds in English vs. Learners' native language	80%	50%
Knowledge of differences in how stress works in English vs. Learners' native language	57%	13%
Knowledge of differences in how rhythm works in English vs. Learners' native language	17%	13%
Knowledge of differences in how intonation works in English vs. Learners' native language	50%	13%
Analyses of which aspects of pronunciation contribute most to communication difficulties	53%	13%
Knowledge of the IPA or another system of symbols for representing sounds	37%	25%
Special terminology for describing pronunciation (e.g., schwa, diphthong, etc.)	43%	13%
Verbal explanations of how different part of the mouth are used to make English sounds	57%	25%
Diagrams or other pictures to illustrate how the mouth is used to make English sounds	53%	0%
Others	0%	0%
None	7%	38%

Note: PT = pronunciation training. NPT = No pronunciation training.

Source: own elaboration.

Fisher's exact tests were run to determine if there was a significant association between each of the theoretical concepts under study and the general pronunciation training received (see Appendix 2): A chi-square test had to be discarded due to the small size of the population, as the expected count did not reach the assumption of 5 in some of the cells. Interestingly, results were only significant for stress instruction (two-tailed $p = .031$), and it almost reached significance for the analysis of pronunciation features that contribute most to communication difficulties (two-tailed $p = .053$) and when no theoretical concepts were taught (two-tailed $p = .053$).

When pronunciation teaching training is taken into consideration, those that have received training tend to introduce more theoretical pronunciation concepts in their instruction than those who have not. This time the numbers of respondents in each group are more balanced: eighteen teachers had received pronunciation teaching training, while 20 of them had not (see Table 2). Again, differences between sounds are the notion most commonly taught for both groups (83% of the teachers in the PIT group and 65% in the NPIT group). The percentages of teachers who taught the different concepts increase in most cases for both groups, probably because now the practitioners with general knowledge on pronunciation are distributed between the two. The most outstanding difference is seen in the use of diagrams, as only 11% of the PIT introduce them in their lectures, while 20% of the NPIT use them.

Again, Fisher's exact tests were conducted to examine the significance of the association between theoretical concept instruction and received pronunciation teaching training (see Appendix 2). This time, results showed significance for intonation instruction (two-tailed $p = .047$) and the use of special terminology (e.g., terms such as *schwa*, *diphthong*, and so on) to describe pronunciation features (two-tailed $p = .042$).

Although the effect of training seems to be present in the introduction of pronunciation in the EFL classroom, whether having received different types of training (i.e., training in phonetics and phonology and specific teaching pronunciation training) or no training at all remains unknown. To answer this question, respondents were redistributed in the four different groups previously mentioned (see Table 3): G1 included 17 teachers who had received both types of training; G2 13 who had been trained just in phonetics and phonology; G3 one who was trained just in pronunciation instruction; and G4 seven who had not received any type of training.

As shown in Table 3, the number of teachers including the different items in their sessions tends to be higher when they received both types of training: G1 tends to show higher percentages for the teaching the differences between individual sounds, stress and intonation between the target language and the students' mother tongue, the analysis of pronunciation features that contribute most to communication difficulties, the teaching of IPA transcription, and the use of special terminology.

Interestingly, differences of rhythm were more commonly introduced when only instruction in phonetics and phonology was received. G2 also shows higher percentages for the use of verbal explanations and diagrams to produce individual sounds. On the other hand, G3, which was made up of just one teacher, claimed not to teach pronunciation, even though he/she received pronunciation teaching training. G4 is the group with the lowest percentage in all the items, and there is a higher number of teachers in this group who decide not to teach pronunciation.

