PRONUNCIATION PRACTICES IN EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING

HANA VANČOVÁ

2020

Gaudeamus

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PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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Introduction

Communication is a complex process of information transfer that can have different shapes – one of them is the acoustic form, also called speech. A unique feature of speech is the pronunciation – the audible representation of a language.

From the pedagogical perspective, pronunciation is often overlooked or neglected by teachers (e. g. Macdonald, 2002; Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010; Metruk, 2020). It is also unflatteringly labelled as Cinderella (Kelly, 1969) or orphan (Gilbert, 2010). On the contrary, researchers find points of interest not only in studying the individual sounds of languages (e. g. Gowhary, Azizifar & Rezaei, 2016; Gooch, Saito & Lyster, 2016) or the importance of suprasegmental features in communication (e. g. Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Field, 2005; Hahn, 2012; Kucukoglu, 2014; Rezaei, Gowhari & Azizifar, 2015), but also in the way pronunciation can be taught or improved in the controlled, classroom setting (e. g. Nunan, 1999; Kelly, 2000, Goodwin, 2001, Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Straková & Cimermanová, 2005, Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010, Bérešová, 2013, Pokrivčáková, 2013). In Slovakia, pronunciation teaching and mistakes the learners make have been analysed by, for instance, Kráľová, 2011; Eddy, 1013; Borošová, 2014; Vančová, 2014; Kehoe, 2015; Metruk, 2020.

One of the goals of pronunciation instruction is the final pronunciation the speaker speaks – the wealth of literature suggests the traditional prestigious native accents have been the desired pronunciation the learners should speak (e. g. Janicka, Kul & Weckwerth; Vančová, 2017); however, this goal is confronted with globalisation and the use of English as a Lingua Franca. This phenomenon disturbed the balance in English – nowadays, the majority of English speakers speak it either as their foreign or second language (Crystal, 2019), and the speakers of minor native accents want to be heard using their accent that represents their culture and identity (Yule, 2010). Therefore, an alternative to traditional native models was formulated and its main points are open to discussion among scientific and educational communities.

The aim of the presented publication is to provide an insight into the current pronunciation teaching practices in a global context, to provide an insight into the views and practices of university teachers of phonetics and phonology, and to provide an insight into the opinion of English learners from Slovakia on the importance of pronunciation, their preference of native accents and accent goals

of learners of English and the most preferred techniques to improve their pronunciation in a formal school setting as well as informal setting.

As suggested in the literature, the problems of the teachers and learners centre around the following topics:

- Methodological issues – the teachers report the lack of theoretical preparation at their university programs; therefore, they must rely on available teaching materials. Although the materials provide exercises on pronunciation teaching, they do not give teachers the full picture of the possible approaches and techniques to pronunciation teaching.
- Curricular issues – the overview of the official educational documentation in Slovakia lacks clarity in the goals of pronunciation teaching in the context of communicative teaching that is currently promoted as an approach in language teaching. The lack of clearly set goals gives the teachers freedom to choose the goals of pronunciation teaching and choose the sequence of their presentation; however, in combination with the aforementioned methodological issues, pronunciation appears to remain the least systematically taught aspect of English in Slovakia.
- Pronunciation issues – in addition to the lack of teachers' preparation and loosely defined goals, teachers are confronted with the pronunciation issues of their learners. The mistakes students make are not only on the level of segmental and suprasegmental deviations from the standard pronunciation, but the mistakes are also based on mispronouncing words by the unsystematic placement of incorrect phonemes. As a consequence, teachers must intervene, but also report insecurities about their own pronunciation and their role for their students.

All the aforementioned reasons should be taken into consideration when discussing teaching pronunciation in the context in Slovakia. The issues can be considered as primary and crucial for the development of successful communication.

The first chapter introduces the general situation in pronunciation teaching – the current formal conditions for pronunciation teaching in Slovakia, the trends in contemporary pronunciation teaching trends and possible factors influencing the success of pronunciation instruction.

The second chapter discusses several traditional and more modern approaches to pronunciation teaching, discusses methodological practices the teachers may find relevant and strategies used in pronunciation teaching.

The third chapter presents the results of an interview study conducted with university teachers of phonetics and phonology, who teach the course directly related to pronunciation and who, on one hand, can evaluate the level of the pronunciation of students who completed secondary education, and on the other

hand have an indirect influence on the future pronunciation teaching practices in Slovakia, as they prepare pre-service teachers of English, therefore shape opinions, beliefs and cognition of future teachers.

The fourth chapter presents the results of a questionnaire study conducted with pre-service teachers studying at a Slovak university. The questionnaire aimed to collect the opinion of students on the importance of pronunciation and its importance, teaching and learning practices, strategies used when learning pronunciation, and their attitudes to native accents of English.

Finally, the last chapter presents a research attempt into the current research in pronunciation instruction provided by a meta-analysis of research papers dealing with various aspects of pronunciation issues and different approaches to pronunciation improvement.

In the end, conclusions and recommendations will be formulated.

1 Pronunciation curriculum

Educational processes are governed by a different unique set of guidelines tailored to the specific needs of every country. The guidelines are formally written as a set of official pedagogical documentation that specifies goals for learners at different levels of education. The guidelines determine the material conditions of schools, their organisation and hierarchy, funding, defines the requirements for qualification of educators and other policies. Alghazo (2015, p. 317) claims that "[s]uccessful learning, thus, partially relies on how the curriculum of the instructional program is designed to meet the learning objectives".

1.1 Pronunciation teaching in Slovakia

In Slovakia, the content of education is defined by *the National Education Programme* issued by The National Institute for Education in the Slovak Republic, one of the organisations belonging under The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic responsible for, among other roles, making curricular policies and their implementation into teaching practice.

In Slovakia, English is used and learned as a foreign language, but its status in the educational system has been constantly redefined. According to Pokrivčáková (2018), Slovakia has adopted the principles of the of the European Union that expects the learners speak two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue (M+2 rule). In Slovakia, there have been constant discussions on the selection of the two languages. On one hand, English is generally perceived as a global and dominant foreign language and a must in the international labour market; however, due to geographical proximity of German-speaking countries, and appreciation of a wide range of Romance languages spoken in Europe and also in other continents, the holding of debates in Slovakia ebbs and flows, about whether the learners should be allowed to learn foreign languages according to their personal preferences and needs, or English would be made the ultimate first foreign language of all learners in Slovakia. The status of the first and second foreign language in Slovakia is not insignificant – the status influences the age the learners start learning the languages, as well as the number of lessons per week students study the language. In this respect, the status of English as a school subject fluctuates between English being the first foreign language of learners, and

one of the second languages taught. Currently, English is given the status of the first foreign language and learners start to learn it in the 3rd year of their studies.

The curriculum for English is designed with respect to its status. English as a school subject is also under the umbrella of *the National Education Programme* and the document relates the goals of pronunciation teaching with respect to the levels identified by *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2013)*.

The Innovated National Educational Programme (Inovovaný štátny vzdelávací program) covers every subject taught in Slovak schools and English as a school subject is treated within the umbrella of "Language and Communication". The documents contain specific goals for the sphere of communicative language competences, performance standard, competences and functions. The document also contains a comprehensible table that points at the relationship between language competences, functions and linguistic means, followed by a vocabulary list with specific lexical items learners should have in their lexicon.

The Innovated National Educational Programme specifying the requirement for English as a subject is designed for four different school types:

- primary schools
- lower secondary schools
- for secondary grammar schools with 4 a 5- year programme
- and for secondary grammar school with 8-year programme.

The Innovated National Educational Programme for primary schools aims to achieve the learner's level A1+ in the 5th year of the learners' schooling. After the 4th year, learners should be able to know the pronunciation of a limited range of vocabulary and developing listening, reading and speaking skills should contribute to the acquisition of a correct pronunciation with appropriate intonation.

The Innovated National Educational Programme for lower secondary schools is designed for two levels according to CEFR – A1 and A2. The document for the A1 level specifies the goal of pronunciation teaching as the ability to pronounce a limited range of words and lexical expressions comprehensible for native speakers accustomed to speaking with speakers from the same language family of the learner; however, the document for A2 level does not set specific goals for pronunciation.

The Innovated National Educational Programme for 4- and 5-year secondary grammar schools is designed for three levels – B1, B2 and C1 for the second foreign language. The document for B1 sets the only goal – articulatory comprehensible pronunciation with occasionally mispronounced words and evident foreign accent. The document for the B2 levels aims the learner to acquire clear, natural pronunciation and intonation. Within the function of describing, the learner should know how to make new words by changing the stress placement in words when describing. The document for the C1 level specifies the goals as the

pronunciation entire repertoire of phonemes and the use of suprasegmentals (intonation, word and sentence stress) for comprehension.

The Innovated National Educational Programme for 8-year secondary grammar schools copies the requirements of the curricula of other study programs, as they are formulated with respect to CEFR levels.

The aforementioned information indicates the documents set relatively clear objectives in terms of the overall quality of pronunciation of Slovak learners of English for different levels; however, the instruction on the relation between pronunciation phenomena defined by phonetics and phonology and their useability in communicative situations outside classroom remains vague and requires from teachers seeking support in other materials than the official pedagogical documentation.

A more detailed document titled *The Target Requirements for the knowledge and skills of secondary schools graduates/Level B1 and 2* (Cieľové požiadavky na vedomosti a zručnosti maturantov z anglického jazyka/úrovne B1 a B2; ŠPÚ 2016) identifies the following requirements in pronunciation for segmental and suprasegmental levels:

- Aspiration of fortis plosives
- The difference between phonemes /v/ and /w/
- Velar nasal /ŋ/
- Vowel / æ/
- Dental consonants /ð / and /θ /
- All diphthongs except for / ʊə/ (e. g. here, ear, where, there)
- Triphthongs /aʊə/ flower and /aiə/ fire, tired
- Silent letters
- Linking sounds
- Primary and secondary word stress
- Reduced vowel pronunciation in unstressed syllables, i.e. weak forms
- Sentence stress and rhythm
- Intonation in sentences (rising, falling, their combination)

The document also specifies that B2 learners should recognise and use intonation in question tags and understand different variants of English pronunciation and passively know the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

As an overall goal, the document formulates the requirement of clear and comprehensible pronunciation for the B1 learner, and the pronunciation inaccuracies and native accent should not disturb the communication. The B2 learner should pronounce clearly and naturally with sporadic inaccuracies.

The majority of the listed pronunciation features are universally accepted as features that change the meaning of words or utterances and are studied by

phonology (Jones, 1970; Roach, Pavlík, 2000; 2001; Cruttenden, 2014). (Non)-pronunciation of silent letters is related to the knowledge of the English orthography and they concern primarily the learners with lower proficiency (Basetti & Atkinson, 2015; Shak, Lee & Stephen, 2016). In addition, the ability to use linking sounds requires not only a good, native-like pronunciation but also fluency, based on a good command of grammar and vocabulary.

The examples stated next to diphthongs and triphthongs are taken directly from the document and point at the requirement of the speakers/learners to use non-rhotic varieties of English. This implicitly suggests the English pronunciation model for learners in Slovakia being one of the British varieties, called the BBC pronunciation (Roach, 2001) or RP (Pavlík, 2000).

The choice of the pronunciation model plays an important role in pronunciation teaching because it gives learners a target form, they should achieve. The choice of the non-rhotic variety for a pronunciation model in Slovakia agrees with the official textbook policy in Slovakia developed by the Ministry of Education, who published a list of officially approved textbooks the purchase of which is financially supported by the ministry (*Zoznam schválených učebníc, schválených učebných textov, schválených pracovných zošitov a odporúčaných učebníc, na zakúpenie ktorých ministerstvo školstva poskytne školám finančné prostriedky*, edicnyportal.sk, 2018). The list of approved textbooks reveals that dominant role in the textbook market in Slovakia play major British publishing houses where the presentation of British pronunciation is expected. However, this expectation is not completely fulfilled, because several series (e.g. New English File or Face2Face) confront the learners not only with the traditional prestigious British accents, but periodically introduce also American or other British accents (e. g. Scottish). Pavliuk (2020) was analysing the number of exercises in general English textbooks used in Slovak schools – across 22 publications she identified 594 exercises. The specific information on the amount of non-RP accents in currently presented to learners in general English textbooks used in Slovakia is not available at present; however, the author strives to address this issue in her future research attempts.

Wrembel (2005) made an overview of English pronunciation teaching materials (30 textbooks and 14 CD-ROMs) and evaluated the number of accents presented to learners in the materials available in Poland. The evaluated materials presented different models in different media – while textbook predominantly presented British accent, followed by American and even Australian one, CD-ROMs predominantly presented American accent. Wrembel also noticed an increased interest in suprasegmentals.

