



Universidad de Valladolid

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

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**A THEORETICAL APPROACH
TO THE PRONUNCIATION
SCENE IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

Ismael Rojo Díez

Tutor: Miguel Vilalta Nieto

Departamento de Filología Inglesa

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation plays a crucial role in effective communication and overall language proficiency. However, in many secondary education schools where English is taught as a foreign language, students face challenges in mastering English pronunciation. Conservative SLA scholars considered native models essential to teach pronunciation. While new research claims intelligible communication and core features of English define in a better way the current linguistic situation of English. This study explore the concepts of the new proposals and concludes that change towards a communicative approach based on international intelligibility is challenging and presents a series of drawbacks in Secondary Education settings.

Keywords: Pronunciation, ELF, Intelligibility, GA, RP, Language Acquisition

RESUMEN

La pronunciación juega un papel importante en la comunicación eficiente y el desempeño general del lenguaje. Sin embargo, en muchas escuelas de secundaria donde el inglés se enseña como lengua extranjera tienen que afrontar retos en la dominación de la pronunciación del inglés. Los académicos conservadores del área de la adquisición del segundo idioma consideraban modelos nativos para enseñar pronunciación. Mientras que nuevos estudios afirman que la comunicación inteligible y las características base del inglés definen mejor la situación lingüística actual del inglés. Este trabajo explora los conceptos de las nuevas propuestas y concluye que un cambio hacia una metodología comunicativa basada en la inteligibilidad internacional es un reto y presenta una serie de desventajas en el marco de la educación secundaria.

Palabras clave: Pronunciación, ELF, Inteligibilidad, GA, RP, Adquisición del Lenguaje

LIST OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
 - 2.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF PRONUNCIATION IN EFL LEARNING
 - 2.2. NATIVE SPEAKER NORMS, GA, RP, AND ELF
 - 2.3. INTELLIGIBILITY, COMPREHENSIBILITY, AND NATIVENESS
3. IDENTIFYING PRONUNCIATION TEACHING FACTORS AND PROBLEMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL
 - 3.1. FACTORS AFFECTING EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACQUISITION
 - 3.1.1. THE IMPACT OF MOTHER TONGUE INTERFERENCE
 - 3.1.2. LACK OF EXPOSURE TO L2
 - 3.1.3. CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS
 - 3.1.4. MOTIVATION
 - 3.2. COMMON PRONUNCIATION ERRORS AMONG EFL LEARNERS
 - 3.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF ERROR CORRECTION IN THE NEW PARADIGM
4. APPROACHES USED TO PRONUNCIATION TEACHING
 - 4.1. TRADITIONAL APPROACHES.
 - 4.2. RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES.
5. CLT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
6. CONCLUSION
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. INTRODUCTION

In Spain, English language is a compulsory subject for students since a very young age. The “Real Decreto 157/2022, 1 March 2022 established minimal teaching requirements in Primary Education. It declares that students must acquire in at least one foreign language “la competencia comunicativa básica que les permita expresar y comprender mensajes sencillos y desenvolverse en situaciones cotidianas.” In this document in the section “Saberes básicos. A. Comunicación” makes reference to the linguistic features that must be addressed: “–Patrones sonoros, acentuales, rítmicos y de entonación básicos, y funciones comunicativas generales asociadas a dichos patrones.” And it also declares that “La nivelación de los criterios de evaluación está basada en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCER)”

The Education Law indicates that tone patterns, accents, rhythm and basic intonation must be acquired. Nevertheless, bias towards native-like accents might influence when effectively evaluating competences as I will develop later. Recently, Common European Framework descriptors have changed to offer a more neutral and not biased criteria to evaluate competences. In Spain, pronunciation has not been a skill prioritized and teachers’ surveys showed that many teachers feel insecure about their pronunciation, or that they only commit relatively little amount of time and work on this aspect.

1.1. OBJECTIVES AND JUSTIFICATION

This paper aims to explore the role of pronunciation in EFL (English Foreign Language) classrooms, specifically in Spanish secondary schools. Although pronunciation is key to communication and curriculum proposed a methodology where pronunciation takes more relevance, it is often disregarded, favoring grammar and vocabulary because of the curricular demands, which still do not align with the

proposed approach, CLT. This study explore common pronunciation difficulties faced by students, and factors behind acquisition problems.

It also reflects on the feasibility of a shift of paradigm based on intelligibility in line with the English as a Lingua Franca perspective, questioning the focus on native-speaker models like RP (Received Pronunciation) or GA (General American).

Justification for this research lies in the need to explore the different theories proposed for teaching English teaching adapted to global communicative reality, where native-speakers are a minority.

At the end of the essay, I will briefly analyze the findings and I propose possible further directions of English teaching, reflecting on the problems of implementing the changes proposed by scholars mentioned throughout the paper.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF PRONUNCIATION IN EFL LEARNING

Pronunciation is one of the most important attributes in a language. This skill allows us to successfully communicate in a foreign language. For some decades, pronunciation has not been given the importance and relevance it has gained recently in English teaching (Murphy, J., & Baker, A. 2015. p. 2). As Hişmanoğlu (2006) argues, during some decades SLA (Second Language Acquisition) professionals put pronunciation aside and emphasized grammar and vocabulary instead.

The well-known traditional methodology named “Grammar Translation Method” was the default methodology for language teaching. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2000) in their book “Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching”, state the following principle describing this method: “The primary skills to be developed are reading and writing. Little attention is given to speaking and listening, and almost none to pronunciation”. Influence of this methodology is still present nowadays in teaching attitudes and curricular demands.

Views towards how oral skills were taught changed as a result of the “Reform Movement” when other approaches emerged, giving more importance to pronunciation.

The Reform Movement was an international trend which had influence in Europe mainly (France, Germany) and Eastern Europe (Scandinavia, Russia). In England Wilhelm Viëtor led the reform and had a lot of influence. Reform Movement objectives were to change the way languages were taught. It moved from a grammar-translation approach to a more communicative strategy. An interest was established in pronunciation teaching following the general principles listed below (by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010, p. 3):

- The spoken form of a language is primary and should be taught first.
- The findings of phonetics should be applied in language teaching.
- Teachers must have solid training in phonetics.
- Learners should be given phonetic training to establish good speech habits.