Table 2. Percentages of respondents that introduced each of the theoretical concepts in question 37 distributed by pronunciation teaching training

Theoretical aspects	PIT (N =18)	NPIT (N = 20)
Knowledge of differences between sounds in English vs. Learners' native language	83%	65%
Knowledge of differences in how stress works in English vs. Learners' native language	56%	40%
Knowledge of differences in how rhythm works in English vs. Learners' native language	11%	20%
Knowledge of differences in how intonation works in English vs. Learners' native language	61%	25%
Analyses of which aspects of pronunciation contribute most to communication difficulties	56%	35%
Knowledge of the IPA or another system of symbols for representing sounds	39%	30%
Special terminology for describing pronunciation (e.g., schwa, diphthong, etc.)	56%	20%
Verbal explanations of how different part of the mouth are used to make English sounds	50%	50%
Diagrams or other pictures to illustrate how the mouth is used to make English sounds	11%	20%
Others	0%	0%
None	6%	20%

Note: PIT = pronunciation instruction training. NPIT = No pronunciation instruction training.

Source: own elaboration

Fisher's exact tests were run again to determine the effect of the training received on the instruction of the different theoretical concepts (see Appendix 3). This time, only the fact that teachers had not received any type of training was significant (two-tailed $p = .012$).

The same procedure was followed to determine the extent to which training affects the use of different techniques to teach pronunciation in class. As displayed in Table 4, every participant introduces pronunciation practice in their classes to some extent. Those trained in phonetics and phonology seem to be the ones who employ more traditional methods: practitioners having benefited from pronunciation knowledge overcome those who have not when practicing hearing and producing words with similar sounds, using word and sentence repetition drills, and using reading aloud passages. There were also more teachers in the PT group that introduce the IPA transcription in their lectures, analyze the students' goals and discuss with them about their attitudes towards pronunciation. As for feedback, they were the ones who provide more, both explicit and implicit, and apply reflective approaches to examine students' goals and attitudes towards pronunciation.

Table 3. Percentages of respondents that introduced each of the theoretical concepts in question 37 distributed by both general pronunciation and specific pronunciation teaching training

Theoretical aspects	G1 (N = 17)	G2 (N =13)	G3 (N =1)	G4 (N = 7)
Knowledge of differences between sounds in English vs. Learners' native language	88%	69%	0%	57%
Knowledge of differences in how stress works in English vs. Learners' native language	59%	54%	0%	14%
Knowledge of differences in how rhythm works in English vs. Learners' native language	12%	23%	0%	14%
Knowledge of differences in how intonation works in English vs. Learners' native language	65%	31%	0%	14%
Analyses of which aspects of pronunciation contribute most to communication difficulties	59%	46%	0%	14%
Knowledge of the IPA or another system of symbols for representing sounds	41%	31%	0%	29%
Special terminology for describing pronunciation (e.g., schwa, diphthong, etc.)	59%	23%	0%	14%
Verbal explanations of how different part of the mouth are used to make English sounds	53%	62%	0%	29%
Diagrams or other pictures to illustrate how the mouth is used to make English sounds	12%	31%	0%	0%
Others	0%	0%	0%	0%
None	0%	15%	100%	29%

Note: G1 = pronunciation training + pronunciation instruction training. G2 = pronunciation training + no pronunciation instruction training. G3 = no pronunciation training + pronunciation instruction training. G4 = No pronunciation training + no pronunciation instruction training.

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4. Percentages of respondents that employed each of the techniques in question 39 distributed by general pronunciation training

Techniques employed	PT (N = 30)	NPT (N = 8)
Practice hearing differences between English words with similar sounds	89%	50%
Practice producing English words that include similar sounds	87%	75%
Tests evaluating students' ability to hear differences between words	20%	50%
Tests evaluating students' ability to produce differences between words	7%	25%
Use of body parts by tapping, clapping, etc. to distinguish differences in English vs. In their native language	27%	100%
Communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation	33%	50%
Transcription using the IPA or another system of symbols for representing different sounds	23%	0%
Word repetition drills (repeating after a model)	77%	75%
Sentence repetition drills (repeating after a model)	63%	50%
Reading aloud passages	77%	75%
Shadowing	17%	25%
Explicit correction of students' English pronunciation	80%	37%
Implicit feedback on students' English pronunciation	37%	25%
Analyses of your students' goals for improving their English pronunciation	10%	0%
Discussion with students regarding their attitudes toward their English pronunciation	20%	13%
Others	0%	0%
None	0%	0%

Note: PT = pronunciation training. NPT = No pronunciation training.