The shift in the presentation of different pronunciation models in textbook suggests the currently set target requirements do not have to be the ultimate ones

but should take into consideration the impact on globalisation in all spheres of life, including education and pronunciation teaching.

1.2 Pronunciation teaching in the global context

English is rich in its variants and several accents have been generally accepted as standard forms for certain groups of native speakers, even if not all accents have been accepted as pronunciation models for non-native speakers (Janicka, Kul & Weckwerth, 2005). The accent is a characteristic feature speaker is aware of and the source of pride (Bérces, 2008, Yule, 2010). There are speakers who would never accommodate their pronunciation to their listener and would prefer to remain acoustically divergent from their listeners.

The English language has long lost the status of a national language used within a small community – for decades it has been used as a Lingua Franca. Crystal (2019) claims the non-native speakers of English have outnumbered the native speakers, therefore, while in the past communication between a native speaker and a non-native speaker used to be an asymmetric act, where one of the parts spoke their native language and the other did not, these days, communication of non-native speakers is symmetric because both speak a foreign language and bring some traces of their mother tongue into English at all levels. Since pronunciation is the primary mode of communication, globalisation has impacted pronunciation as well. The traditional terms "English as a second language" or "English as a foreign language" got a new competitor – "English as an international language". While the former two concepts refer to communication of a native and non-native speaker, Jenkins (2002) uses the latter term in relation to the communication of two non-native speakers.

Levis (2005) presents a matrix of communicative situations of native and non-native communicative participants and introduces the terms intelligibility that takes into consideration varying value of speech elements as well as the importance of context the communication takes places. For intelligibility, the listener is more important than the speakers, because "intelligibility tends to mean different things to different people and depends, to a certain degree, on the attitude or point of view of the listener" (Macdonald 2002, p. 8).

Levis (2005) contrasts two principles – nativeness principle aiming for the native-like pronunciation that competes with biological constraints of learners, thus setting unrealistic goals to both, teacher and the learner, and intelligibility principle, that promotes improving those features that make the speaker understood, even if the learners retain some features of the native accents, as not all features carry an equal amount of importance for understanding between two parts of communication. The shift, Levis perceives, is directed to promoting intelligibility and inclusion of foreign accents into pronunciation teaching;

however, professional users of English should concentrate on the native accents in their pronunciation training.

To comply with the growing variety of English pronunciation accents of English (native and non-native), need to define "a minimum general intelligibility", a common ground for pronunciation, was being proposed (e. g. Roach, 2001, p. 7).

Jenkins (2002) introduced her Lingua Franca Core curriculum for the pronunciation that includes the following core features:
- preference of rhotic accent
- some substitutions of the dentals
- British /t/ in words latter or water
- allophonic variations in words that do not change the meaning
- additional requirements
- aspiration for fortis plosives in word-initial positions
- fortis clipping
- pronunciation of all consonants in the word-initial consonant clusters
- consonant clusters simplified in the manner of native-like pronunciation
- consonant cluster nt in the word-medial position maintained
- the contrast between short and long vowels
- consistent l2 regional substitutions
- word stress for contrastive purposes

Besides core features, Jenkins also introduces the non-core features that facilitate comprehensibility. They include the following range of pronunciation features:
- dentals and the allophone [ɫ]
- consistent vowel quality
- weak forms
- assimilation at word boundaries
- attitudinal and grammatical intonation
- word stress
- stress-timed rhythm

The view on the pronunciation features selected as core and non-core contains a mixture of segmental and suprasegmental features, as well as positional variants of phonemes that were methodically treated in pronunciation instruction classes with great attention. For instance, Van den Doel (2010) takes the issue of replacing dentals by other obstruent not only as a mark of pronunciation, but also as a mark of social class and a possible reason of the speakers' stigmatisation if pronounced incorrectly.

Although the proposed curriculum was met with understanding among the teachers (Sewell, 2010; Rahimi & Ruzrokh, 2016) because it would provide them with universal guidelines in pronunciation teaching, there is also critics, who view it as "controversial" (Detering (2011), call it "politically correct" and "artificial" (Sobkowiak, 2005). Sobkowiak also points at the fact that language goes beyond communication, which is not taken into account in the Lingua Franca Core.

While the Slovak requirements identify the interlingual differences between the Slovak and English acoustic repertoire of a particular variety of English (a non-rhotic one) and demand the Slovak high-school leavers to know and actively use them, the Lingua Franca curriculum turns into itself and identifies the possible causes of phoneme substitutions and takes into consideration the inner peculiarities of English phoneme distribution. The proposed curriculum by Jenkins (2002) also looks at the structure of English sounds above the segment and identifies additional or secondary shifts in the meaning of the words across accents and varieties of English She also considers that even native speakers often speak with their social or regional accents and they do not interfere with communication, while non-native accents do. Due to globalisation and the disappearance of native accents among speakers of English, such finding a common ground for pronunciation for educational purposes is worth consideration.

2 Teaching pronunciation

Acoustic form of communication – speech, is the primary and most direct mode of communication for most people at the level of a society and an individual. Contrary to writing systems, there is no community in the world that could exist without speech.

Comprehensible and clear speaking is difficult in every language, including the mother tongue. To articulate well and deliver the message at the comprehensible rate and emphasis on the most logical parts of utterances requires effort in every language. The challenges in speaking are confirmed by the number of materials available to improve rhetorical skills and rhetorical activities

2.1 Overview of pronunciation teaching

Current research into the attitudes of teachers towards pronunciation teaching indicates that teachers generally (Mcdonald, 2000; Foote, et al., 2016) do not favour teaching it. Teachers find themselves theoretically underprepared and practically untrained in pronunciation teaching techniques; however, this trend does not seem to be relatively new. The International Phonetic Association, an umbrella association of phoneticians from all around the world, was established at the end of the 19th century thanks to the activities of language teachers who were aware of the pronunciation importance but lacked official materials that would allow them to teach foreign languages in all their complexity, including the correct acoustic form (Crystal, 2010).

Murphy & Baker (2015) overview the history of teaching pronunciation to the ESL learners and maintain that the first investigations into phonology and pronunciation teaching can be traced to India 3,000 years ago, to Greece 1,800 years ago or to learners of Latin in the 16th century, but recognise four major waves of pronunciation instruction: (1) "imitative-intuitive" instruction from the 1850s, (2) establishment of the International Phonetic Association and the use of "analytic-linguistic instructional practices" at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, (3) the introduction of communicative principles to teaching pronunciation and (4) empirically based pronunciation teaching in the mid-1990s. The former two waves share similarities to the classification by Celce-Murcia

(2010) and are oriented towards the development of phonology as a discipline, the latter two are focus on the development of pronunciation teaching proper.

Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) recognises two main approaches to pronunciation training – (1) intuitive-imitative approach based on the discrimination of sounds and their intuitive imitation of pronunciation models and (2) analytic-linguistic approach based on explicit definitions, explanations, description, demonstration, etc.)

The main approaches and methods of a foreign language, in general, treat pronunciation differently – while the Direct Method, Audiolingual Method or Silent Way Approach focused at pronunciation errors in order to correct them based on repetition and drill, Grammar-Translation Method, Total Physical Response Approach or Communicative Approach do not view pronunciation as the key component of language teaching (Celce-Murcia, 2010). The last of the mentioned approaches, Communicative Approach, has been the dominant approach to foreign language teaching since the end of the 20th century and views pronunciation as a competence that can be taught on the background of teaching other aspects of communication. The main techniques and practices include:

- Listening and imitating a model
- Phonetic training based on descriptions of articulation and phonetic transcription
- Minimal pair drills based on the discrimination of words based on phonemes
- Using minimal pairs in a sentence context
- Visual aids used to make cues of target sounds
- Tongue twisters
- Development of approximation skills based on the chronological acquisition of sounds
- The practice of vowel and stress shifts in words with affixes
- Reading aloud
- Recording of learners' production for the purposes of self-, peer and teacher evaluation

The aforementioned techniques and practices were listed by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) and they are a selection of partial techniques of the previous approaches and methods to foreign language teaching.

Arising from the communicative approach, there are two main approaches to pronunciation teaching focus-on-form and focus-on-forms. The difference between the two approaches lies in the focus of the instruction – while the focus-on-form (FonF) is based on the use of the communicative value of pronunciation that is trained in meaningful contexts with minimal attention to the description of pronunciation features, focus-on-forms (FonFS) is based on theoretical teaching of

pronunciation features. This approach presents a certain shift in pronunciation improvement, as it allows integrating pronunciation into language improvement classes. On the contrary, traditional English lessons would treat pronunciation as a separate language aspect, as for instance the presentation, practice, production model originated (phoneme identification – automatization – transfer into speech, Gilner, 2008).

Other competing approaches are the traditional distinction of a bottom-up and top-down approach to teaching pronunciation. While the bottom-up introduces individual segments first, and only after their familiarisation learners move to higher units (chronologically word stress, sentence stress, intonation), top-down approach introduces pronunciation features through long utterances and through the use of the higher pronunciation units learners slowly familiarise also with the lower units that naturally occur in longer utterances. The debate on the precedence or segments or suprasegmentals is still open, as some pronunciation experts advocate the communicative value of word stress or intonation (e. g. Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Field, 2005; Hahn, 2012; Kucukoglu, 2014; Rezaei, Gowhari & Azizifar, 2015, and others defend the importance of individual segments in communication (e. g. Gowhary, Azizifar & Rezaei, 2016; Gooch, Saito & Lyster, 2016) .

Among the more recent techniques to teach and correct pronunciation belongs gesture (catchment, Smotrova 2017) that helps learners perceive hardly noticeable events in speech, using appropriate gestures representing pronunciation features can have different functions (Thompson & Renandya, 2020): iconic (representing concrete objects), metaphoric (representing abstract meanings), deictic (indicating) and beat (indicating rhythm).

A similar approach is the pronunciation improvement direction by represents kinaesthetic and haptic shadowing that was primarily used for the improvement of listening skills, but its use has been investigated in the current research.

"*Haptic* in this context refers to systematic hand movement across the visual field accompanying speech that typically terminates in a touch of some kind, like one hand touching the other. That touch occurs simultaneously with the articulation of a stressed syllable of a word, focal stress of a phrase or a prominent word in discourse" (Acton et al., 2013).

Specific movements were established to accompany an acoustic input for learner to follow it and perceive reinforce the instruction given to learners.

Shadowing is also used in pronunciation instruction as "the process of copying the model as accurately as possible, students first attend to listening to the detailed features of the incoming sounds, including each phoneme, stress, intonation, and accents. Then, moving their muscle in their mouth, they reproduce them almost simultaneously and unconsciously" (Hamada, 2018, p. 22).

Another opportunity that can play into pronunciation improvement is the conscious work with learners who can employ and carry out their observation in theoretical aspects of pronunciation. Couper (2011) suggests using socially constructed metalanguage and critical listening in pronunciation classroom. Both concepts are based on students' perception of the concepts of pronunciation. Socially constructed metalanguage is based on the formulation of specific vocabulary for pronunciation aspects by a particular group of learners by, for instance, describing or comparing the differences between two sounds. Critical listening is based on perceiving meaningful differences in pronunciation. Both types of tasks can improve short-term pronunciation of learners.

2.2 Pronunciation learning strategies

Learning is a process that must be driven primarily by learners who must be active to achieve the set goal. Learners vary in their setting to learn and apply different procedures to progress on their journey towards knowledge. It is the role of the teachers to guide them on the journey and use appropriate methods and techniques to spark interest and transfer the message to their learners.

The approaches of good learners of languages started to be investigated in the 1970s and the term learning strategies was coined. Zare (2012, p. 163) defines them as "special ways of processing information that improve comprehension, learning, or retention of the information". Over the years, several taxonomies were developed. Among the most popular ones are the classification by O'Malley who distinguishes metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies. Rubin's classification divides them into learning, communicative and social strategies. Stern identified management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative – experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies and affective strategies (for details see e.g. Zare, 2012; Pawlak & Szyska, 2018).

The most popular taxonomy of learning strategies used in pronunciation training is the taxonomy by Oxford (1991). Learning strategy is defined by Oxford (1990, p. 1) as "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning". Specifically, for learning languages, strategies are critical, as they are viewed as "tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence" (ibid.).