Or according to Richards & Rodgers (2001):

- Changing from inductive to deductive grammar teaching
- The avoidance of translation and the use of target language unless strictly Necessary and reinforce reading and listening skills.
- Preference for listening to the language before seeing it in its written form. Even before writing.
- Speaking skills was the major focus and should be reflected in oral-based methodology (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

After the reform, many methods and approaches appeared. The direct response against grammar-translation methods was Direct Method (Bayley, 1998) in the mid decades of 19th century. It put emphasis on developing communication skills (listening and speaking comprehension) and shifted the focus to the target language, using it as the main vehicle to teach, not allowing translation. Other methods were developed later such as the audiolingual method.

When these approaches emerged, there was a strong association of “correctness” with accents. Now English is predominant as an international language. This caused SLA scholars (Jenkins, Pennington) to investigate the impact and use of English around the world, the different contexts, and considering core features in English Teaching.

2.2. NATIVE SPEAKER NORMS, GA, RP, AND ELF

Native speakers' norms incorporate two varieties of English. Normally, we find students' books materials to be either American or British English (Caleffi, 2023). General American is understood as the “standard” American English. It may appear with different names other than General American such as Standard American English or Mainstream American English (Wolfram, Schilling, 2015). Received Pronunciation refers to the British English variety that is widely accepted as “standard”. Cambridge Dictionary provides the following definitions:

“General American: the standard way in which people from the US speak, that does not sound as though it comes from any particular region”

“Received Pronunciation: the standard way in which middle-class speakers of southern British English pronounce words.”

Generally, teachers had to use a standard variety that carries a strong power of status and preferences due to the historical bonds. No other varieties are normally contemplated or chosen to work pronunciation or other skills (listening) in education. These attitudes in a context where English is a language spoken internationally might be insufficient and unfair because these models no longer show the reality of English around the world.

For instance, one of the most widely recognized corpora (e.g. British National Corpus) only accumulates 10% of oral speech production in its materials, this causes corpora to be biased towards the written language (Crystal, 2003, ch. 5). According to Newbold (2017) only 3% of the population of the UK actually speaks RP. The rest of them speak some regional variation (e.g. Scouse, Cockney or Yorkshire, among others). Finally, in this vein Backley, & Nasukawa, (2022) commented the following:

“it [British English dictionaries and textbooks] does not reflect recent changes in RP, because there is always a significant gap between the time when a new pronunciation starts to be used in spoken language and the time when that new pronunciation appears in dictionaries and textbooks. So, some of the RP pronunciations that students are now learning may already be a little old

fashioned, as they are learnt from pronunciation textbooks rather than from the ever-changing speech of young speakers.”

Some of the changes that Backley and Nasukawa list are the vowels, and consonants, or other features such as glotting, which is a feature often used in Cockney accent (an urban accent of London area) which used to be associated with low social classes but now it is widely used among young speakers.

Scholars have already proposed different points of view challenging the traditional SLA theories, for example Schmitz (2014) who researches this topic involving not only pronunciation but other aspects of English such as Language Testing. On this topic, the author argues that depending on the variety of English taken as reference, the answer (in a grammatical exercise for instance) might be correct or incorrect or may accept more than one that is correct. Another scholar, Jenkins developed the theory of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) focusing on features for successful international communication between non-native speakers.

Whereas traditional models such as GA or RP consider the main goal to reach a certain level of native-like accent and pronunciation features, ELF considers English an international language and the main vehicle for communication between non-native users as it is not totally true that in the present English is used mostly to communicate with native speakers (Schmitz, 2014).

Jenkins proposes the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) in which she includes a series of features of the English language which are essential to produce English accurately. The main features of the LFC are summarized as follows (Jenkins 2009, p. 12):

- Consonant sounds except voiced/voiceless th and dark l
- Vowel length contrasts (e.g. the difference between the vowels in ‘pitch’ and ‘peach’)
- Restrictions on consonant deletion (in particular, not omitting sounds at the beginning and in the middle of words)
- Nuclear (or tonic) stress production/placement

The non-core features are summarised as follows in Jenkins (2009, p. 13):

- Vowel quality except for the vowel sound in RP ‘fur’
- Consonants in (NS English) clusters separated by the addition of vowels (e.g. Japanese English ‘product’ as peroducuto), as well as vowels added to consonants (e.g. Korean English ‘luggage’ as luggagi)
- Features of connected speech such as elision, assimilation, weak forms
- Consonant sounds th (e.g. German English ‘think’ as sink), and dark l (e.g. in French English, the ‘l’ in ‘hotel’ pronounced by raising the tip rather than the back of the tongue)
- Word stress placement
- Pitch direction

An interesting point that Jenkins considers in her work is the sociopolitical view of pronunciation and accent in students. Learning a new language means to adopt a new identity too. ELF indeed does not oblige students to adopt an identity of a country they have no links with other than the target language. In fact, Jenkins considers British or American varieties as norms and not as “models”; and if a student’s wish is to sound native-like taking as reference those norms, their wish should be respected (Schmitz, 2014).

As for the teachers, the results of a survey conducted by Henderson et al. (2012) in Europe showed that teachers generally prefer to teach RP pronunciation, while in some cases students prefer GA pronunciation. However, RP tends to be used because that was the model which they were trained to and they feel comfortable with. In the case of Spain, as Henderson et al. state, teachers also choose RP pronunciation for both receptive (95%) and productive work (75%); they also used GA for productive work, but only 35%. For receptive work, 70%. Only a small number of participants mentioned the use of the International English variety, 30% for receptive work and 10% for productive work (Henderson et al. 2012).

Europe is still rooted to traditional models as shown in different surveys and studies (Uchida and Sugimoto, 2019, Henderson et al. 2012). It is also remarkable that a significant majority of teachers mentioned they would consider teaching English pronunciation using international features and not giving that much importance to accents.

It has been socially established a connection between native-like pronunciation and status, performance and “good” or “bad” pronunciation based on how close to RP and GA a speaker sounds. Although what some might regard accent traces as “bad” pronunciation, it does not necessarily mean that a speaker cannot communicate successfully and correctly. In the case of Spain, the Educational Law refers to the use of a “lengua estándar” (BOE-A-2022-4975). Teachers use CEFR criteria to evaluate students' performance in the different skills of foreign language.

Considering the evaluation criteria, in 2018 CEFR publication 2001 phonology scale was replaced since it was unclear when measuring progress; in order to edit this scale, Piccardo (2016) reflected on the latest considerations on phonology aspects. One of the areas selected to work on for the new scale descriptors was accentedness. Previous descriptor referred to an accent as a deviation from a ‘norm’. The new scale for pronunciation refers to L1 accents as admissible, stating for instance in C1 overall phonological control that “some features of accent retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.” (Piccardo, E. 2016. CEFR C1 Descriptor)

Therefore, the focus on core features can make students intelligible despite their accent traces. Nevertheless, there are always going to be students and professors whose objective is to achieve native-like accent to feel more confident and fulfilled. Nevertheless, the contact with different accents or varieties of English has proved of great relevance for students to practice and improve listening skills even more (Charpentier-Jiménez, 2019), and consequently, improve their pronunciation skills.