Source: own elaboration

On the other hand, those with no pronunciation training claimed to use more innovative techniques, such as body language to distinguish differences between the pronunciation features of English and the students' native language, communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation, and shadowing. Interestingly, they were the ones who assess their students more, both in production and perception. However, when Fisher's exact tests were conducted, no significant results were shown for any of the techniques employed (see Appendix 4).

Percentages differ when specific training in pronunciation instruction is concerned (see Table 5). Those who received pronunciation teaching training stated they practice hearing words with similar sounds, and they were also the ones who claimed using innovative methods more, such as the use of body parts to distinguish differences, communicative activities, IPA transcription, and shadowing. They were also the ones to analyze students' goals and discuss their attitudes more. The NPIT group, on the other hand, obtained higher percentages for production practice, and the use of reading aloud passages and word repetition drills. As for sentence repetition drills, almost the same number of teachers in both groups use them (PIT = 61%; NPIT = 60%).

Regarding assessment, the NPIT group is revealed to test perception more, but the percentages are almost equal for production (PIT = 11%; NPIT = 10%), which is not evaluated that often. These findings are interesting because, as mentioned above, those with no training in pronunciation instruction tended to focus more on production rather than perception. As for feedback and reflective pedagogy, more practitioners trained in pronunciation teaching tend to use it.

Hence, it seems that pronunciation instruction training influences the type of techniques employed in class to teach pronunciation. Fisher's exact tests were also run to examine the relevance of those differences (see Appendix 4). Results only showed significance for discussing with students their attitudes towards English pronunciation (two-tailed $p = .038$).

Finally, the teachers' answers were redistributed in the four groups previously described in this section according to the amount of training received (see Table 6). Again, percentages do not show a clear tendency. However, a couple of interesting observations can be made: on the one hand, the teacher in G3, who only received pronunciation instruction training, claimed to use several of the techniques suggested despite the fact that he/she does not introduce theoretical concepts in his/her lectures; on the other hand, those who did not receive any type of training (G4) show higher percentages than those who received both types of trainings or just general pronunciation training in testing, and many of the other items listed (the use of communicative activities, IPA transcription and shadowing, among others). Again, Fisher's exact tests were conducted to determine the relevance of training and practice association and no significant results were found (see Appendix 5).

Table 5. Percentages of respondents that employed each of the techniques in question 39 distributed by pronunciation teaching training

Techniques employed	PIT (N = 18)	NPIT (N =20)
Practice hearing differences between English words with similar sounds	83%	65%
Practice producing English words that include similar sounds	78%	90%
Tests evaluating students' ability to hear differences between words	17%	35%
Tests evaluating students' ability to produce differences between words	11%	10%
Use of body parts by tapping, clapping, etc. to distinguish differences in English vs. In their native language	33%	10%
Communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation	44%	30%
Transcription using the IPA or another system of symbols for representing different sounds	22%	15%
Word repetition drills (repeating after a model)	67%	85%
Sentence repetition drills (repeating after a model)	61%	60%
Reading aloud passages	72%	80%
Shadowing	22%	15%
Explicit correction of students' English pronunciation	78%	75%
Implicit feedback on students' English pronunciation	44%	25%
Analyses of your students' goals for improving their English pronunciation	11%	5%
Discussion with students regarding their attitudes toward their English pronunciation	33%	5%
Others	0%	0%
None	0%	0%

Note: PT = pronunciation training. NPT = No pronunciation training.