The strategies formulated by Oxford (1990) focus on the development of the communicative competence by encouraging the students to guide actively the process of its development by allowing them to solve problems variously, including self-reflection, cooperation or instinct. Learners can sequence the activities in a manner that helps them learn. On the other hand, learners can learn how to improve their existing learning patterns and give new competences to the teachers, who can organise the learning process in a non-traditional way, so that

the learner is central in the process of language learning. She distinguished two main types and three subcategories for each subtype:

I Direct
- Memory strategies (creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, employing action)
- Cognitive strategies (practising, receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning, creating a structure for input and output)
- Compensation strategies (guessing intelligently, overcoming limitations in speaking and writing)

II. Indirect
- Metacognitive strategies (centring your learning, arranging and planning your learning, evaluating your learning)
- Affective strategies (lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself, taking your emotional temperature)
- Social strategies (asking questions, cooperating with others, empathising with others)

Direct strategies allow learners to use different mental processes – to make use of memory, reason and logic, and allow them to use compensatory language tactics, such as guessing and synonyms.

Indirect strategies rely on the use of other abilities of the learners, i.e. manage their cognition, support interaction and use affection to improve communicative language skills.

With respect to Oxford's learning strategies, Peterson (1997, cited from Berkil, 2008), compiled a list of strategies and activities specifically for pronunciation teaching that is often being used to address the actual practices in the foreign language classrooms:

- memory – using the IPA alphabet, personal codes or made-up song and rhymes to learn the pronunciation of words
- cognitive – imitation of a model (native speaker or teacher), repetition silently or loudly after a model (native speaker, teacher, video), talking silently or loudly to oneself, using exercises to learn sound, practising sounds in isolation and in context, listening to pronunciation errors of other language learners, observing articulation, paying attention to the pronunciation of the foreign language, making hypotheses about pronunciation rules, remembering pronunciation and articulation of words, using flashcards, listening to authentic materials, being aware of the pronunciation during the process of speaking, speaking slowly in order to pronounce words correctly, recording and listen to one's own pronunciation, observing and practising accents (Spanish), changing the speed of speaking, noticing the contrast between the

mother tongue and the target language, practising the pronunciation silently before speaking
- compensation – repeatedly practising difficult words
- metacognitive – learning about phonetics in general, reading about pronunciation rules, looking for pronunciation models, looking for individual feedback by another person, avoiding practising inappropriate sounds in the mother tongue, deciding to focus on listening and learning on particular sounds, deciding to memorise sounds, deciding to present presentation from memory, writing difficult words in very large font in poster papers
- affective – having fun with mispronunciations, imitation of sounds with native language words
- social – asking someone to correct the pronunciation, speaking English with others, asking someone to pronounce a word, studying with someone, teaching someone else

Oxford's language strategies did not go unnoticed in the literature, as several studies were conducted in order to investigate, which of the strategies are successful or which of them have proven to be used most frequently by the users (e. g. Akyol,2013; Rokoszewska, 2012). Pawlak & Szyska (2018) in their metaanalysis of research papers identified cognitive and memory sstrategies as the most preferred by students, but metacognitive, social and affective are also popular among learners. However, Grzegorzewska (2017) maintains that the application of language learning can be more beneficial with the decreasing proficiency level of learners,

2.3 Teachability of pronunciation
Theoretical approaches to the ideal pronunciation training and acquisition are often being questioned by opinions whether pronunciation can be taught and what are the realistic and achievable results with respect to several factors contributing to the limited improvement non-native learners typically achieve. The opinions of pronunciation improvement limits are based on the experience of the language teachers and often shape the discourse on pronunciation training.

There are different aspects of limits to learning or acquiring a foreign language pronunciation, Kenworthy (1987) lists the following factors:

Age limit or Critical period hypothesis for pronunciation acquisition is often perceived as the most important factor acquiring or learning a foreign language accent, as the abilities of the learners to speak with no trace of the mother tongue disappears with age. The issues of pronunciation acquisition are not only dependent on the "brain plasticity and the differential function of the two hemispheres of the brain" (Nunan, 1999, p. 42), but also on the ability of articulatory organs to make speech sounds. Kenworthy (1987) estimates the age

to be between 10 and 13 years of age. The sounds the learners acquire at a very young age shape the final pronunciation in any foreign language a speaker speaks. However, countless studies have investigated (e.g. Flege, 1987, Bialystok, 1997, Bongaerts, 1997, Du, 2010), whether certain pronunciation features can be learned in various capacities and whether the age limit for learners presents an insurmountable obstacle in communication. The long-term effect of pronunciation training has also been investigated (Couper, 2006; Dlaska & Krekeler, 2013; Thomson & Derwing, 2014). In this respect, the terms intelligibility or comprehensibility as the attainable pronunciation goal were introduced into foreign language teaching.

Mother tongue of the learners influences the overall pronunciation of the foreign learners to such extent that fruitful research of pronunciation mistakes typical for learners of languages was conducted (in Slovakia e.g. Kráľová, 2011; Vančová, 2014; Kehoe, 2015). For pronunciation teaching, it implies the identification of these mistakes and the application of suitable measures into pronunciation training.

For instance, Kelly (2000) has designed a comprehensible table with typical mistakes of the learners of the selected 13 languages. The table clearly shows that mistakes vary across the languages. For instance, a frequently mispronounced group of dentals / θ/ and /ð/typically does not present a problem for Greek and Spanish learners, but on the contrary, French and Chinese learners compensate each of the sounds with up to three other phonemes. However, Grant (2014) claims that speakers of similar languages can achieve almost native-like pronunciation. Learners of foreign languages with the inability to pronounce the newly acquired language with a full range of phonemes of the new language often compensate the sounds by transphonemisation, i.e. substitution of a sound of the source language to the sounds of the target language (for Slovak learners see Ološtiak, 2002).

Exposure to the target language is a key factor affecting constant training and (Rubin, 1975) uses the term "opportunity" (p. 42). The term exposure often refers to living in a country where the target language is spoken. Learners living in the English-speaking countries tend to get better results in pronunciation improvement because they receive the input also outside the classroom. In countries where English is not spoken on daily basis, the teacher is often models of pronunciation. Chen (2013) indicates that pronunciation features typical for teachers can be often found in the pronunciation of their learners.

Phonetic ability sometimes called aptitude, or ability to discriminate and pronounce sounds. This ability is innate, although research has shown it can be trained. Kennworthy (1987) claims students with good phonetic ability can improve their pronunciation by drills, while other learners do not. Baker Smemoe & Haslan (2013) relate aptitude to pronunciation accuracy. Aptitude is also

supported by the musical abilities of learners, who pronounce more accurately than learners with a less musical ability (Milovanov et al., 2010). Musical abilities are especially important for mastering intonation and rhythm.

Attitude and identity of the learner is another factor of pronunciation quality, as the perception of self and sense of belonging to and identification with a certain group of speakers influences the way learners approach pronunciation training. Yule (2010) defines the phenomenon of accommodation of pronunciation as convergence. People are convergent when they want to belong to a group and want to be accepted by the listener. The opposite process, divergence, relates to maintaining the accent irrespective of the listener to show either belonging to one group of speakers or demonstration of distance from another group of speakers.

Motivation is a key factor in many spheres of human life, not only in pronunciation learning. Kenworthy (1987, p. 8) uses the expression "concern" about the way speakers sound. The degree of this pronunciation concern depends on the speakers' understanding of the meaningfulness of pronunciation in communication and also the impact of pronunciation in real life, e.g. professional development of the learner (Moyer, 2015). The main motivational factors are integrative (a pleasure to meet and befriend with L2 speaker), intrinsic (personal satisfaction to improve pronunciation), extrinsic (social pressure or goals, e.g. school performance), and curiosity factors (a pleasure to learn the pronunciation of a new word; Sardegna et al., 2014).

The list of factors affecting pronunciation of a foreign language learners reveals the different factors typical for learners or the environment they live in; however, in learning pronunciation, there is another very important factor that must be taken into consideration. One of the most important factors in the teacher.

"Teachers must take a step back from current practice and evaluate their own pronunciation skills and teaching methodologies, and also have access to them current research, so that they are able to look at how they can improve not only the communicative skills of their students, but also their own" (Setter & Jenkins, 2004, p. 13).

Without a doubt, teachers shape the relationship of the learners towards the subject they teach and they influence the amount of information the learner acquires. Beyond their expertise in the subject and choice of teaching methodology.

3 Teachers attitudes to **teaching** pronunciation

Teachers have, without a doubt, a decisive impact on their learners, pre-service teachers are no exception. Teachers influence their students, not only on the level of the knowledge the students to gain during the lessons, but the teachers' attitude to the subject shapes the views of learners to the subject. However, although this influence is well known to the general public, the teaching profession has a varying level of prestige across Europe according to *Study on Policy Measures to improve the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe, Vol. 2* (European Union, 2013). The Visegrád Group countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic) have a similar situation among the teaching profession. The results of *Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS 2018 Insights and Interpretations* (Schleicher, 2018) indicate that the countries are below average in the indicators of social evaluation of the teaching profession (data for Poland not indicated) and relative salaries to tertiary-educated workers.

3.1 Introduction

In the following section, results of selected studies dealing with teachers practices and beliefs will be presented, because practices of teachers have a different character in the global context.

Henderson et al. (2012) carried out a research study that investigated the pronunciation and training of teachers from Finland, France, Germany, Macedonia, Poland, Spain and Switzerland. In addition to that, the authors were interested in teachers' preferences in pronunciation models and goals they set for their learners. The data collected by the questionnaire identified national differences among teachers, as many of the aspects are related to conditions in a particular country. However, the general conclusion is that the teachers' education does not correspond to their classroom needs and their training is viewed as "woefully inadequate" (p. 23). The teachers reported their own preference of RP accent but the preference of GA by their students. Students also expressed the varying level of aspiration to sound native-like.

One of the most frequently cited is the findings of Foote, Trofimovich, Collins & Soler Urzúa (2016) who investigated pronunciation teaching practices in Canadian schools. Their longitudinal observation of three teachers revealed that

pronunciation instruction constitutes 10% of all classes and takes the form of unplanned corrective feedback on segmental issues.

In Australia, Macdonald (2000) performed an in-depth interview with eight Australian teachers who claimed to be spending less time with pronunciation training than they felt was necessary for their learners and who did not like and were not good at teaching it. The teachers reported the issues arising from the lack of curricular guidance, lack of appropriate teaching materials and lack of guidance for the assessment of intelligible pronunciation, they were unsure about the appropriateness in approaching correction of pronunciation errors and had questions arising concerning integrating pronunciation training into communicative classes. The recommendations Macdonald formulated concerning the aforementioned teachers' findings would promote teaching pronunciation and remove the obstacles that prevent teachers from improving the learners' pronunciation.

On a more practical level, Buss (2015) studied the beliefs and practices of Brazilian teachers of English. Almost a third of the teachers taught pronunciation always and almost half of them taught pronunciation often. The most frequently taught features were "problematic sounds". Concerning pronunciation activities, the most frequently used were students' imitations and repetitions, practice of the phonetic alphabet and minimal pairs drills. On the contrary, the least frequently used were the explicit instruction based on the observation of learners' articulation in the mirror, body movement used to express the presence of a pronunciation feature (e. g. a step, a clap, tap, head nod to indicate stress or intonation pattern), and using jazz chants to practice rhythm.

In Japan, Koike (2016) compared the opinion of native English-speaking teachers (N = 22) and Japanese speaking teachers (N = 26) of pronunciation. The comparison brought to attention that while native-speaking teachers preferred communicative practice of pronunciation, the Japanese teachers preferred explicit instruction; however, the most frequently used techniques among both groups were repetition, reading aloud, shadowing and minimal pairs practice. The least frequently used were kinaesthetic reinforcement and teaching phonetic symbols. Another difference between the two groups of instructors was in the perception of the importance of pronunciation teaching with relation to other skills – while native speakers viewed pronunciation as moderately important (62%) or slightly important (24%), Japanese teachers viewed pronunciation equally as very or moderately important (both 38%). While the majority of native speakers display a high level of confidence in pronunciation skills (extremely 45%, quite 50%), most Japanese teachers are mostly somewhat (42%) or quite confident (35%) with their pronunciation. Native speakers were mostly quite confident to teach pronunciation (38%), half of the Japanese teachers were somewhat confident to teach it. Koike's (2016) recommendations are based on integrating pronunciation

into communicative classes, providing teachers with the pedagogical documentation that would guide them with pronunciation teaching as well as educating teachers with the issues of phonetics and phonology.

Another study carried out in Japan by Uchida & Sugimoto (2016) confirmed that teachers are more confident in teaching individual words than longer texts units, because while pronunciation of individual words can be checked in a dictionary, but pronunciation of sentences is less governed by rules. Additionally, Uchida & Sugimoto confirmed that confident teachers have positive attitude to pronunciation teaching, contrary to less confident teachers.

Chen (2016) investigated how 47 in-service teachers in mainland China and Hong Kong reflect on their own pronunciation and adapt it according to the ability of their learners to help the learners understand the input. Repetition, change on the segmental and suprasegmental level and modification of speech rate were the most frequent modifications the teachers made to raise their intelligibility to their learners. On the other hand, the same features the teachers avoid also cause misunderstanding in the speech of their learners. To improve the learners' pronunciation, teachers mostly apply techniques that are time-saving and easily used with larger groups of learners, i.e. reading aloud and pronunciation modelling.