2.3. INTELLIGIBILITY, COMPREHENSIBILITY AND NATIVENESS

Intelligibility and comprehensibility are terms sometimes used indistinctly. However, these concepts represent different aspects in communication. Intelligibility is related to human ability to produce and recognize words or individual sounds in a spoken language. It is a bottom-up process, that is, the listener tries to understand by looking at individual meanings.

On the other hand, comprehensibility also includes interpretation of meaning and depends on the listener's background, context, and knowledge to sculpt the

message's meaning. Therefore, it is a top-down process. In this case, the listener would be able to understand or get an idea of the conversation despite the lack of vocabulary or grammar knowledge. For example, if a non-native speaker produces ungrammatical sentences but the listener can infer the message due to shared background knowledge or the context, comprehensibility is maintained even if intelligibility of every single word is not perfect.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) or Interlanguage variation investigated how people change their speech depending on who they are talking to. CAT, proposed by Giles, aimed at explaining interlanguage communication processes. This hypothesis postulates that people tend to change how they speak, act and gesticulate depending on the context, often unconsciously. There are two main strategies applied: convergence and divergence.

Convergence occurs when the individual adapts to a group with which does not share the same features. Students, for instance, do not speak the same way when they are in the classroom as when they are with their friends. In the former case, they would choose a more academic register. In the case of language communication between natives and non-natives, this accommodation occurs when native speakers of English facilitate communication by adapting to non-native speakers. They could, for instance, speak slower, adapt the vocabulary to simpler terms, or even adjust their accent to facilitate the communicative process.

Divergence happens when an individual would not adapt to the group, but would adjust their own behaviors to be more dissimilar to the group (Giles, 2016). This could be to assert identity, maintain social distance, or express disapproval. There are different types of adjustments that can be classified as upward or downward depending on social value. As Giles (2016) exemplifies, normally Standard American English would be socially accepted whereas migrants' variations of English (e.g., South Asian, Spanish, African accented Englishes) might be considered non-prestigious. Therefore, a non-native speaker might feel the need to converge to Standard American in order to be accepted by other speakers. These adjustments can happen in short and long term. Long-term adjustment happens when the adaptation is repeated for a prolonged period in different contexts. For example, a non-native English speaker might converge to a standard variety (i.e., Received Pronunciation) for a long-term period during his or her professional life, potentially leading to a noticeable and even permanent change in their

accent over time. On the other hand, short-term adjustment occurs less frequently and for a brief duration (Giles, 2016), such as slowing down our speech for a specific communication exchange. CAT proves how dynamic communication is in ELF contexts and how this natural adaptation of speakers helps to overcome potential communication breakdowns. This theory supports ELF by showing that successful communication is not about strictly following native norms but rather about the ability of speakers to accommodate each other.

Social identity issue is also addressed in this theory. As explained above, speakers could converge to a native accent to acceptance, but they could also diverge from that norm to express their social identity, depending on the context. Jenkins (2007) researched the topic of linguistic identity and the attitudes of non-native English speakers. She argued that these factors are crucial in vindicating intelligibility over native-speakerism. Interviewed English teachers exhibited mixed attitudes towards their own English accent; while some participants liked it and saw it as part of their identity, others would rather prefer a native variety, even if they were comfortable with their L1 accent. This attitude is a conflict between pressure from society and their own native identity. Some of the speakers might have a strong national feeling, projecting it through their non-native accent. But when it comes to perception of others, especially in education, they would rather choose a native variety in an attempt to be perceived as better professionals. Part of the teachers' attitudes have been related to past and present experiences.

Positive experiences were related to a native-like accent whereas negative experiences were related to deviation from it, such as punishments or mockery for a non-native-like accent during their own language learning journeys or professional careers, further reinforcing this preference for native varieties. Such experiences can lead to feelings of inadequacy, self-consciousness, and a perpetuation of the native-speaker ideal.

Jenkins' book "The Phonology of English as an International Language" (2000) compiles the pronunciation features of the English language as a Lingua Franca and states the idea that deviations from native norms should be considered admissible variations in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), rather than errors. However, this ideal is far from the current reality in classrooms, where a preference for native norms often takes priority over the acceptance of "admissible variations", partly due to rigid

curricular demands and teachers' lack of confidence in their own pronunciation. Many teachers feel awkward being the reference for standard pronunciation, considering only Standard American and/or British varieties as correct, and often, condemning any deviation from these as a mistake.

This sentiment aligns with the situation in Spain, where English education is heavily influenced by native-speakerism. Llurda and Mocanu (2024) found that Spanish teachers' opinions mirror those of their foreign counterparts, with a strong emphasis on native English speakers as "ideal models" for teaching. This preference often leads to direct or indirect discrimination against qualified non-native English speakers, affecting their career prospects, professional confidence, and opportunities for development.

In Spain, English teaching is often limited to traditional models and myths, where accent is frequently associated with proficiency, despite it being a social construct related to status rather than linguistic reality. This outdated view often arises from historical pedagogical practices that emphasized rote learning and prescriptive grammar, rather than communicative effectiveness. As Wolfram and Schilling (2015) argue, speaking a particular dialect or having an accent does not limit one's ability to express precise ideas or abstract constructs; linguistic diversity is a strength, not a deficiency. This highlights the urgent need for a paradigm shift in language education that recognizes and values the multifaceted nature of English.

Furthermore, some scholars, such as Pennington (1991), contend that relying solely on two standard pronunciations (British and American English) is outdated, as numerous varieties of English are now established globally, each with its own distinct features and social acceptance (e.g., in India, Singapore). In this vein, Jenkins references Kachru's (1992) theory, which divides World Englishes into three concentric circles, illustrating the spread and diversification of the language. The Inner Circle represents the "mother tongue varieties" (e.g., UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand). The Outer Circle includes countries where English has an official status, often due to colonial history (Mohammad, 2020), and plays an important role in daily life and government (e.g., India, Singapore, Philippines, Nigeria). Finally, the Expanding Circle incorporates countries where English is learned as a foreign language, and its uses are rapidly increasing and diversifying (e.g., Spain, China, Brazil).