Source: own elaboration

Table 6. Percentages of respondents that employed each of the techniques in question 39 distributed by both general pronunciation and specific pronunciation teaching training

Techniques employed	G1 (N = 17)	G2 (N =13)	G3 (N =1)	G4 (N = 7)
Practice hearing differences between English words with similar sounds	82%	77%	100%	43%
Practice producing English words that include similar sounds	76%	100%	100%	71%
Tests evaluating students' ability to hear differences between words	12%	31%	100%	71%
Tests evaluating students' ability to produce differences between words	6%	8%	100%	43%
Use of body parts by tapping, clapping, etc. to distinguish differences in English vs. In their native language	35%	15%	0%	0%
Communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation	41%	23%	100%	43%
Transcription using the IPA or another system of symbols for representing different sounds	24%	23%	100%	43%
Word repetition drills (repeating after a model)	71%	85%	0%	86%
Sentence repetition drills (repeating after a model)	65%	62%	0%	57%
Reading aloud passages	71%	85%	100%	71%
Shadowing	24%	8%	0%	71%
Explicit correction of students' English pronunciation	76%	85%	100%	71%
Implicit feedback on students' English pronunciation	47%	23%	0%	29%

Techniques employed	G1 (N = 17)	G2 (N = 13)	G3 (N = 1)	G4 (N = 7)
Analyses of your students' goals for improving their English pronunciation	12%	8%	0%	0%
Discussion with students regarding their attitudes toward their English pronunciation	29%	8%	100%	0%
Others	0%	0%	0%	0%
None	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note: G1 = pronunciation training + pronunciation instruction training. G2 = pronunciation training + no pronunciation instruction training. G3 = no pronunciation training + pronunciation instruction training. G4 = No pronunciation training + no pronunciation instruction training.

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of training in teachers' pronunciation practices in secondary schools in Spain. To answer research question 1 (RQ1), the role of training in phonetics and phonology in the theory explained was first analyzed. There is a clear tendency to introduce a wider range of explanations when training has been received. These explanations are mainly based on segmental differences between the L1 and the L2; suprasegmentals are less present, rhythm being the most understudied feature. These findings go along the lines of Burgess and Spencer (2000), although suprasegmentals (except for rhythm) had more weight for their participants.

However, when Fisher's exact tests were run, only the instruction of stress showed significance (two-tailed $p = .031$). Teaching stress was given high priority by participants in Burgess and Spencer (2000). Indeed, learning how stress works in English becomes essential for a Spanish speaker: knowing where stress falls and how to reduce unstressed vowels in English affects the overall comprehensibility and intelligibility, but Spanish students do not tend to be aware of these phenomena unless they are told about them. Hence, it seems reasonable to think that those teachers who know about stress differences between Spanish and English find it a feature with functional load for Spanish EFL learners. Nonetheless, rhythm is not usually taught although English is a stress-timed language. Hence, it is probable that practitioners only teach stress at the segmental level by working on word stress, but not at the suprasegmental level.

Furthermore, analyzing the features that contribute to communication difficulties almost reached significance (two-tailed $p = .053$), probably because trained teachers are more aware of the importance of spotting the features students struggle with when communicating in English. Again, the concept of functional load becomes present (Munro & Derwing, 2006). On the other hand, not teaching any theoretical concepts almost reached significance, too (two-tailed $p = .053$). This finding seems to suggest that not receiving general training on pronunciation might lead to avoiding teaching theoretical phonetical and phonological notions. Nevertheless, the number of respondents was unbalanced, so more participants will be needed to reach conclusive results.

Second, training in pronunciation instruction also seems to positively affect teachers' tendency to introduce theoretical concepts in their lectures. It is interesting, though, that those who were not trained in pronunciation teaching used diagrams more than those who did, but for the rest of the items under study, the PIT group obtained higher percentages. This time, Fisher's exact tests were significant for intonation instruction (two-tailed $p = .047$) and the use of special terminology to describe pronunciation features (two-tailed $p = .042$). Although, overall, respondents considered intonation the most important feature to teach (Quesada Vázquez, 2024), it seems that they do not feel equipped to teach it unless they have received training in pronunciation instruction. Intonation was also considered crucial for Burgess and Spencer's (2000) teachers, and students considered it a difficult feature to acquire. Thus, training teachers how to teach suprasegmental aspects like intonation might help students improve their prosody.