Investigation of the teachers of English and their attitudes to pronunciation is a global issue, as evidenced in the study by Ulla (2017), where a group of 51 teachers consisting of primary and university teachers of English from Myanmar. In the questionnaire, the item "I can pronounce English clearly so that other people can understand me", the majority of participants indicated only average confidence (52.94%) and the 29.41% of participants even expressed being not very/not at all confident. Only the remaining 17.65% of participants are very or quite confident with their pronunciation. In group discussions, the teachers expressed the lack of communication with native speakers of English made them feel afraid of being misunderstood and not able to understand others.

In Slovakia, Bodorík (2017), Datko (2013) and Metruk (2020) carried out their research studies on the pronunciation practices of teachers in Slovak secondary schools.

Datko (2013) interviewed 11 Slovak secondary school teachers, who were asked to express the level of their confidence in teaching English pronunciation. Out of all participants, 6 teachers claimed to be confident with teaching pronunciation; however, the author describes the tone of 5 teachers answering the question as "a kind of defensive" and only one teacher could confirm she taught pronunciation with the same confidence as vocabulary and grammar. The second group of teachers (N = 3) felt less confident teaching pronunciation than other layers of language, one of them citing a "mental block" and the remaining 2 teachers agreed on the lack of preparation to teach pronunciation from their

teacher training. The final group of respondents (N = 2) admitted the lack of confidence teaching the pronunciation of words with lower frequency.

Bodorík (2017) used a questionnaire to elicit the opinions of 90 teachers of English from Slovakia concerning pronunciation teaching. Except one, all teachers viewed pronunciation as an important part of language learning and all teachers also claimed to teach it to a different extent – 79% of teachers claimed to teach it during every class when a pronunciation phenomenon appeared, and 11% would strictly follow pronunciation exercises in the textbook. The remaining two teachers would deal with pronunciation when a significant mistake occurred. In terms of error correction, of all, only 9 teachers corrected mistakes when they impacted intelligibility, the rest of the teachers would either correct every mistake or correct a repeated mistake. From the techniques, imitation and identification were dominant pronunciation teaching practices. Majority of teachers (36.7%) evaluated their own preparation to teach pronunciation based on university studies as good and 34.4% as average; only 14.4% as excellent and 10 teachers labelled their preparation as poor.

Metruk (2020) collected the opinions of 50 secondary-school teachers via a questionnaire. The teachers agreed on both, the importance of teaching segments and suprasegmentals, and they were mostly neutral on the number of exercises in textbooks on segments and suprasegmentals. Almost half of them (46%) also use additional exercises in their classes. Majority of teachers agreed that teaching pronunciation is more or less as important as teaching vocabulary and grammar, and segments and suprasegmentals are equally important to teach. The teachers also claimed suprasegmentals and segments as equal in terms of their own production and also teaching.

All three studies from the Slovak context suggest that pronunciation is not neglected in Slovakia; even if the teachers did not receive the level of training in pronunciation teaching, they would find adequate. Overall, the reported results correspond to pronunciation teaching practices and opinions in the global context.

3.2 Research

To complete the picture of the practices and beliefs of pronunciation teachers in the Slovak context, a semi-structured in-depth interview with guiding questions (Appendix 1) based on the research questions of McDonald (2002), Buss (2015), Koike (2016) and Uchida & Sugimoto (2016), was designed.
The main aim of the interview was to answer the following questions:
1. What are the organisational conditions that the teachers have to teach phonetics and phonology?
2. What are the teachers' attitudes to teaching pronunciation or phonetics and phonology? How was their relationship to the course in the beginning and how have they changed?

3. What is the importance of pronunciation/phonetics and phonology according to the teachers?
4. What are the teachers' preferences regarding teaching particular pronunciation issues?
5. What are the aims of the courses the teachers teach?
6. Which pronunciation model do the teachers prefer?
7. What practices do the teachers include in their lessons?
8. What is the opinion of university teachers on the quality of pronunciation instruction on lower levels of education?
9. What effect has pronunciation training/teaching phonetics and phonology had on their students?

Participants and sampling

To answer the research questions, university teachers of phonetics and phonology were identified as a group of possible participants in the interview due to two main reasons – their teaching subject matter concerns pronunciation and also the linguistic layer that the primary and secondary teachers are most reluctant to teach. The insight into the discipline from the perspective of an expert in the subject could identify the essential knowledge and teaching skills the English teachers should master to be competent to teach pronunciation and its use in the classroom. In other words, the interviews aimed to advise the teachers of English who lack knowledge and confidence to teach pronunciation. The second reason is that the teachers of phonetics and phonology at universities work with students of English, therefore are knowledgeable of the state of the quality of students' pronunciation after they complete secondary education and subsequently have a formative influence on the future teachers of English.

Interview requests were sent to 7 teachers in Slovakia and 5 of them decided to participate in the interview. The participating Slovak teachers were evenly distributed from all regions in Slovakia (Western, Central, Eastern). Another 13 requests were sent to the teacher upon recommendation of the already participating teachers to their teaching colleagues in other European countries. Even though dialogue was established with several teachers, eventually, three teachers from Hungary agreed to participate in the interview. Finally, the total number of teachers participating in the research was increased to 8. To maintain teachers'confidentiality, teachers are labelled with the initial letter T for teacher and the number 1 to 8, according to the chronological order they were interviewed.

The participating teachers were all qualified teachers of English with teaching experience ranging from 5 (T5) to 26 years (T6). English phonetics and phonology were the primary teaching and research subject; the other subject they teach are either teaching methodology (T1, 3, 4, 5), linguistic disciplines (T2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7),

culture (T8) or courses improving communicative competence of their students. Based on all the data collected, all participating teachers comply with the requirements set for the interview.

Method

The interviews were conducted in the Slovak language with the Slovak participants; therefore, their answers had to be translated. Only the three interviews with the non-Slovak participants were conducted in English. The interview followed the guidelines as defined by Ondrejkovič (2007) and Mackey & Gass (2009).

The first interview was conducted on 7th July 2020 and the last interview took place on 7th September 2020. The length of the interviews ranged from 25 minutes and 25 seconds (T7) to 1 hour, 55 minutes and 7 seconds (T5). All interviews, except interview 1, were conducted via video calls or phone calls due to the current travelling restrictions. All interviewed teachers were informed about the purpose of the interview and gave their consent to the interview being recorded. Upon request, the teachers could preview the questions. All teachers had been assured the confidentiality of their answers would be maintained. The interviews were transcribed verbatim; however, the pauses and false starts were removed from the presented utterances as the analysis of the psychological processes of the teachers during the interview was not the primary goal of this research effort. Due to technical issues caused by the Internet and telephone connections, the quality of the recordings was not consistent, therefore the parts of interviews with low quality of the recorded utterances were not included in the evaluation to avoid misinterpretation of the participants' statements.

Results

1. What are the organisational conditions that the teachers use to teach phonetics and phonology?

All teachers reported the weekly span they are given to work with students is not sufficient, but realistically, T6 claims *"of course not but everybody feels so, so that that doesn't really matter. we have to fit in this time frame. I also understand that students find this more than enough".* In terms of the role of the course of phonetics and phonology, three interesting trends can be observed about the course. The first trend is the reduction of the classes – teachers 2 and 3 reported that the subject used to be taught over the course of two semesters, but it has been reduced to one semester only. The courses are now taught as a 45-minute lecture and 45-minute seminar. Only one teacher (T1) teaches the course over two semesters, but teachers generally declared the average length of the weekly lessons with students to be 90 minutes.

The second change reported by T4 is the change in the objectives and the name of the course.

"Everything has changed. We had to change the scope from most theoretically issues towards more practical issues. […] basically, the two objectives I just mentioned that improving their pronunciation, on one hand, giving the theoretical background, on the other hand, so we had to switch from the theoretical background towards the practical issues and improving students' pronunciation. Gradually, over the past few years, phonetics has become an interesting issue because, somehow, I feel a connection with phonetics, […] students are inherently scared or horrified by the [terminology of the] Latin origin primarily which comes from phonetics."

The third change was reported by T8 – the course changed its status from a compulsory one to an elective course.

" The pronunciation [course] was in the first year, now it's moved, now it's in the second year. And unfortunately, it's an elective course, because it was compulsory, but two years ago our faculty decided to change programs to a modular system, something like that, so phonetics was suddenly compulsory, but it became an elective subject. which has its advantages and disadvantages".

Although the T8 claims their colleagues empathise with him and there are plans to shift to make the course compulsory again, the teacher sees the positives of the change of the course to the elective one in attracting only motivated students, so the teacher can explore deeper spheres of the discipline and make personal progress as a teacher.

These claims suggest that there is a universal trend to make changes in study programs at universities based on the departure from the traditional theoretical programs with theoretical subjects to practically oriented study programs with subjects that would reflect the current needs of the labour market and provide the graduates with a set of practical skills that could be directly used to resolve tasks in everyday professional lives.

2. What are the teachers' attitudes to teaching pronunciation or phonetics and phonology? How was their relationship to the course in the beginning and how have they changed?

Teachers at lower levels of education often claim they do not like teaching pronunciation; however, even though most of the university teachers of phonetics and phonology felt positive about the disciplines when they had been students themselves (T1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8). T5 started to like the course because of their teacher:

"I liked the subject or I liked [my teacher], and what happened was I took all of her phonetics and phonology classes and she started to mock me for my wrong pronunciation […] somehow there was chemistry working between [my teacher] and me, I liked her way of teaching […]. The fact that she kept making fun of me made me motivated to get rid of all these wrong pronunciations."

This example of good practice can have an impact on the students and can also change the attitude of teachers.

T7 changed their attitude to the course after they started teaching it. As a student, the teacher perceived the course as a theoretical subject that was a part of the curriculum; however, after realising how important, but neglected, the pronunciation is in education.

Other attitudes of the teachers include respect for the discipline:

"It was very positive for me, although from the beginning, as with every student, I was a little frightened by the technical issues and terminology and so on, because the phonetics is a little different from the other subjects. I'm not saying it's easier, harder, better, worse, but it's a little different." (T1)

T2) could relate it to music and it was logical to them however, these attitudes had changed once the teachers started teaching the courses and could see its impact on communication. Additionally, teacher 4 claims:

"You get to the other side of the classroom and then you start getting totally different difficulties like how do you explain things you already understand to people who don't. How do you make them interested in things you are interested in inherently and do not need any explanation to why these issues are exciting at all and you need to try to motivate them, and [...] how you actually teach pronunciation so that's where this kind of methodological issue came up."

Teachers also claim that before they started teaching phonetics and phonology, they hadn't been fully aware of the extent of the impact of pronunciation in the language. The actual teaching practice of the course helped them develop a deeper understanding of language and raised their awareness in the sphere of phonetics.

3. What is the importance of pronunciation/phonetics and phonology according to the teachers?

The teachers univocally claim the importance of pronunciation and the course of phonetics and phonology and over the course of the interview could provide countless examples of the importance a good pronunciation impacting communication typical for their languages (e. g. *a bed day - a bad day*, T5). In this respect, they view pronunciation superior to other aspects of language (grammar, vocabulary) in speaking.

"It gives the impression of good language skill. When you open your mouth, the first thing that gets noticed is your pronunciation. If you have problems with your grammar, vocab or anything, all of them are secondary in terms of how quickly other speakers can notice. That's one thing. And the other thing is that having good pronunciation, even hides problems, if you have problems, with other language skills, you may have very bad vocabulary. But if you have good pronunciation, other people may not notice". (T5)

Even so, teachers admit their nonsensical stigmatisation of people with a foreign accent (T6) but take into consideration physical and physiological limits of

speakers (T4). Teachers also admit little evidence for this conclusion but claim to have had experience with such speakers.

"I never thought about it like that, although it is not the rule, mostly students who were competent in the lexical and syntactic level, had decent pronunciation," adding that *"I had a couple of students who sounded very natural, very native-like, but basically, when I listened to what they were talking about, the choice of collocations was wrong, the grammar isn't always perfect, so it's … that's otherwise interesting that so far, until you said it, I have not thought about it. But it would make sense because it is, to some extent, separate." (T2)*

Overall, teachers believe that a good pronunciation is very important part of communication that has priority in speech and has an impact on the first impression the speakers make; however, they are aware of the limitations of foreign learners.

4. What are the teachers' preferences regarding teaching particular pronunciation issues?

The teachers claimed generally liking all aspects but majority of them tended to prefer segmental issues. Teachers also admitted that teaching segmentals was their personal choice (T4). One of the reasons was the fact that they seem to be more logical (T2 and 3). Only teacher 7 preferred the bottom-up approach, as suprasegmental phonology, contains of all other pronunciation aspects and the method "teaching through suprasegmentals" is popular among the students.