While Kachru's model was pioneering in classifying World Englishes, it has faced criticisms for its inability to fully represent the dynamic growth of English or the distinctions of different varieties. Graddol (2006) proposed an alternative, focusing on speakers' proficiency and functional nativeness rather than strict geographical divisions. In Graddol's model, the "inner circle" would conceptually expand to include all proficient speakers who can use English effectively for their communicative needs, irrespective of their native language or accent. This shift reflects a more pragmatic and inclusive understanding of global English.

There is significant debate regarding the role of native models in English classrooms. Despite English being a global lingua franca with many established varieties, native models are often perceived as superior, leading to the rejection of non-native speakers (NNS) in teaching roles or as valid linguistic examples. Jenkins (2006) criticizes Second Language Acquisition (SLA) scholars for failing to consider the global sociolinguistic situation of English. Instead, they frequently concentrate on highlighting differences between L2 users and "correct" grammar and pronunciation, ignoring that L2 speakers use English for everyday communication. From this traditional SLA perspective, L2 learners are often constantly seen as learners, implying that achieving native-like competence is quasi-impossible (Derwing, 2005), especially considering expanding circle countries where learners are not in contact with English in their daily-life. This view suggests that traces of their own native language will almost always remain without constant, intensive practice. Consequently, traditional SLA and English as Foreign Language (EFL) paradigms often implicitly or explicitly label these students as "failed speakers" if they cannot mimic native speakers.

However, Jenkins's perspective of English as a Lingua Franca proposes a more inclusive view. She reiterates that English include various varieties affected by different sociolinguistic contexts, all of which are equally correct as native varieties for communication purposes. L1 accent traces or transferred features would not be seen as defects but as a component of speakers' identity.

3. IDENTIFYING PRONUNCIATION TEACHING FACTORS AND PROBLEMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

3.1. FACTORS AFFECTING EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ACQUISITION

Influence of previous approaches can be perceived in students' books where most exercises consist of "listen-and-repeat" tasks and little or no innovation in pronunciation instruction (Celce & Murcia, 2010) with no other types of activities being implemented to consider intelligibility features. Even when those books are aligned with communicative approach, curricular demands fails to adapt. Besides these instructional issues there are also some factors that need to be considered in pronunciation instruction. These factors have been widely discussed in the field of applied linguistics and are considered in the field of language acquisition and teaching.

3.1.1. THE IMPACT OF MOTHER TONGUE INTERFERENCE

One of the factors considered when working on pronunciation is mother tongue interference. In the case of Spanish learners, one of the most common errors is pronouncing words as they are written, because in Spanish language generally all the vowels and consonants are pronounced as it is a phonological language, and students tend to transmit this to English. (Ruiz & López, 2014)

This does not only happen with vowels and consonants but also with stress, rhythm and intonation, that is, it happens in both segmental and suprasegmental levels. Pronunciation transfer usually happens due to this mother tongue influence in the speaker. Consequently, the students struggle with this L1 transfer and they work on reduce their accent if they want to sound native-like, which is in most of the cases the goal. Although depending on the point of view, as I have mentioned above quoting Jenkins (2006), accentedness due to L1 transfer is not considered an error as far as we are intelligible when speaking English with other native or non-native speakers.

L1 interference also deals with cognates (words that share a etymological origin and often presents similarities in pronunciation, spelling and meaning), leading students to transfer L1 pronunciation to L2, especially in the case of Spanish, since English is an opaque language, where vowels do not correspond to just one phoneme. For example, in cognates: animal, general, festival, division, explosion, Spanish

speakers would have difficulties with /l/, /ʃ/, /æ/ or /ə/. These errors usually happen when students are reading aloud, as Rallo (2021) proved. Students performed better when the repetition was delayed (repeating just before listening). Rallo presumed that these results were probably because students do not have to concentrate in processing graphemes, phonemes and intonation or stress, instead good mimicry and short memory skills were mostly used in delayed repetition (Rallo, 2021). She also established a relation between students with high vocabulary knowledge and low, and results showed that in delayed repetition tasks, both groups performed equally well and produced good pronunciation, proving that this method is equally effective.

This factor depends, to a greater or lesser extent, on the linguistic distance between L1 and L2. Muñoz and Cadierno (2021) argue that the linguistic distance between Spanish and English and Danish and English was a decisive factor that influenced the results of the tests the participants performed in their research. Danish has more cognates than Spanish, and more frequent tokens than Spanish, which contributed to better comprehension of L2. The results showed that Danish students did better in listening and comprehension tests, thanks to this relatively shorter linguistic distance and a richer English environment.

Differences between Spanish and English languages are noticeable, not only in grammar structures and vocabulary but also in stress and intonation patterns causing romance languages' speakers to put an extra effort to dominate English pitch range, for example.

3.1.2. LACK OF L2 EXPOSURE

The amount of time a student spends interacting with L2, either listening, speaking, or reading in target language is a factor that has prove pertinent importance. Senel (2006) pointed out that “it is not merely exposure that matters, but how the learners respond to the opportunities.” This idea can be connected with the importance of keeping students motivated and willing to learn a language and use all the opportunities to acquire it. A relevant factor I will develop later.

So, a highly committed autonomous student will be able to take better opportunities of the environment and exposure to L2. Nowadays it is easier to get exposure to L2, through social media, (Brevik, 2019) where there are hundreds of posts in English, or through music and films, thanks to streaming platforms such as Spotify, YouTube or Netflix, which can also provide lyrics or subtitles of the content.

In these cases, a student can listen to music while reading the lyrics to fully comprehend what is the content of the song. By doing this, the student not only has a better understanding of the song, but also can concentrate on perceiving how words are pronounced too, and perhaps notice the difference that the teacher has exposed in the classroom in the pronunciation of a certain sound or vowel.

Some devoted students who are really interested in learning the language also look for language exchange apps, which basically connect partners interested in learning each other's language. Students using these apps show commitment towards learning the language, plus, they are exposed to real-life conversations, which might make them feel motivated and keep interest in L2.

Brevik (2019) collected data from most skilled English learners in tests. The author conducted a series of surveys in order to collect different data and her findings showed that students engaged in English language thanks to their big interest in the language. They used it outside school in different activities, such as: online games, social media, news, music and lyrics or films.