Taking both types of training into consideration, it seems that the more training received - i.e., trained in both general phonetics and phonology and pronunciation instruction -, the more theory taught. However, the teacher who claimed just having received training in pronunciation teaching did not teach theoretical concepts. In addition, only the fact that teachers had not received any type of training was significant (two-tailed $p = .012$). This finding contributes to Burgess and Spencer's (2000) idea of the dependency between knowledge in phonology and pronunciation teaching methodology, as the practitioner needs to know what a notion means to effectively introduce it in class.

Research question 2 (RQ2) aimed at investigating the use of different practical techniques to teach pronunciation. All the instructors claimed practicing pronunciation in their lectures. They tend to use more traditional methods, though: practicing producing and perceptually distinguishing words that contain similar sounds, providing explicit correction of students' English pronunciation, using reading aloud passages, and using word repetition drills by repeating after a given model were the most chosen options. Many of these techniques were also employed by participants in Baker's (2014) study, who showed a tendency to use more controlled-like activities. The usage of free practice, such as communicative tasks, is less common. Regarding assessment, teachers rarely consider it in the evaluation of their courses.

When training in phonetics and phonology is considered, it can be observed that the NPT group appears to introduce more innovative methods in their classes, such as kinesthetic and communicative approaches. However, more teachers in the PT group claimed to provide both explicit and implicit feedback and assess

pronunciation. In fact, no significant results were reached in the different Fisher's exact tests conducted, so it can be concluded that general pronunciation training does not seem to influence the choice of techniques used.

Things are different when pronunciation teaching training is examined. Those who received it are the ones who introduce more innovative methods like the use of body language or communicative activities and provide feedback. As for assessment, the NPIT group shows a higher percentage when perception is considered, whereas the evaluation of production shows low and almost equal percentages regardless of training. On the other hand, only discussing with students their attitudes towards English pronunciation showed significance (two-tailed $p = .038$). Thus, pronunciation teaching training seems to encourage reflective pedagogy (Basturkmen, 2012).

Finally, when both types of training are taken into account, some interesting observations can be made: as explained in the previous section, the teacher who only received pronunciation instruction training uses several of the techniques suggested. Hence, it seems that he/she felt comfortable to introduce some practice in the classroom due to the training received even if he/she did not have the knowledge to provide theoretical explanations, as his/her training was not based on theoretical phonology.

On the other hand, against what was expected, those who did not receive any type of training showed higher percentages than those who received both types of training, or just general pronunciation training, in many of the items under study. These findings challenge previous studies that advocate for more training to feel more confident when teaching pronunciation (Burns, 2006; Burri et al., 2017; Burri & Baker, 2021; Buss, 2016; Couper, 2016; Foote et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Huensch, 2019a, 2019b; Kirkova-Naskova, 2013; Macdonald, 2002; Nagle et al., 2018; Quesada Vázquez, 2024; Saito, 2012; Walker, 1999). However, when Fisher's exact tests were run, no significant results were found. Perhaps a wider poll of practitioners will help shed more light on the issue.

6. Conclusion

Pronunciation instruction is present in the EFL classroom of Spanish secondary schools nowadays, but teacher training seems to affect how it is approached. After analyzing the survey's responses, it can be claimed that knowing about phonetics and phonology seems to encourage the teacher to introduce theoretical concepts in the classroom. Besides, both general pronunciation and pronunciation teaching training seem to have an effect in the teaching of some of the concepts, although more participants will be needed to reach conclusive results, as groups were unbalanced.