"I prefer, and I think it's better to focus on the suprasegmental level, that is, practice accent, rhythm, intonation, but basically what they're doing, that … we don't practice pronunciation in class, there are no drill exercises, […] there is basically everything, there is the pronunciation of vowels, consonants, connecting the syllables, the suprasegmental level, there is everything. But I think the suprasegmental level is more important." (T7)

In terms of confidence, the participating teachers are aware of their own pronunciation limits, but they do not prevent them from teaching pronunciation. However, the teachers' confidence in teaching pronunciation or the lack of thereof is related to two reasons – first, the amount of time does not allow them to practice all features equally:

"Maybe intonation. I mean, it's a kind of blind spot, but probably because you don't really get to it. You first deal with segmental stuff and then maybe stress and then you run out of time and you don't get to talk about intonation." (T6)

The other reason would be their inability to pronounce a feature native-like:

"If there is something I have a very little confidence in, it's those aspects of the English pronunciation in which I can't do perfectly, because they are, I believe, impossible to learn unless you are a native speaker, for example, aspiration. I've never been able to make sure that my word-initial voiceless stops are more aspirated than word medial voiceless stops." (T5)

Two teachers (2 and 5) claimed the importance of their colleagues in gaining the confidence to teach pronunciation.

*"I don't think I had enough training, also because I had those phonetics classes in my first year of study, that is, four years before I started teaching, so I would be very pleased if I had some guidance a, and only when I joined this department, then I had a colleague who was in a senior position and of course I could consult with her, but because it was not until 8 years after I joined in general to a teaching position, so it seemed to me that I should probably already know those things and that I would not ask her such questions, so I was looking for it in the available literature, and so on., so I would certainly be pleased if I were more trained." (*T2)

On the other hand, teacher 5, who, as already mentioned, started to be interested in pronunciation issues due to the positive impact of their former teacher, reattended the classes after they had started teaching at the university, could *"enjoy"* the classes and get an even deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

None of the participating teachers think a native speaker should be the only teacher of pronunciation, on the contrary the word *"overrated"* (T1) or its synonym appeared in the utterance of more than one teacher. Non-native teachers of pronunciation, especially having the same linguistic background as their learners, can explain pronunciation features to their learners for two possible reasons – firstly, because native speakers are generally not aware of the features of their own native language, because they acquire it naturally, without theoretical explanation, and secondly because the teachers dealt with the same issues when learning pronunciation and can build their teaching upon their own experience. However, their role is important as good models for its teaching (T4). Teacher 2, whose husband is a native speaker, helped her to improve her own pronunciation by correcting her mistakes, pointing at pronunciation peculiarities and having an overall good influence on her pronunciation skills. However, the only possible exception the teachers provided was a native speaker trained in pronunciation teaching can be a good teacher of pronunciation.

5. What are the aims of the courses the teachers teach?

Participating teachers specified the goals of their course according to the nature of the discipline, but they shared their view on the general purpose of the course – to familiarise the students with the basic terminology of phonetics and phonology, sounds of English, description of pronunciation principles and rules, information of the patterns of the English pronunciation and the use of the IPA. These goals apply to both, theoretical lectures and practical seminars. Therefore, their discipline is of the linguistic nature and should develop a more profound understanding of a language. The teachers also agreed that even though it is not the primary goal of their course, attention to pronunciation mistakes of the learners must be paid. They encounter students with basic pronunciation mistakes

– articulation of incorrect phonemes, incorrect stress placement, mispronounced words (e.g. *determine, focus*). Only T3 has a corrective element embedded explicitly in their course.

As a result of the pedagogical efforts, the learners should acquire intelligible pronunciation with minimal interference of the mother tongue.

"I think there are 2 two goals of an English major [students]. On one hand [...], the goals of English majors [students] are not the same as an average language learner so they're not simply learners of English language, but something special, something extra. So, they're expected to be familiar with pronunciation issues as I've already mentioned even if they are unable to use these pronunciation features in their own English, they're supposed to be able to recognise them, name them [...] and describe these pronunciation features. Of course, knowing about pronunciation features does not only help in your production of English but it helps, perhaps even more, in comprehension." (T4)

This statement summarises the pronunciation goal for English majors, who are different from other learners and users of English. Familiarisation with native accents is also very important for translators, i.e. what to expect to hear from native speakers.

6. Which pronunciation model do the teachers prefer?

Pronunciation models play a very important role in pronunciation learning. Recently, pronunciation models have been a subject of discussion in literature, but in the classrooms, traditional prestige accents RP or BBC English serve as a common ground for all participants. The only exception is T1, who prefers and teaches General American. T7 also uses RP as a point of reference in their course, but their students can choose which of the two varieties they want to practice and are encouraged to train the accent they are familiar with, especially if the students have an authentic experience with the accent.

Concerning the students' preferences, teachers notice the shift in the trends among the students – while in the past, British accents were popular, now teachers perceive the growing interest of learners in American accents. The investigation into the preferences was made by teacher 8 in a diploma thesis:

"We had a diploma thesis about it, about 30% of students prefer British, the rest prefer American. Gimson calls it Amalgam English or someone called it mid-Atlantic English. But students mix their pronunciation but should be consistent, so maybe even those who have such a mix can be helped to have a cleaner American one if they want to... This is interesting, now that the course is elective, it seems to me that I have more that want the British." (T8)

On the other hand, T3 observed:

"They prefer, or what I notice, but they have, in the end, their pronunciation is such a levelled model that if we have the scale, on the one hand, British and on the other American, then the whole spectrum on both sides, then they seem to reduce

certain traits, one or the other, and those who tend to American English sometimes somehow mix up somehow." (T3)

Teachers also notice students with wrong pronunciation often claim they want to develop their own accent.

7. What practices do the teachers include in their lessons?

When asked about the specific classroom practices, many teachers universally noted their classes being different from the general language improvement classes. Their classes reflect the theoretical nature of the subject and is less oriented on the conventional classroom techniques.

As an example, T4 suggests:

"I'm trying to keep track of what [students] have at their disposal in everyday lives what their cultural setting is, and then bring in certain elements of their characters into the classrooms. [...] I like making reference to social media for example and use resources from popular social media. I try to follow the development, as in terms of memes and popular jokes and again cultural issues but again it's getting harder and harder."

The teacher sees the difficulties *"to finding common ground with students in terms of the relevance of the materials, as the popular culture is very diverse and, because examples require the familiarity with the context of the joke, the joke can sometimes be lost on the students"* and adds: *"You need humour in your life, whatever you do, whatever you deal with, you have to find the humour in it, so I constantly joke, I bring in puns, I make my own puns I improvise in my classes." (T4)*

When students see the impact of pronunciation on communication in their everyday lives, they appreciate the information they receive in the classes. This appreciation is mostly provided by in-service teachers (T5 and 7). Otherwise, students are shy (T6) to express their opinion. The rising interest in pronunciation and its popularity among students by the annually increasing number of bachelor and diploma theses students apply for (T7).

Participating teachers were asked to rate the traditional pronunciation improving techniques in terms of their usefulness. Generally, the teachers found many techniques useful for specific purposes and if applied correctly. The teachers were generally least keen to practice minimal pairs but could provide countless examples for the materials they used. The majority of teachers relied upon or supplemented textbooks with authentic materials, which often made up to 50% of classroom material. Teachers also compiled their own textbooks (T4, 5, 7) or collected unpublished material they preferred using in the classroom in contrast to traditional textbooks.

T1 prefers communicative approach:

"Well, apart from those classic drills and repetitions and so on, again I'm going from that communicative approach, so a lot of pair work, a lot of group work, where they have the opportunity to practice it, or then point each other out in a good way,

a positive example of some mistakes what can change, what can be improved, so these exercises, pair work, group work." (T1)

Phonetic transcription was very important for teacher 6 and 8. However, teachers split their views on the communicative aspect of their classes – while T1 was a strong proponent of communicative teaching of pronunciation, T4 and 8 believed these techniques primarily belong to language improvement classes.

For improvement outside the class, T3 recommends:

"For example, it worked for me - if you know a book, you have read it more than once, you no longer have to deal with the lexical context, the understanding of the text, you can buy audiobooks on the Internet now for a few pennies, some even recorded that some are free, so you start listening, but listen with such knowledge that you are not listening to words, you are listening to that sound." (T3)

8. What is the opinion of university teachers on the quality of pronunciation instruction on lower levels of education?

Most teachers had experience with teaching at lower levels at certain points of their career but teachers admit being guilty of not paying enough attention to pronunciation at lower levels of education themselves *(I fell into the same trap as all teachers,* T4), or did not approach the pupils the same way they would approach university teachers (*I enjoyed their little interpretations,* T6), or did not see the point in teaching it (T7). Only teachers 1 and 3 devoted classroom time to pronunciation instruction, using supplementary material to support the exercises in students' book.

There are two views on the quality of students coming to universities – the majority of teachers believe the average student is less and less proficient in pronunciation, even if exceptions apply. The majority of students make basic pronunciation mistakes at the segmental and suprasegmental level, and also make mistakes in the pronunciation of individual words (e.g. *determine, focus, preface*). Students make these mistakes even if they had never heard these mispronounced words from the teachers; however, these mistakes are the easiest to improve (T3).

On the other hand, T7 can see the improved quality of students' pronunciation and provides two reasons – authentic English-speaking experience of students with different accents during their travels and the time spent on the Internet, making those students second language learners of English.

One of the teachers makes a direct relation between the bad pronunciation of the learners and their teacher, especially the teachers of very young learners, based on their own experience.

"Of course, it's clear with children. I practiced pronunciation with my son and then he came home from school and started saying things differently from what we practiced, because of the influence of classmates and teachers. He cannot criticise the teacher. The impact at a younger age, from teachers and classmates, is very strong

and it is interesting that the influence of teachers and classmates is so strong that a good pronunciation turns into a bad one, and that fascinates me." (T8)

According to teachers, older students report no or little training of pronunciation in the classroom, especially suprasegmentals, which contradicts with the findings of Bodorík (2017) according to which more than half of the teachers regularly include pronunciation training techniques into their lessons. This suggests that the perception of a pronunciation exercise differs between students and teachers.

When students come to university, often their physical abilities do not allo)w them to fully acquire target sounds of English and T3 claims that if teachers started with learners at a younger age, they would not have pronunciation problems when they come to university. Even if the teachers try to correct some of the mistakes, the physiological limits are stronger than cognitive abilities of learners and they can only improve to a certain extent.

Younger learners can benefit from different types of pronunciation exercises and improvement tasks than older learners, but a learner of any age can make progress. A key factor, according to teachers, is motivation. Teacher 8 adds that, paradoxically, since their course became elective, the students became more motivated, are generally better than average students and the teacher him/herself can make progress. The same idea from a different perspective was expressed by teacher 2 who claimed they teach so many students they feel they cannot progress anymore.

One of the questions regarded the suggestions that could be made in pronunciation teaching. Majority of teachers suggested earlier practice and improvement of teachers' pronunciation, however, one of the teachers suggested:

"One change can solve this. In [my country], teacher salaries should be tripled, and if the salary is tripled, then the prestige of the profession could come back and probably the teaching profession is one of the lowest paid jobs in my country. [...] I wouldn't suggest any other types of changes, because I don't like to solve the problems on the surface, I like to find the root of the problem." (T6)

This statement suggests the quality of pronunciation instruction does not depend solely on the teachers, learners or the instruction itself, but the problem extends beyond classroom practices.

9. What effect has pronunciation training/teaching phonetics and phonology had on their students?

Students often take the course of phonetics and phonology only as a part of their studies, as an independent discipline they have to pass and move on to another discipline (T7). From the perspective of teachers, they often work with students in a limited capacity and do not meet the same student again throughout the studies, or teach so many students they are unable to recollect the performances of individual students if they meet them at later stages of their study

program; therefore, the participants could not provide results of longitudinal studies on the effect of pronunciation instruction on their students' performances. However, teachers noticed and could recollect long term effect on those who are motivated (T2,3) and who practice after they complete the course (T7). Teachers also believe some students are not able to improve their pronunciation, for which they assign their lack of motivation; however, they all believe pronunciation can be trained and improved at any age, even if it does not reach native-like quality.

The final section of the interview was an open question during which the teachers could express the thoughts the interview questions did not cover or give advice to the teachers. The teachers either expressed the questions covered all the main points of teaching phonetics and phonology or expressed their enthusiasm about the fact investigation in this field is being done.