Participants in the interviews claimed that they are better at English thanks to the use of it outside the classroom. The amount of exposure to authentic English is also important. Brevik classified students according to different profiles, and each spent more time in different activities, i.e.: Gamer, surfer and social media user. The distinction was made depending on the amount of time participants spent on these activities. Findings showed all participants developed L2 reading skills thanks to games in which they had to participate in the form of an avatar and interact with other players, as well as talk either in a chat or call through external apps. (Brevik, 2019)

It is worth mentioning that the amount of hours the participants spent using English were considerable, not only gaming but also for other activities, such as reading or looking for authentic English. Students would also look for more detailed and complete information in English than in their L1 in some topics.. Then, the use of

extramural English was constant in everyday life, and thanks to this exposure and *interest in the language*, their L2 proficiency surpassed low L2 exposure classmates. (Brevik, 2019).

Considering the linguistic situation in Spain is also important as Spanish does not belong to the same linguistic family as English (Germanic, Romance) and therefore, linguistic distance is bigger. Muñoz and Cadierno's study (2021) proved that Danish participants surpassed Spanish students in reading and comprehension competencies, as well as in grammar judgment tests, suggesting that the Danish used both implicit knowledge (from their environment where English is more used, i.e.: TV cartoons in English subtitled in Danish) and explicit knowledge (from their acquisition in school) and Spanish students mostly relied in their explicit knowledge from school.

From these articles it can be highlighted that interest and commitment to acquire a second language is essential to search for L2 exposure out of school. It has already been proven in different studies and tests the benefits of exposure to L2, and in the case of Spain, exposure to English does not occur as much as other countries such as Denmark, Germany or The Netherlands, where English is more used and found in everyday life (for instance, dubbed TV shows).

3.1.3. CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS

Another factor influencing language learning is the age of students. Generally, it has been said that the older the students the harder it is going to be for them to acquire the language, since younger students' brains are more likely to absorb information and modify structures to learn a new language.

This theory suggests that the critical period would expand from 2 to 13 years old or puberty. This critical period or sensitive period would be the interval where language acquisition is more likely to be successful and easier. It is considered that a pre-critical period (from a few months to 2 years old) is also essential to acquire language skills (Siahaan, 2022). If children are isolated, they would show difficulties in communication and language competence later in life, (e.g. Victor of Aveyron). Finally, the post-critical period would comprehend late adolescence and adulthood. In the latter

stage, the brain's plasticity is thought to decrease, and language acquisition becomes more a conscious language learning process.

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) was developed by Lenneberg (1967) in an attempt to prove that L1 development needed to be made within the sensitive stage. As a result, CPH applied to second language acquisition suggests that younger learners are more likely to reach native-like pronunciation and mastery. Although CPH has been a topic of discussion in SLA, adults can also learn L2, but due to the limited plasticity of their developed brain, native-like competence will be harder to achieve, showing L1 accent traces, or occasional grammatical errors even after years of learning. Empirical reports collected by Oyama (1976), and Asher and Garcia (1969) prove that there existed a direct relation between participants' (Italian and Cuban immigrants from different age range) pronunciation (native-like) competence and age. Showing that the older they started to acquire the language, the worse their pronunciation was in the future.

Lenneberg's article proved that there are biological foundations in language acquisition, although it does not mean that adults cannot learn how to pronounce a language correctly when they reach a certain age. In fact, this is why it is important to collect and use age-appropriate materials and approaches depending on the student groups we are working with. For instance, Hertiki (2018) concluded that teaching materials can create a joyful atmosphere in the classroom (young learners), promoting student engagement and interest in the lessons.

Creating and providing materials according to the age range and situation of each classroom would improve engagement of the pupils during the lessons. Teachers are also responsible to collect and bring materials so that their classes work appropriately and support students. Scarcella and Oxford (1994) believe that adults can also improve their pronunciation if they become active in their own learning and teachers support their learning.

3.1.4. MOTIVATION

Dörnyei (1998) pointed out that motivation plays an important role in language learning success. In his article, Dörnyei collects various perspectives on motivation from the point of view of psychology (i.e. Expectancy-value theories, goal theories, self-determination theories).

There are two types: integrative or intrinsic motivation refers to a type of motivation that is caused by the interest in the target language and culture, with no apparent reward. On the other hand, instrumental or extrinsic motivation includes rewards, good grades, etc. According to Ryan & Deci (2000) this last-mentioned type of motivation can initiate commitment but eventually its effectiveness decreases over time.

To keep students willing to learn L2 it is necessary to keep the classroom environment relaxed and stress-free. If possible, the teacher must create a good relationship with learners. Plus, according to Krashen's theory (1982), it is important that students receive comprehensible input, adding something they know so that they do not feel lost and unmotivated and something they do not know in order to advance and obtain knowledge on the language.

It is important that the content the teacher is preparing for the students is appealing, in order to help them keep interested and concentrated on the subject. This will likely help students' output production. Considering pronunciation activities, generally, students complain about the lack of real situation contexts to practice spoken production in the classroom, draining their motivation, frustrating them. Therefore, to include materials they enjoy and real-life situations would pretty much solve this discomfort. Usually, teachers would have to create activities other than those proposed in students' books, as the majority of these do not include many instructions for communicative strategies in speaking activities, and mostly focus on NS models. (Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013)

3.2. COMMON PRONUNCIATION ERRORS AMONG EFL LEARNERS

Pronunciation is one of the most challenging skills to learn in English and one of the key components for worldwide communication. Focusing specifically in Spain, learners face different difficulties, both linguistic and phonetic, due to the differences between the two languages. These dissimilarities can lead to phonetic and prosodic errors that can affect comprehensibility and intelligibility. I will briefly go through some of the general pronunciation problems among Spanish EFL students.

The Spanish language has a vowel system of 5 main sounds, while English significantly exceeds this number. Because of this, Spanish students may have difficulties when differentiating between two vowels such as long or short vowels, i.e.: short /ɪ/ or long /i:/. The same is true of consonants, as there are many sounds that do not exist in Spanish language, for instance, /θ/ in “*thick*” or /ð/ in “*though*”, or even subtle differences as it occurs with /b/ and /v/, sounds that Spaniards do not differentiate. Students also struggle when it comes to pronouncing complex consonant clusters like str in “*street*” or spr in “*spring*.”

Some common pronunciation mistakes come at the time of reading, as Spanish language is considered to be “transparent” (Montelongo et al., 2009) since it is read as it is written. For this reason, students may read English words as they are written, leading to pronunciation errors. In this line, this causes Spanish students to produce silent letters, for example “l” in talk or could. Students can also introduce sounds (epenthesis) not present in the original words so that they find it easier to produce the sound. One of the most common ones is adding an “e” at the onset of words starting with “s”, for example “*school*” or “*student*” (Ruiz & López, 2014).