Segmentals seem to have a prominent role; some of the participants introduce concepts like stress and intonation in their lectures, but it seems that practicing these is more common when the teacher has received some training in how to teach them. On the other hand, rhythm tends to be ignored in class despite its key role in acquiring an intelligible and fluent command of a language (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Levis, 2018). Hence, it seems that teachers still have a score to settle with suprasegmentals, even if these are essential to guarantee communication, and train the intelligible speakers both European and Spanish institutions expect L2 learners to be (Council of Europe, 2020; LOMLOE, 2020).

Regarding the techniques employed, specific training in pronunciation teaching translates into the use of more innovative methods and feedback. Hence, to provide an updated, holistic approach to pronunciation, teacher programs should offer both types of instruction to guarantee that practitioners feel confident to teach both theory and practice as effectively as possible.

It is true, though, that pronunciation practice (not theory) is introduced by all the subjects regardless of their training background. In fact, many of the subjects who have received no training claimed to use several techniques, some of them being even more innovative than the ones used by trained practitioners. Maybe the fact that there are more user-friendly hands-on exercises in coursebooks nowadays encourages teachers to practice pronunciation in class. Forthcoming studies associated to this project will investigate how the access to research-based materials and resources affect practitioners' practices. Other conditions, such as class size, students' proficiency level, curriculum and type of institution will be further studied as well, since all might play a crucial role in integrating pronunciation as part of the EFL classroom.

Even if training seems to influence whether pronunciation is taught to some extent, a wider population will be needed to reach conclusive results that lead to an improvement of teaching programs. However, this study should be considered a first attempt to help improve teachers' professional development and guarantee a successful learning progress of L2 communication skills for Spanish secondary students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Question 37 and 39 extracted from the survey

37. Which of these theoretical aspects of pronunciation do you teach?

- Knowledge of differences between sounds in English vs. learners' native language
- Knowledge of differences in how stress works in English vs. in learners' native language
- Knowledge of differences in how rhythm works in English vs. in learners' native language
- Knowledge of differences in how intonation works in English vs. in learners' native language
- Analyses of which aspects of pronunciation contribute most to communication difficulties
- Knowledge of the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) or another system of symbols for representing different sounds
- Special terminology for describing pronunciation (e.g., schwa, diphthong, etc.)
- Verbal explanations of how different parts of the mouth are used to make English sounds
- Diagrams or other pictures to illustrate how the mouth is used to make English sounds
- Others
- None

39. Which of these techniques do you use to practice these concepts in class?

- Practice hearing differences between English words with similar sounds
- Practice producing English words that include similar sounds
- Tests evaluating students' ability to hear differences between words
- Tests evaluating students' ability to produce differences between words
- Use of body parts by tapping, clapping, etc. to distinguish differences in English vs. in their native language
- Communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation
- Transcription using the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) or another system of symbols for representing different sounds
- Word repetition drills (repeating after a model)
- Sentence repetition drills (repeating after a model)
- Reading aloud passages
- Shadowing
- Explicit correction of students' English pronunciation
- Implicit feedback on students' English pronunciation
- Analyses of your students' goals for improving their English pronunciation
- Discussions with students regarding their attitudes toward their English pronunciation
- Others
- None

Appendix 2. Fisher's exact test results for the effect of general pronunciation training and pronunciation instruction training in the instruction of theoretical concepts

Theoretical aspects	General pronunciation training		Pronunciation instruction training	
	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>p</i> (1-sided)	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>p</i> (1-sided)
Knowledge of differences between sounds in English vs. Learners' native language	.170	.106	.278	.178
Knowledge of differences in how stress works in English vs. Learners' native language	.045*	.031*	.516	.263
Knowledge of differences in how rhythm works in English vs. Learners' native language	1	.628	.663	.384
Knowledge of differences in how intonation works in English vs. Learners' native language	.106	.062	.047*	.027*
Analyses of which aspects of pronunciation contribute most to communication difficulties	.053	.045*	.328	.172
Knowledge of the IPA or another system of symbols for representing sounds	.689	.432	.734	.407
Special terminology for describing pronunciation (e.g., schwa, diphthong, etc.)	.216	.114	.042*	.026*
Verbal explanations of how different part of the mouth are used to make English sounds	.232	.116	1	.627
Diagrams or other pictures to illustrate how the mouth is used to make English sounds	.309	.215	.663	.384
Others	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
None	.053	.053	.344	.205

Note: **p* <.05. N/A = Not applicable because it is a constant.