"Perhaps I would just like to express my pleasure that someone is doing this, and I believe that your results will be beneficial and that they will pay more attention than before, especially to those high schools and primary schools and will have more time allotted for at universities." (T2)

Generally, teachers said they shared their expertise within the questions they were asked. Finally, teacher 6 gave the final piece of advice upon the request of the interviewer: *"I think that you don't have to teach everything you just said it's much more important that you show why what you're teaching is interesting and let the students follow their own instincts" (T6).*

This piece of advice from the most experienced teacher, in terms of what could give the teacher encouragement, is that even if the teachers do not have time or confidence to teach all pronunciation features, students mostly appreciate teachers who are enthusiastic about their course and can provide them with key aspects of the subject matter.

3.3 Conclusions

Teachers participating in the interview had a slightly different background from participants from other studies in terms of their field of expertise – all teachers taught pronunciation besides other courses, such as other linguistic disciplines, teaching methodology, dialectology, orthography or culture, which allowed them to look at issues concerning teaching pronunciation from different perspectives.

The interviews gave an optimistic message to teachers of English who are reluctant to teach pronunciation. The participating teachers reported that relation to pronunciation can be built by seeing the meaningfulness of pronunciation in communication or with a professional support system provided by colleagues or other experts. In class, the amount of information should not overwhelm teachers, as they can concentrate on the aspects they find relevant for their learners.

Teaching brings confidence and experience teachers often need. The repertoire of available approaches and strategies to pronunciation teaching is accessible; teachers should benefit from it to meet the needs of their learners.

4 Teacher trainees´ ~~Students~~ attitudes to learning pronunciation

Pre-service teachers are a very important part of pronunciation teaching – they are not fully qualified teachers yet, but they will teach pronunciation to the future generation of learners. Even if they do not have the authentic experience with teaching, they understand the language more profoundly than regular speakers of English.

4.1 Introduction

In introduction, pre-service teachers' attitudes to accents, teaching practices and learning strategies will be discussed.

Munro, Derwing and Sato (2006) analysed research papers on foreign accent perception among native speakers to help pre-service teachers with familiarization with the impact of accents. The impact of a foreign accent in communication with native speakers is undeniable and the authors provide examples of consequences foreign learners of English face due to their non-native pronunciation, one of them being "negative social evaluation " (p. 68), that results in, for instance, hiring only native-speaking teachers of English, considering foreign-accented speakers for less suitable for high-status jobs or availability of accent reduction courses accented speakers can attend. Also, native speakers take note of their native accents. The authors tried to design a consciousness-raising activity for pre-service teachers who regularly observe the foreign accent in their classrooms but are not aware of the full impact of the role of the accent outside the classroom setting. Even if teachers generally embrace diversity, they can still hold subconscious prejudices against the accented speakers. Munro et al claim that raising the awareness of teachers would be only beneficial for teachers and their learners. The design included the following steps: (1) collection of suitable accented samples, (2) evaluation of the accents presented to the pre-service teachers and (3) discussion the results with pre-service teachers.

Kang (2010) investigated the attitudes of second language learners towards pronunciation. The results indicated there is a difference in attitude towards native accents – a higher number of participants from New Zealand did not want to speak as native speakers in comparison to learners in the US. In addition,

teachers may regard their own accent as the only correct accent for pronunciation instruction.

Coskum (2011) studied the attitudes of Turkish pre-service teachers to EIL (English as an international language) pronunciation. The questionnaire concentrated on attitudes towards pronunciation and accent. The collected indicate that majority of participants adopted a Standard American accent, followed by the Standard British and "a type of Turkish-English". The reasons for adaptation of the accents were equally established between the identification with the country and its availability as a school model (N=26). Its aesthetic preference was identified by 19 respondents. In terms of pronunciation importance, an equal number of participants regard pronunciation as a very important part of school studies and view native-like pronunciation as important. Intelligible pronunciation is viewed as very important by 37 respondents. In a comparison of the pronunciation teaching goals – 41 participants claim its goal is native-like pronunciation, clear and intelligible pronunciation is important for 46 participants. In another set of questions, 27 participants agree with exposure to different varieties of English, but only 12 participants agree with learning a non-native variety of accent. In terms of communication with native speakers, 30 participants would accept a faint non-native accent and with non-native speakers, a faint non-native accent would accept 29 participants.

In Poland, Janicka, Kul & Weckwerth (2005) investigated the attitudes of 240 Polish learners of English to native English accents. The students majoring in English claimed they preferred the accent they had relation to, describing American accent more modern (e. g. dynamic, business-like, relaxed) and easier to learn, and British accents as more traditional (e.g. unspoiled, proper, classy, serious, aristocratic, academic, more authentic etc.), therefore was perceived as a challenge for the learners. Generally, the learners followed and wanted to follow in the future the model they were presented in the previous years of their studies. The learners viewed the British model as one that benefited from the geographical proximity, however, due to globalisation, students also pointed at the accessibility of American models in music or films. From all of the participants, only 5 students claimed pronunciation instruction was not necessary, because they appreciated the importance of intelligibility and factors restricting achieving native-like prKoonunciation. One of the participants also raised the need to have pronunciation training in an academic setting, but not in the general use, which corresponds with the opinions with teachers in Chapter 3 of this publication. The rest of the respondents perceived pronunciation instruction as "extremely important" (p. 257). Most of the participants prefer teaching the pronunciation model they were familiar with, although Australian, Canadian, Scottish, Welsh, Irish and Jamaican varieties were also proposed as possible models.

According to Burri et al. (2017) compared the cognition of pre-service and in-service teachers on teaching pronunciation. While pre-service teachers lack the confidence to teach pronunciation, in-service teachers can include pronunciation improvement activities into their already existing teaching skills. However, both groups would not teach pronunciation as an integral part of their course but would devote a specific amount of time in each class to teach pronunciation separately from other layers of language. They also add that pre-service teachers are often influenced by the teaching style of their own teachers, therefore continuing to use controlled techniques to teach pronunciation.

Pre-service teachers, like in-service teachers, can be reluctant to teach pronunciation. According to Suárez & Basto Basto (2017), the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching individual aspects of language, including pronunciation, can change after completion of a 10-week language teaching practice. The authors observed two teacher trainees and identified the main drivers of the change as the personal experience in the classroom and the subsequent personal change. While the students claimed that teaching grammar is not difficult and teaching pronunciation is, after the course, they expressed changes in their attitudes. The change in teaching pronunciation was caused by the application of a three-step sequence of using flashcards that were used for the formal introduction of the word (orthography, meaning, pronunciation) and guessing.

Akyol (2013) investigated the preference of Turkish pre-service teachers in the application of language learning strategies based on Oxford's (1990) classification. The study investigated learning pronunciation by the control and experimental group participating in a specialised course. The data indicate that the learners used all six type of strategies, the most frequently used were cooperation, memory and affective strategies, the least frequently used were cognitive, metacognitive and compensation strategies.

In Slovakia, Vančová (2017) investigated the views of pre-service teachers (N = 19) on English pronunciation. The participants filled out a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale as a part of the feedback after passing a two-semester course of English phonetics and phonology. Only two participants claimed to have previous experience with pronunciation training; the significant majority of students had never experienced a systematic approach to raising the awareness to pronunciation issues in English (N = 14, 3 students expressed a neutral opinion). This directly contradicts to findings of Bodorík (2017), Datko (2013) and Metruk(2020), who all claimed to interview teachers regularly teaching pronunciation. The participants all agreed on the importance of pronunciation and they express their wish to improve it; they see their goal of pronunciation in intelligibility and are comfortable with having an accent.

Similarly, Metruk (2020) interviewed 36 pre-service teachers from Slovakia. The majority of the interviewees viewed pronunciation teaching as important as grammar and vocabulary teaching, and the majority of them also regarded segmental and suprasegmental issues as equal aspects of pronunciation to be taught; however, they viewed segmental issues easier to teach than the suprasegmentals.

4.2 Research Method

For the research attempt, the quantitative-qualitative questionnaire survey was selected as the appropriate method for data collection. The questionnaire was aimed at the students and graduates of a Department of English language and literature in Slovakia and was based on published studies by to compare the collected data and provide a comparative study of the attitudes of the respondents in a global context. The questionnaire was titled *"What do you think about teaching English pronunciation?" (Čo si myslíte o vyučovaní anglickej výslovnosti?)* (Appendix 3) and was formulated in the Slovak language on the basis of recommendations of Gavora (2010) and Scott & Usher (2011).

The questionnaire contained four major sections:
1. background information investigating the status of participants to the department, years of studying English, years of teaching experience (if applicable), the highest level of formal education in English achieved, the relationship to English (mother or second language)
2. a 20-item questionnaire with a 5- point Likert scale
3. semi-open questions regarding students' attitudes to accents of English (native and non-native) and ways of practicing pronunciation, as well as their comments and suggestions

The questionnaire was aimed at answering the following research questions:
1) Do the students consider teaching pronunciation important?
2) According to the students, what is the goal of teaching pronunciation – native or intelligible pronunciation?
3) What variant of English pronunciation do the students prefer?
4) Are the students satisfied with their previous pronunciation education?
5) Which pronunciation practice method do the students consider most effective? (Which worked for them?)
7) What is their opinion on the ways of teaching pronunciation that they have completed so far?
8) How do they see their future pedagogical work in this area?

The questionnaire was published at survio.com on the 25th of June 2020 and the participating students of the department were invited to answer directly via email. The questionnaire was also advertised on the department website, as well as on its Facebook page. In addition, the announcement on the questionnaire data collection was advertised on the Facebook pages of the students and teachers of English in Slovakia and their opinion was also welcome. The first data were collected the first day of the announcement and the last entry was recorded on the 30th of July. The highest number of answers was collected after the announcement with decreasing intensity towards the end of data collection. The questionnaire was visited by 214 potential participants; 117 of them completed the questionnaire; therefore, the return rate of the questionnaire was 54.7%.

Participants and sampling

The questionnaire was intended primarily for the students and graduates of the department, who were training to be future professional English users, pre-service teachers. They were selected as a convenient sample available to the researcher and were chosen as the target group of the questionnaire due to their unique position. On one hand, they are being professionally trained to become teachers and participated in the course of phonetics and phonology, on the other hand, their teaching experience is limited or even non-existent. Therefore, their answers reflect their experience from the previous years of studying English and may bring an insight into their future teaching practices, i. e. suggest the possible future teaching practices of pronunciation instruction in Slovakia.

Table 1: Participants' relation to the Department

Answer	Answers	Percentage
● student of the 1st year Bachelor programme	35	30.4 %
● student of the 2nd year Bachelor programme	23	20 %
● student of the 3rd year Bachelor programme	14	12.2 %
● student of the 1st year Master programme	12	10.4 %
● student of the 2nd year Master programme	2	1.7 %
● the department graduate	10	8.7 %
● in-service teacher	15	13.0 %
● applicant	0	0 %
● other	5	4.3 %

Of all participants, in total 64.7% were the current students of the department (N = 86) and additional 10 participants were the department graduates. The data indicate that with the growing level of studies, fewer and fewer current students participated in the questionnaire. One of the possible reasons why only 2 students of the 2nd year of the Master's programme participated could be that those students, at the time of the data collection, had already completed their studies, therefore might have not checked their faculty email accounts, the accounts could have been already closed or they did not checked the website or social media advertising the questionnaire. Most participants were the first-year students (N = 35); therefore, they are the closest to their high school studies and best recall the role of pronunciation in the classes of English and could compare the course of phonetics and phonology at the university.

The respondents from the category "Other" specified their role as a teacher of English, 2 teachers, teacher trainer and one participant declared had no relationship to the department.

Most of the participants were foreign learners of English (N = 80; 68.4%), 35 participants (29.9%) characterised themselves as second language learners and only two native speakers (1.7%) took part in the research.

According to the information the participants shared in the open question number 3, they had studied English for 16.899 years on average. The lowest level of exam in English was Maturita exam in English; 17 participants were holders of an international language certificate, 49 participants passed state exams and 6 had other education (i.e. a bachelor degree in teaching English language and literature, C1 Business English, other programme at the faculty of Education, non-specified university degree).

Teaching experience of the participants (question number 5) varied – the highest score received the answer "none – I just study English" (47.9%), and 25.6% of participants teach English privately. From the total number of participants, 30.8% claimed to teach English. The participants with teaching practice varied – the majority of them claimed to have experience from multiple type of schools, one participant was a teacher/trainer. Three participants claimed to have other experience with English – had taught English part-time, taught teaching methodology or took part in the questionnaire due to its interesting topic.

The majority of the respondents were sufficiently formally qualified in English to provide relevant opinions on the issue, as only 6 participants (5.1%) declared other education, often related to English (none official, finished university studies (2x), Master studies at another university, C1 Business English and bachelor degree in teaching English language and literature).