Suprasegmental features are as important as pronouncing correct sounds. The absence of correct stress and intonation patterns may result in unnatural and boring speech (Cenoz, Lecumberri, 1999). This is complicated for Spanish students as their L1 is a syllable-timed language whereas English is stress-timed. A wide pitch range (which Spanish language lacks) to give more emphasis to specific elements of the sentence in speech. For example, in unstressed syllables, when vowel sounds could be replaced by schwa /ə/, students would not produce the sound accurately, causing over-articulation and phonetic overuse that breaks English sound structure.

As a consequence, the aforementioned mispronunciation mistakes jeopardize intelligibility and comprehensibility in communication.

3.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF ERROR CORRECTION IN THE NEW PARADIGM.

A crucial part of the learning process is the correction of errors so that students can continue improving. When it comes to pronunciation depending on which English variety you choose to work with, there are going to be subtle differences in grammar (i.e. AmE prefer singular verb forms with collective nouns), vocabulary and pronunciation.

The expanding circle (Kachru, 1992) in which Spain is categorized still has views of correcting pronunciation using a traditional variety of English (either AmE or RP). As Jenkins (2009b) express in the following passage (quoting Andreasson):

"[...] Andreasson, who considers that it would be “far from a compliment to tell a Spanish person that his or her variety is Spanish English” and that this would imply that their English was incompetent (1994: 402). The ‘error rather than variety’ view is, unfortunately, still the most typical position of both native and non-native teachers in the expanding circle." (Jenkins, 2009b, p. 11).

Error correction has been a topic for criticism in this theory. Jenkins (2009a) reported it has been said that LFC promotes errors but reported:

“This misinterpretation results from an inability to separate ELF from EFL, where pronunciation errors are determined entirely by comparison with NS accent norms.”

In this same article Jenkins also listed a series of common features in discussions on this topic and one of them is “how reluctant they are to disassociate the notions of English correctness from English nativeness.” (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 20). This issue is especially relevant in expanding-circle countries where there is a preference for traditional native varieties and anything different is going to be labelled as error.

Implementing a whole ELF approach into a classroom would mean changing the whole assessment methodology to correct mistakes. Since the main goal of ELF is to guarantee successful communication through LFC features, in all kind of interactions (either NNS - NS or NNS - NNS) how we measure proficiency is an issue that requires

a “reconfiguration of our understanding of language proficiency itself” (Harding & McNamara, 2018). This would imply using the following criteria like the following to evaluate students (from Harding & McNamara, 2018, p. 9):

- The ability to tolerate and comprehend different varieties of English: different accents, different syntactic forms and different discourse styles
- The ability to negotiate meaning when meaning is ambiguous
- The ability to use those phonological features which are crucial for intelligibility across speakers of different L1 backgrounds
- An awareness of appropriate pragmatics (e.g., awareness of politeness in cross-cultural situations)
- The ability to accommodate your interlocutor, to make yourself understandable to whomever you are speaking with
- The ability to notice and repair breakdowns in communication

Nevertheless, the implementation to this criteria and alternative assessment to ELT is still a great challenge and possibly these criteria are going to be used as “complementary criteria” in language assessment in which ELF competences are to be expected. (Harding & McNamara, 2018).

But implementing all this into curricula and coursebooks for younger learners (which need adapted and easier materials) is no easy task. Some scholars (Galloway, 2017; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013; Caleffi, 2023) researched whether or not scholar books included ELF and WE materials. Galloway (2017, p. 12) commented the following:

“As noted above, incorporating an ELF perspective into ELT materials does not necessarily mean abandoning communicative tasks. Course book writers are encouraged to build on the advancements of methods such as Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Task accomplishment, however, should be measured according to how successfully they communicated and not whether they accomplished the task in the way that a NES would.”

In this vein, Pennington states the following (2021, p. 5):

“The EIL orientation, linked to ELF and World Englishes (Kachru, 1992), has in a sense taken up the mantle of early CLT and maintained the pragmatism and the political and ethical, learner-centred, position that pronunciation should not be a focus of instruction as long as meaningful communication occurs.”

So, ELT paradigm is progressing, but it needs some adjustments, such as the implementation of some of the criteria suggested above by Harding & McNamara (2018). Likewise, Galloway (2017, p. 5) claims it is important to judge “how ELF users exploit the language creatively and push the boundaries of native English”, which is still one of the matters that teachers and learners find difficult to change, the native-like ideal. Luke Harding in his 2011 book *“Accent and listening assessment: A validation study of the use of speakers with L2 accents on an academic English listening test.”* demonstrated in a collection of interviews participants complained about others’ accents and pronunciation, expressing discomfort or labelling others’ accents of “weird” or non-competent or professional. (Harding, 2011).

Therefore, English teaching is heading for a new paradigm that is considering the sociocultural issues that arose in English language due to its globalization. It is proposed to focus mostly on communicate effectively, considering phonological features essential to intelligibility and attitudes towards diverse accents tolerance or negotiation of meaning. However, these assessment criteria would need further research, specifically in Secondary Education Schools, where other challenges could come up. For instance, this communicative assessments in large classrooms might be an obstacle. Or, if the interaction is among Spanish L1 speakers, the intelligibility criteria, among others, could not be evaluated objectively. That is, ideally, students would have to test their communicative skills with different L1 speakers to actually follow the criteria mentioned.

4. APPROACHES USED TO TEACH PRONUNCIATION.

Despite the changes and development of new approaches that may improve pronunciation teaching, the situation in the classrooms is changing slowly. Teachers rely on traditional techniques to teach pronunciation, and their limitations of time and curricular demands make it even more complicated to achieve the desired change. The results of a survey conducted by Henderson et al. in 2012 show that the techniques most commonly used consist of listen-and-repeat activities, spontaneous error correction, reading aloud, and phonetic instruction (Kirkova-Naskova, 2019). Practice on pronunciation is infrequent or insufficient and the most common activity was “repeating words and sentences.”

Many teachers are still hesitant to change the *modus operandi* of the classroom due to various factors. Henderson et al. (2012) collected these factors in his work, among which, the most remarkable are the lack of training or knowledge of IPA, difficulty to work with techniques dealing with suprasegmental features or other features rather than work with syllabus and time restrictions. Therefore, many teachers prefer to use long-standing methods since they do not dedicate too much time to teaching pronunciation, around 25% of the total amount of the week (Henderson et al. 2012).

Considering adult learners (Bachelor, after puberty), the situation might be different and teachers should also adapt, since according to Wooldridge (2022) adults do not learn the same way as children do. Partially because of the critical period hypothesis, but apart from the biological factors, the reasons why they might be learning are also different. Dealing with pronunciation, Scarcella and Oxford (1994) consider that for adults to reach native-like pronunciation is an unrealistic goal, but not impossible. Few of them could achieve native-like pronunciation but the vast majority will not likely reach their objective.