Appendix 3. Fisher's exact test results for the effect of training in the instruction of theoretical concepts

Theoretical aspects	<i>p</i> (2-sided)
Knowledge of differences between sounds in English vs. Learners' native language	.104
Knowledge of differences in how stress works in English vs. Learners' native language	.161
Knowledge of differences in how rhythm works in English vs. Learners' native language	.866
Knowledge of differences in how intonation works in English vs. Learners' native language	.062
Analyses of which aspects of pronunciation contribute most to communication difficulties	.170
Knowledge of the IPA or another system of symbols for representing sounds	.881
Special terminology for describing pronunciation (e.g., schwa, diphthong, etc.)	.077
Verbal explanations of how different part of the mouth are used to make English sounds	.396
Diagrams or other pictures to illustrate how the mouth is used to make English sounds	.366
Others	N/A
None	.012*

Note: **p* < 0.05. N/A = Not applicable because it is a constant.

Appendix 4. Fisher's exact test results for the effect of general pronunciation training and pronunciation instruction training in the techniques employed

Techniques employed	General pronunciation training		Pronunciation instruction training	
	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>p</i> (1-sided)	<i>p</i> (2-sided)	<i>p</i> (1-sided)
Practice hearing differences between English words with similar sounds	.170	.106	.278	.181
Practice producing English words that include similar sounds	.587	.372	.395	.279
Tests evaluating students' ability to hear differences between words	.170	.106	.278	.181
Tests evaluating students' ability to produce differences between words	.189	.189	1	.656
Use of body parts by tapping, clapping, etc. to distinguish differences in English vs. In their native language	.164	.120	.117	.086
Communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation	.433	.319	.503	.279
Transcription using the IPA or another system of symbols for representing different sounds	.307	.161	.687	.437
Word repetition drills (repeating after a model)	1	.625	.260	.173
Sentence repetition drills (repeating after a model)	.687	.385	1	.604
Reading aloud passages	1	.625	.709	.427
Shadowing	.624	.462	.687	.437
Explicit correction of students' English pronunciation	.363	.275	1	.573
Implicit feedback on students' English pronunciation	.689	.432	.307	.179
Analyses of your students' goals for improving their English pronunciation	1	.481	.595	.459
Discussion with students regarding their attitudes toward their English pronunciation	1	.538	.038*	.032*
Others	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: **p* <.05. N/A = Not applicable because it is a constant.

Appendix 5. Fisher's exact test results for the effect of training in the techniques employed

Techniques employed	p (2-sided)
Practice hearing differences between English words with similar sounds	.265
Practice producing English words that include similar sounds	.087
Tests evaluating students' ability to hear differences between words	.117
Tests evaluating students' ability to produce differences between words	.188
Use of body parts by tapping, clapping, etc. to distinguish differences in English vs. In their native language	.419
Communicative activities with an intentional focus on pronunciation	.429
Transcription using the IPA or another system of symbols for representing different sounds	.756
Word repetition drills (repeating after a model)	.417
Sentence repetition drills (repeating after a model)	.601
Reading aloud passages	.765
Shadowing	.323
Explicit correction of students' English pronunciation	.552
Implicit feedback on students' English pronunciation	.661
Analyses of your students' goals for improving their English pronunciation	1
Discussion with students regarding their attitudes toward their English pronunciation	.122
Others	N/A
None	N/A
Note: * $p < .05$. N/A = Not applicable because it is a constant.	