RESULTS

After investigating the background information of the questionnaire participants, the analysis of their answer follows.

The first item was a list of 20 statements where the participants expressed their attitude to them on a 5-point Likert scale (1) Strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; (5) Strongly disagree.

Table 2: Students' attitudes toward the statements

	● 1	● 2	● 3	● 4	● 5	Average score
1. Pronunciation is important in foreign language communication.	**78 (66.7 %)**	31 (26.5 %)	3 (2.6 %)	3 (2.6 %)	2 (1.7 %)	**1.46**
2. I am aware of my pronunciation when I speak a foreign language.	56 (47.9 %)	**39 (33.3 %)**	12 (10.3 %)	7 (6.0 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**1.82**
3. I want to improve my pronunciation in a foreign language.	**85 (72.6 %)**	23 (19.7 %)	2 (1.7 %)	4 (3.4 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**1.43**
4. The aim of the pronunciation training is native-like pronunciation.	31 (26.5 %)	**51 (43.6 %)**	19 (16.2 %)	13 (11.1 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**2.19**
5. If I had better pronunciation, I would be more confident in English.	**53 (45.3 %)**	30 (25.6 %)	19 (16.2 %)	9 (7.7 %)	6 (5.1 %)	**2.01**
6. I think that my current pronunciation is good.	21 (17.9 %)	**52 (44.4 %)**	30 (25.6 %)	9 (7.7 %)	5 (4.3 %)	**2.35**
7. I think teaching pronunciation at primary and lower secondary schools is at a good level.	4 (3.4 %)	12 (10.3 %)	25 (21.4 %)	**45 (38.5 %)**	31 (26.5 %)	**3.72**
8. I think teaching pronunciation at higher secondary schools is at a good level.	6 (5.1 %)	21 (17.9 %)	**39 (33.3 %)**	35 (29.9 %)	16 (13.7 %)	**3.29**
9. I think English textbooks provide sufficient material for pronunciation training.	6 (5.1 %)	14 (12.0 %)	28 (23.9 %)	**42 (35.9 %)**	27 (23.1 %)	**3.59**
10. I think my teachers provided/provide me with a good pronunciation model.	30 (25.6 %)	**42 (35.9 %)**	31 (26.5 %)	8 (6.8 %)	6 (5.1 %)	**2.29**

11. Training English pronunciation is challenging.	28 (23.9 %)	**46 (39.3 %)**	20 (17.1 %)	22 (18.8 %)	1 (0.9 %)	**2.33**
12. I occasionally modify and accommodate my pronunciation when I speak English.	22 (18.8 %)	**40 (34.2 %)**	29 (24.8 %)	16 (13.7 %)	10 (8.5 %)	**2.58**
13. As a teacher I place/will place emphasis on pronunciation of my pupils/students.	**55 (47.0 %)**	52 (44.4 %)	6 (5.1 %)	3 (2.6 %)	1 (0.9 %)	**1.76**
14. Training pronunciation is as important as teaching grammar and vocabulary.	**65 (55.6 %)**	37 (31.6 %)	8 (6.8 %)	6 (5.1 %)	1 (0.9 %)	**1.04**
15. The previous way of teaching pronunciation was suitable for me.	18 (15.4 %)	**45 (38.5 %)**	24 (20.5 %)	22 (18.8 %)	8 (6.8 %)	**2.63**
16. Training transcription helped me improve my pronunciation.	**51 (43.6 %)**	33 (28.2 %)	15 (12.8 %)	13 (11.1 %)	5 (4.3 %)	**2.04**
17. Imitation of records/songs/films. etc., helped me improve my pronunciation.	**62 (53.0 %)**	39 (33.3 %)	9 (7.7 %)	5 (4.3 %)	2 (1.7 %)	**1.76**
18. Exercises based on word discrimination (e.g. minimal pairs) helped me improve my pronunciation.	39 (33.3 %)	**48 (41.0 %)**	19 (16.2 %)	9 (7.7 %)	2 (1.7 %)	**2.03**
19. Gap-fill task based on pronunciation helped me improve my pronunciation.	27 (23.1 %)	**46 (39.3 %)**	30 (25.6 %)	13 (11.1 %)	1 (0.9 %)	**2.27**
20. Theoretical information on pronunciation helped me realise certain pronunciation aspects.	**44 (37.6 %)**	42 (35.9 %)	19 (16.2 %)	9 (7.7 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**2.01**

The statements in this item can be thematically divided into six main domains:

1. *The role of pronunciation in communication (items 1, 14)*

Thematically, the items 1 and 14 were connected to students' perception of the importance of pronunciation in communication. The data indicate that the participants generally are aware of the importance in pronunciation (66.7% agree strongly) and think that its role in the education process should be equal to studying other layers and components of language (55.6% agree strongly). This suggests they will be willing to devote the classroom time to pronunciation improvement activities.

2. *The participants' pronunciation evaluation (items 2, 3, 5, 6, 12)*

The participants strongly agree that they are aware of their pronunciation when they speak (item 2, 47.9%) and even higher number of participants want to improve it (item 3, strongly agree = 72.6%). From all the participants, the majority (45.3%) expressed a strong will to improve their pronunciation (item 5) and 44.4 % of the participants think their current pronunciation is good (item 6). In addition, they can modify their pronunciation in different situations (item 12, 34.2%).

3. *Aim of pronunciation instruction (item 4)*

According to the results of item 4 of the questionnaire, 82 participants strongly agree or agree with the statement that the aim of native-like pronunciation is the ultimate goal of pronunciation training. The attitudes of participants to this particular question will be closely inspected when discussing items 8 to 10 of the main questionnaire but seem to be consistent in this respect.

4. *Evaluation of previous experience of pronunciation (items 7, 8, 9, 10, 15)*

Concerning teaching pronunciation at lower levels of education, the participants generally find the pronunciation training better at high schools than at secondary schools, but generally for both items (7 and 8) the highest score was in the category "disagree" (45 and 35 participants respectively). The perception of the participants with regards to the occurrence of pronunciation tasks and exercises in textbooks is in contradiction to Pavliuk's (2020) findings. This raises the question whether it is caused by the fact that students claim teachers skip pronunciation exercises in class, therefore they also overlook them; or whether the students and teachers (and textbook writers) share the same view of what constitutes a pronunciation exercise. However, most participants considered their teachers as good pronunciation models. Finally, since the participants mostly claimed pronunciation was not taught in sufficient amount or manner at lower levels of education, the answer to question 15 relates to the pronunciation practice part of the phonetics and phonology course. Although the main objective of the course is not pronunciation improvement and accent reduction as such, certain mistakes and errors must be corrected and students are introduced to selected pronunciation teaching techniques. In that respect, the participants answered that they viewed the pronunciation tasks as suitable to their needs.

5. *The participants' attitude towards the pronunciation as a subject of study (item 11)*

Participants view English pronunciation as a difficult subject of studies (item 11), which belongs to indirect metacognitive strategies by Oxford (1990). From the perspective of Oxford's (1990) learning strategies, mostly the cognitive, metacognitive and memory strategies were selected for identification of their preference by the participating students. The participants find imitation (cognitive) the most efficient way of practicing pronunciation, followed by

learning theoretical information on pronunciation (metacognitive), minimal pairs (cognitive), transcription (memory) and finally gap-fill tasks (cognitive) as the least useful way of learning pronunciation.

6. *Pronunciation learning strategies (items 16 to 20)*

This issue of pronunciation learning strategies will also be discussed in questions 12 and 13 (Table 4 and 5) of the questionnaire. Cognitive (items 17, 18 and 19) seem to be the most and least helpful to students; memory (item 16) and metacognitive (item 20) strategies seem to be comparable in this particular context.

The following section (questions 8 to 11) concentrate on the preference of students of individual accents of English and their perception of its importance in communication.

Questionnaire items 8-10 were presented as individual dichotomous, yes-no questions that were thematically related – they allowed the students to formulate their own pronunciation goals simple sentences with the possibility to provide an explanatory comment. The items were presented in chronological order and the participants could not preview the following question; therefore, their answers could overlap and could agree with statements in items 8 and 9 to a certain extent; however, they strictly refused the possible lack of pronunciation standards in their utterances. The table 3 summarises the data for all three items.

Table 3: Participants' attitudes towards native-like and intelligible pronunciation

Answer	Yes	No	Open answers
● 8. I want to sound native-like	86	29	51
9. I want to be intelligible	106	11	38
● 10. I am not concerned about my pronunciation	8	108	37

For question 8 – native-like pronunciation as the target pronunciation – the participants provided 51 comments that can be thematically grouped into following ideas (selected utterances are presented as an example):

- **Professionality** – participants (N = 7) associate native-like pronunciation as a standard for the student majoring English (Because it's important to me as a person who deals with it to a larger extent, than other people) or they view themselves as a model for the students (e. g. *So that I would teach correct pronunciation as a teacher). They also cite native-like pronunciation as professional (pronunciation is important and people also sound more professional if their pronunciation is at least a little closer to that of native speakers; I like the way it sounds; people think I'm not Slovak; I find it more professional; it bothers me if someone can't pronounce Slovak, that's probably why);*
- **Self-confidence** – participants (N = 4) cite native-pronunciation boost their confidence (e. g. *So that I feel more confident and people understand me better; I feel more confident and people who are native speakers understand me better).*
- **Part of the linguistic competence** – several participants also view pronunciation as a inseparable layer of English (e. g. *Because correct pronunciation is part of speech which, as a whole, can function only partially without one of its parts; Because then one masters a language as such; Correct pronunciation is an integral part of language).*
- **Facilitation of communication** – participants (N =3) see its importance for communication (e. g. *For greater comprehensibility, It sounds more natural. It's nicer to listen to; To understand what I'm saying).*
- **Other reasons** – participants (N = 2) also cite other reasons *(Because with the correct pronunciation, in my opinion, I show respect for a given language and culture. Because it pleases me).*

Students who did not agree with the statement provided the following comments, presented below according to the main topics:

- **Intelligibility as a goal** – participants (N=5) who did not agree with the statement claimed intelligibility the goal of pronunciation instruction *(e. g. [native-like pronunciation] is not the primary goal, what matters in the correct intonation, stress, yes, the correct pronunciation of vowels and consonants - but the most important aspect is intelligibility; It is necessary to focus on clear communication, not on 100% imitation of pronunciation; I don't find it important*).
- **Limits to native-like pronunciation acquisition** – a group of participants (N = 5) express their awareness of limits to their own ability to produce native-like sounds (*Since the Slovak language and pronunciation are quite different from English, I think that achieving 100% pronunciation as a native speaker is very challenging; I want to get as close as possible to it, but I don't think that in regular communication (outside of teaching) it matters so much; Yes, but of course it is not 100% possible, e.g. in terms of connected speech, etc.).*

- **Pessimism** – several participants (N = 5) are even pessimistic about their pronunciation or even resigned from the training (e. g. *Because in my opinion, this is not entirely possible unless one lives abroad or is in daily contact with native speakers; Because I will never be that (a native speaker), I will not even think that way; I will never succeed again, I am too old, but I would like to improve as much as possible).*
- *Variety of accents* – the final group of participants (N = 8) are aware of the great variety of English accents, appreciate it and perceive their accent as a part of their identity (e. g. *English has dozens of accents, it is perfectly fine to find your own / have a national, i.e. Slovak accent; I want to have my own style. I want to be able to pronounce nicely but at the same time not imitate any accent from any country; Because foreigners learning the Slovak language also have their own accent, they do not imitate ours. For native speakers, our accent is easy to listen to*).
- **Pride** - one participant is proud of their accent *(I'm not ashamed of my accent).*

Question 9 focused on the aspect of intelligibility. The data in table 3 suggest more than one of the participants agree with both statements (8 and 9). The comments on item 9 can be grouped as follows:

Agreement with **both** statements (8 and 9) – 4 participants agreed why they agree with both statements (*[I speak] comprehensibly and with the correct pronunciation, because when I don't speak like that, I feel that my English lags behind native English; Both are important; In a comprehensive communication, it is probably a combination of both aspects, if possible; If we look at the accent as an intonation, then I do not focus on that. I tend to focus on the British accent, but also to make my speech comprehensible*).

However, majority of open answers (N = 26) clearly expressed the priority of **comprehensibility over native-like pronunciation** (e. g. *Because the role of language is also to communicate with others; So that the people I talk to understand what I'm trying to tell them; To reduce the risk of misunderstandings and misunderstandings*).