Despite the situation given, general feelings from both teachers and students are that they desire to work more and put more emphasis on pronunciation (Marzá, 2014). So, given the number of resources available, both students and teachers can take advantage of them to break from traditional ties and adopt new approaches. Benzie conducted a survey-based study about university students’ perceptions towards pronunciation teaching in their English classes and concluded that “the role of

pronunciation in EFL classes is still insufficient”. Furthermore, findings also revealed that students pronunciation were rarely tested, that error correction was monotonous and not enough time is devoted to teach pronunciation (Benzies, 2013, p. 47).

4.1. TRADITIONAL APPROACHES.

Traditional approach refers to methodologies working on pronunciation towards a native-like target. These approaches emerged after the Reform Movement (e.g.: audiolingual approach) and dominated pronunciation teaching during the 20th century, and still continues to influence ELT today. The main objective of traditional approaches is to achieve a native-like pronunciation. As shown in several studies and surveys previously mentioned, the most fundamental methods consist in listen-and-repeat techniques which relied on mimicry and memorization, considering that the pronunciation would be acquired by consistent imitation. A model is presented and students attempt to replicate it as closely as possible. The model used as a reference is usually General American or English Received Pronunciation, used indistinctly.

Phonetic training was also introduced after the Reform Movement and was used to develop good pronunciation habits. Nowadays, it is still used to learn pronunciation although it is less likely used than the listening and repeating techniques. Teachers show students pictures of the vocal tract and explain how to position their tongue, lips, etc. to produce specific sounds. With this approach, students would learn and recognize phonetic symbols to transcribe words. Currently, despite it is a scientific-based approach, it might be considered traditional when compared with communicative approaches. This approach used techniques such as minimal pair drills and isolated sound practice. Minimal pairs would help students distinguish between subtle phonological distinctions that might not exist in their L1. Students would practice the pair of words that differ slightly in one sound (i.e.: *ship/ sheep*) by hearing both words and identify the differences, then produce them accurately.

As some of the results of Henderson et al. (2012) or Benzies (2013) show, reading aloud has also been widely used in most EFL classrooms. Teachers would correct their pronunciation as they go, usually incorporating stress and intonation

patterns in order to help students understand the relationship between written and spoken English.

All of these approaches are teacher-centered, leaving the students' role passive in their own learning. They mostly use General American or Received Pronunciation as their target and their goal is that students sound as close to native speakers as possible. This might cause a potential demotivation on students who struggle to achieve native-like pronunciation. Moreover, most of the exercises are not based on communicative contexts, so the use of these approaches usually interfere with the goal of preparing learners for real-world communication.

While these approaches and methods might look correct or incorrect, it can lead to some grey areas where some techniques that were included in traditional approaches are used for teaching English in a research-based approach. For instance, Kirkova-Naskova (2019) recommends using drilling because it is “a particularly significant phase in the initial stages of language acquisition” and believes that “learners need to be able to imitate the sounds” (Kirkova-Naskova, 2019). Therefore, using different techniques aligning them with the objectives aiming to achieve a successful communication is beneficial for students.

4.2. RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES

Research-based approaches are based on different areas of research aimed at improving the way language is taught. This includes for example, psychological views to explore the different notions and factors that contribute to learning acquisition, or on the contrary, hinder acquisition (identity barriers, demotivation, mother tongue influence...). Contrary to traditional approaches, the aim is to pursue communication and not inhibit it.

Research-based approaches consider other features of spoken language that traditional approaches (normally) do not, such as stress and intonation, or connected speech. Traditional approaches mostly focus on isolated sounds, making it harder for students to acquire other important features of the language.

Scholars such as Kirkova-Naskova (2019), Wooldridge (2022) or Wei (2006) list a series of techniques to teach pronunciation. As mentioned above, Kirkova-Naskova considers imitating sounds essential for students' progress in acquiring pronunciation. She also includes interdisciplinary techniques which consists of the use of different senses such as kinesthetic (gestures, movement), visual, or auditory (Kirkova-Naskova, 2019). Using different senses, students will have more learning chances to acquire knowledge. For example, teachers could propose students to see themselves in a mirror when they place the tongue in a certain position so that they can both feel and see the articulation of certain sounds.

Meta-linguistic awareness and self-awareness are essential characteristics of research-based approaches. Kirkova-Naskova (2019, p. 127) proposes a series of topics recommended to students so that they can think about them, including "the importance they give to pronunciation" or "which degree of competence they aim to achieve." These questions will help the teacher know more about the students and their beliefs in order to pursue any identity conflict students may have with the target language. By doing this, the teachers will have a greater idea about the students they are working with will be able to set their own goals, or pursue a certain variety (if any) such as their target for nativeness or intelligibility, since they would also be aware of the different regional models of English.

There are also mentions to the importance of learners' raising their phonological awareness relevant to L2 so they can analyze their speech. This suggestion of self-monitoring is considered by Wei (2006), adding that students could improve their own intelligibility. This technique is more often recommended in older learners, since adults have more capacities of analytic skills to deal with their own recordings or materials. Although it could be implemented with younger learners if the technique is presented in game form (Kirkova-Naskova, 2019).

It is proposed in research-based approaches that students develop phonetic awareness. Teaching student IPA symbols would allow students to track their own speech and check it on online dictionaries where a transcription and audio file in both American and British English can be found to check the correct pronunciation. Kirkova-Naskova proposes ear-training or perceptual training to be included in the acquisition since "accurate perception is a prerequisite for L2 imitation" (Kirkova-Naskova, 2019). Furthermore, it has been proven that groups exposed to

HVPT (High Variation Phonetic Training) in game form have acquired a better pronunciation and phonetic awareness (Rvachew, S., Nowak, M., & Cloutier, G. (2004); Moore, D. R., Rosenberg, J. F., & Coleman, J. S. (2005)).

The use of authentic material is also recommended in research-based approaches to teach pronunciation, along with these materials being of relevant interest to students. Students perform better when they are engaged with some materials they really like and enjoy. Although this is the ideal, Wooldridge (2022) also mentions that she sometimes used her own materials because she would have more control over the features or what she actually wanted to use and commented that it is really time consuming looking for good authentic material. This might be one of the big drawbacks teachers face, specially when time is restricted and limited by curriculum.

Finally, some of the techniques proposed are means to deal with the teaching of suprasegmental features. Normally, suprasegmental features were not taught because traditional methods focused more on segmental features. Suprasegmental features add meaning to speech and many times EFL learners are not able to grasp the full meaning of the message, or are led to confusion or misunderstanding in ambiguous sentences because of this lack of training on suprasegmentals. Wooldridge's techniques (2022) to teach suprasegmentals include imitation drills, nonsense syllables, gestures, back chaining, and dramatic reading.

5. CLT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Communicative Language Teaching is currently the approach prescribed in the official syllabus in Spain and many other European countries. Additionally, textbooks are already implementing activities that comply with the criteria of CLT (Criado & Sánchez, 2009). Nevertheless, there is a gap between the theory and the practice in the classrooms, where CLT presents a series of problems for the teachers in its implementation. Among the problems we can find in Spain for instance, there is the lack of intrinsic motivation. This is caused (in all expanding circle countries) because English is not present outside the school, and learners are not going to encounter a context to use English, besides the classroom.

Derakhshan & Torabi (2015) collected in their study data reflecting teachers complaints about the difficulties of implementing CLT, these are: the lack of resources, or lack of knowledge or fluency in English language, discrepancies between CLT syllabus and placement exams, and the use of traditional methods.

Alsied (2018) affirms that the implementation of CLT is a challenging process in an ELT context because of the lack of native speakers. This claim is a proof of existing bias towards native speakers, considered the only possible context to create authentic communicative contexts when the reality is that native-speakers represent a minority in a global communication context. As aforementioned, this is also supported by the teachers' own knowledge of the English language, and their doubts when they are considered the role-model and facilitator of correct and good English as they are experts.

Placement tests are also considered a trouble in implementing CLT. At the moment, the tests focus on grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, lessons are conducted structurally to fulfill the requirements necessary to pass the evaluations at the end of the academic year (Derakhshan & Torabi, 2015); as a result, “teachers’ actions are not predominantly communicative in nature” (Criado & Sánchez, 2009). Garrote, Alonso, & Galetti, (2019) also concluded that identifying communicative principles is still challenging for Spanish teachers; furthermore, the implementation in CLT in mixed-ability classes with a high number of students, is so far problematic.

As the studies previously mentioned manifest, there is still a gap between the theory and the practice in the implementation of CLT. Despite it is the official methodology in the curriculum and the CEFR descriptors focus on intelligibility, there is still a strong connection with native-speakerism in schools. Not only in attitudes, but also showed in textbooks, as stated by Caleffi (2023), Galloway (2017), and Vettorel & Lopriore (2013). Nevertheless, the implementation of communicative contexts in classrooms considering NNS, as proposed in the ELF theory by Jenkins is also complex.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The panorama of ELT currently faces a remarkable disparity between evolving pedagogical ideas and the pace at which educational materials, in particular textbooks, are updated. Not only that, but when books meet the requirements of the curricula (CLT-based), teachers face difficulties in the practice to implement it, partially due to curricular demands. This complex situation creates a challenge influenced by a prevalent tendency to idealize native speaker proficiency and consequently misinterpret non-native accents as indicative of low communicative competence or professionalism.

Effective pronunciation instruction extends beyond merely raising learners' awareness of the diverse World Englishes and their global usage. It involves expanding the scope of pedagogical activities to align with communicative goals. Many teachers find themselves restricted by conventional coursebooks lacking learner engagement and overlooking crucial features for intelligibility and communication, such as suprasegmental features. Only a minority of the materials analyzed in the studies mentioned focused on connected speech phenomena, such as linking and assimilation.

The ultimate goal of enhancing pronunciation skills is to foster intelligibility regarding communication in real-world interactions. The current sociocultural context, as proposed by Jenkins and the theory of English as a lingua franca (ELF) proposes that native-speakers constitute a global minority in terms of overall English usage. Therefore, the pursuit of a 100% native-like pronunciation and the exclusive reliance of native-speaker-based audio materials represent (according to ELF theorists) an unrealistic pedagogical goal that is not aligned with contemporary communication needs and primacy of intelligibility.

Instead, the newest approaches would involve exposing learners to a rich selection of English accents and varieties. As a result, the multifaceted exposure would develop robust communicative competence, involving not only oral

production but also listening comprehension. This approach fosters a more inclusive understanding of global English and prevents English users from mischaracterizing other non-native speakers' accents as “bad English” simply due to their perceived “strangeness” or “deviance” from a singular native norm.

Nevertheless, this view of English has some limitations and challenges worth reflecting on. First, the term intelligibility could be considered ambiguous. Is the speaker being intelligible to whom and in which context? In a globalized context where there is a vast diversity of Englishes, the students might face difficulties to produce intelligible speech without a point of reference. Considering this issue, a Spanish speaker might find it easier to understand an Italian speaker, than to understand a Vietnamese speaker. These interactions, even if successful communication is achieved, are going to cause fatigue in both speakers in terms of listening as they will have to strive to comprehend the intended message.

The notion of error discussed above, is proof that correcting students' pronunciation in terms of intelligibility can be challenging. Considering that intelligibility depends on the listener, the teacher would have to follow a non-biased criteria to measure students' oral production, and decide whether or not it was sufficiently intelligible.

It would be advisable to do further research and studies to test whether these challenges can be overcome and what other problems would arise from an actual implementation of a communicative approach focusing on international intelligibility. I consider that native norms are still important in education context, especially in secondary education schools, where students do have to improve other skills of the language. Eventually, pronunciation will improve naturally, after exposure and use of the language. Therefore, changing the paradigm in secondary education is subtly more challenging than it would be for older adults, (bachelor or university students) where curricular demands might not be as structured.

The integration of some proposed notions would not be such a challenge, but would be enough to introduce students to World Englishes, raise their

awareness and judgements towards their own accent and other speakers' accents. The absence of native speaker norms could affect students' performance in communication because, a student trained to identify the different vowel phonemes probably is going to have better comprehension than a student whose target was just being intelligible. It might be considered that abandoning native norms and ways to teach English pronunciation would have a series of drawbacks in learners, that would have to be tested in further research. Full implementation of an ELF pronunciation teaching may not have the expected results in international communication if speakers have an accented English that is linguistically far from a standard norm and lack the communicative exchange with different L1s speakers.

For the moment, research and development in the field of phonetics for English learners continues growing and adding information to the existing perceptions of English Language Teaching. The implementation of communicative teaching based on international intelligibility would need to start by adding clear guidelines, criteria, and change the curricular necessities in secondary education to fully implement new approaches.

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