The possible reasons were similar to the ones presented in question 8, i.e. **articulatory limits** (*I would prefer it if the phonemes that do not belong there were not on the tip of my tongue..., it irritates me but I cannot help it).*

However, the cited reason of using a comprehensible pronunciation for **professional purposes** was different than in question 8 – while the participants in question 8 strived for native-like pronunciation to sound professional, the participants in question 9 lowered their native-like pronunciation to an intelligible one because of its efficiency in the classroom, especially with the underprepared and inexperienced students native-like pronunciation can be concerning (*It is important that my future students understand me; Because of the students; Because*

of the students who come to primary school with a very low level of English; To be comprehensible when I help with English in tutoring. It's situational). These statements support the participants' evaluation of the quality of pronunciation instruction at the lower level of the education system.

As far as the participants' concern about their pronunciation, they are concerned about it (92.3%) of them do not agree with the statement suggesting no concern); only two participants expressed why they are not concerned (*I don't care about pronunciation only when I'm in a circle of friends and our speech is garbled for fun, otherwise I would try to have the best possible pronunciation; Depending on the situation*).

The remaining comments (N=33) repeated the aforementioned reasons for the importance of pronunciation, i.e. it enables communication with native speakers, it forms the first impression of the listeners, because it reflects the overall competence in the foreign language, and can create a barrier in communication, etc. (*In my opinion, pronunciation is highly important, I think that a native speaker will overlook small grammatical errors, but probably not incorrect pronunciation ; The longer I learn English, the more I care about its correct pronunciation because I realise how important it is for people to understand me; I care about pronunciation, as it also has a distinctive function and it is the first thing we notice about oral expressions.*).

The comparison of the answers of three interrelated questions 8-10 confirms the perceived importance of pronunciation by the participants, even if their goals (intelligibility or nativeness) may differ or even overlap.

Table 4: Students' preference of accents

Answer	Answers	Percentage
● British	85	72.6 %
● American	43	36.8 %
● Australian	7	6.0 %
● Canadian	2	1.7 %
● other	5	4.3 %
● none	2	1.7 %

The answers indicate that the participants prefer the traditional prestigious native accents, broadly and non-specifically referred to as British or American; however, the preference of the British accent corresponds to the preference of the

teachers, but as they estimated, it contradicts with their estimation based on experience of preferences of their students.

In the open section, one respondent distinguished between the accent they use (British and American) and accent they like to listen to (Scottish and Irish). One respondent missed the pronunciation of New Zealand English and one respondent prefers "Slovak/my own". One respondent does not specify the accent, but finds rhotic pronunciation variety easier to pronounce. Finally, one respondent finds the British pronunciation closer to their heart, but gets influenced by the authentic audio-visual production; therefore, pronounces words "subconsciously".

Table 5:The most frequently useful practices for pronunciation improvement in class

Answer	Answers	Percentage
● Imitation of recordings of native speakers	79	67.5 %
● Theoretical explanation of a pronunciation feature	30	25.6 %
● Transcription of words (practicing transcribing or reading transcribed texts)	61	52.1 %
● Teachers feedback	64	54.7 %
● Classmate feedback	7	6.0 %
● Pronunciation games	32	27.4 %
● Explaining pronunciation mistakes and their consequences	63	53.8 %
● Other	7	6.0 %

This questionnaire item aimed at the identification of pronunciation training techniques used in a traditional classroom environment that are typical for controlled settings. These activities are predominantly cognitive and memory-based, according to Oxford's classification of learning strategies.

Peer feedback (social strategy) does not seem to be popular among the participants (N = 7), but on the contrary, the students find teacher's feedback (also a social strategy) the second most influential factor on their pronunciation (N = 64), which gives a higher relevance and credibility to a qualified teacher than to a classmate.

The most popular technique is imitation of native speakers (cognitive, N = 79), transcribing transcription in IPA (memory, N = 61) and explaining the

pronunciation mistakes (metacognitive, N = 63). On the contrary, pronunciation games (affective) are preferred by only 32 respondents.

In the open answers, the participants expressed their preference of imitation of authentic examples of native accents of English (cognitive), intuitive pronunciation/imitation of words they hear (cognitive), speaking with native speakers (social), watching films in English with subtitles (metacognitive) and one respondent had attended and liked a course based on practical use of the English pronunciation with only the most essential theory provided.

13. I improve my pronunciation...

Table 6: The most frequently used practices for pronunciation improvement out of class

Answer	Answers	Percentage
● Self-studying by means of textbooks with exercises	23	19.7 %
● Watching shows, films, videos	102	87.2 %
● Watching instructional videos aimed at pronunciation training	35	29.9 %
● Listening to music	77	65.8 %
● Communicating with native speakers	56	47.9 %
● With another classmate	18	15.4 %
● With another teacher	26	22.2 %
● By looking up pronunciation of unknown words	77	65.8 %
● Using recordings in electronic/online dictionaries	44	37.6 %
● No other way	1	0.9 %
● Other way	3	2.6 %

The final item of the questionnaire aimed at eliciting the most frequently used strategies of the learners to improve their pronunciation at home. In contrast to items in questions 4, where the focus was on the pronunciation practice activities performed in the controlled environment of the classroom, the aforementioned strategies are used consciously or subconsciously by the learners in a non-formal manner.

The most frequent way of improving pronunciation of the participants (N = 102) is through the exposure of the target language, predominantly through metacognitive activities based on audio-visual material, followed by the auditive stimuli of music (N = 77) and equally (N = 77) looking up the pronunciation of unknown words and the use of dictionaries (N = 44). Speaking to a native speaker (social) is popular with 56 participants. On the other hand, purely cognitive strategies, in this case, self-study (N = 23), pronunciation instruction videos (N = 35) and training with another teacher (N = 26) belong to the least popular methods of non-formal pronunciation training. The fact, how many teachers the students can observe or improve their pronunciation with, was not investigated.

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, three participants (2.6%) use also other strategies not provided in the multiple-choice list, more specifically communication with their friends (social strategy), watching interesting videos (metacognitive) and recording themselves to listen to their pronunciation back (cognitive).

The data indicate the students need to be introduced to compensation and effective strategies that can be beneficial in the process of their pronunciation improvement.

The final open section allowed participants to freely express their final thoughts on the subject of pronunciation teaching. The participants (N = 16) used this space to say goodbye, well-wishing, but also individual comments dealt with other pronunciation issues.

The very final questionnaire item allowed the participants to extend their previous comments or comment on the things not included in the questionnaire. In total, 16 participants commented further on the topic:

Feedback on teachers and their courses – one participant was the graduate of the course at the department of the researcher and provided positive feedback for the course; another participant was a graduate of an equivalent course at another department of one of the universities in Slovakia. This questionnaire participant highly praised the course was based on the practical training of pronunciation, transcription, recording different genres of speaking tasks and little attention devoted to theory.

One of the participants expressed their **concern about the neglect of the pronunciation** in the educational system in Slovakia at all levels and other participants added pronunciation should be introduced to learners earlier or in more attractive ways. The themes of self-improvement and the necessity to work on the accent were emphasised.

Finally, a participant maintained that children have better pronunciation due to games, which corresponds with the observation of teachers in chapter 4.

4.3 Conclusions

"Personally, I think that pronunciation is very important, and even if it is not key in communication, as future teachers and advanced students of English, we should deal with it more. However, I was all the more disappointed with our education system, where almost no value was attached to it, and even the pronunciation course at the university did not help me with anything practical. I learned everything through self-study, Youtube videos and courses at foreign universities, which focus mainly on practical pronunciation training."

This statement reflects the frustration many learners of English experience when they realise the role of pronunciation in authentic communication; however, this statement places an unrealistic expectation on the courses of phonetics and phonology. This mistaken demand should be clarified, or even better, avoided by early intervention in classrooms before the window for pronunciation acquisition closes. Accent reduction courses differ from regular pronunciation courses because, in typical communication, accent free pronunciation is not required. Besides the corrective element in regular English lessons and treatment of a speech therapist, accent reduction courses are also offered by commercial companies (Thompson, 2014).

The overall results of the questionnaire are in line with the similar studies in the field with other pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers. Pre-service teachers who are aware of the importance of pronunciation want to teach it and plan to follow one of the prestigious models they are familiar with (Buss; 2015, Koike, 2016). Most participants view intelligibility as their ultimate goal, but as future professional users of English, they strive for native-like pronunciation, as suggested by the teachers in chapter 4 of this publication, or Janicka et al. (2005). Pre-service teachers with experience benefit from modification of their pronunciation to a more accented to sound more approachable to their learners (as Chen, 2016), and rely mostly on memory and cognitive strategies (Pawlak & Szyska, 2018). Pre-service teachers prefer prestigious accents, as identified by Janicka et al. (2005). The conclusions indicate pronunciation teaching in Slovakia is comparable to pronunciation teaching in other countries; however, pre-service teachers have positive attitude to the subject and are open to communication.

Although this study is limited in its extent due to the number of its participants, it tentatively foreshadows the future direction of pronunciation learning in Slovakia in the years to come.

5 Current trends in pronunciation improvement

With the growing interest in pronunciation instruction by the researches, it becomes more and more important for teachers to keep track of the latest research findings. Not all practices are readily available to the classrooms, but teachers can find inspiration in the use of conventional tools they have at their disposal in their classrooms.

5.1 Introduction

Starting from the earliest study, Saito (2012) analysed 15 quasi-experimental studies to find out how effective are an instruction in pronunciation development, as well as the focus of pronunciation training, a form of training (focus on form or focus on forms) and the outcome measures (controlled, spontaneous). He also observes the increasing focus on the intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation. In the studies, 7 studies dealt with suprasegmental features, studies analysed segmental issues; however, there is no general trend in the choice of the pronunciation features, as the studies treat those features that represent the challenge for the particular speakers involved in the experiment. Besides these individual aspects of pronunciation, Saito (2012) claims the instruction improved also the intelligibility of participants, therefore, both types of pronunciation features must be presented to learners equally. The length of the instruction in the studies presented by Saito (2012) was equally important as in the study by Lee et al. (2015) – experimental treatments shorter than 30 minutes do not draw long-term results. Generally, studies improving pronunciation at a controlled level received better results than studies with a spontaneous level in both, segments and suprasegmentals. In terms of FonF and FonFS type of instruction, controlled level elicited greater improvement than spontaneous tasks.

Two years later, Thompson and Derwing (2014) observed a growing interest into the investigation of pronunciation instruction; while in the previous decades the focus of pronunciation studies concentrated on the contrastive analysis of phonetic inventories of languages, or was only a marginal issue in the context of Communicative Language teaching, at the turn of the 21 century, the number of

studies of pronunciation instruction was significantly higher than in the previous years. The authors discovered that even if most of the studies took place in the setting where English was spoken as a primary language and the exposure the learners to the target language was available to learners also outside classroom, learners had different language backgrounds. The learners mostly ranged around the age of young adulthood (graduate and undergraduate students), with occasional teenagers or pre-teenage learners or learners in their fifties. The goal of the pronunciation instruction was mostly native-like pronunciation, although several studies concentrated on intelligibility. The majority of studies focused on the segments than suprasegmentals or their combination, according to the learners' needs based on their L1. The mix of classroom and CAPT instruction was in favour of the classroom instruction, which also generally took longer than the CAPTT instruction. Finally, 82% of all studies had proven the effectiveness of the instruction.

Lee et al. (2015) analysed research studies for three types of information: "(i) contexts, (ii) treatments (including targeted linguistic features), and (iii) outcome types found in studies of PI" (p. 353). According to the authors, age is a more important factor than exposure to the target language (in the classroom only, outside classroom); however, the authors make conclusions only in respect to the analysed studies. They also found out the learners at any proficiency level can benefit from pronunciation instruction. Even if both, laboratory or classroom-set studies are effective, the number of studies carried out in the classroom had grown. Other important factors are the length of the treatment, as well as the feedback the learners receive. Using technology and software appears to have a lowering effect compared to teacher-led experiments due to the fact that computers cannot provide the input and feedback with the way a human teacher would, but the CAPTT has a great potential in pronunciation instruction.

Finally, Vančová (2019) also observed a shift from teaching native-like pronunciation to teaching intelligible pronunciation due to the acceptance of the nativeness principle and the increased interest of teaching suprasegmentals in her analysis of research studies dealing with segmental and suprasegmental issues.

5.2 Research

Teaching English pronunciation has been a growing area of research interest in the 21st century. The pronunciation improvement experimental studies are carried out to develop the most efficient practices in different settings – in a controlled laboratory setting, which tests and validates the researchers' hypotheses to bring them into the second type, the classroom setting, where the research conclusions have a direct impact on learners in the classroom. In the following part, current practices in pronunciation improvement will be presented.

Methods

The chapter aims to provide an analysis of the current practices in the improvement of English pronunciation of various learner groups by analysing selected research papers (N= 14) published in reputable scientific journals and conference proceedings.

The first stage of the identification of the academic papers suitable for the analysis took place in July and August 2020 and consisted of the search of academic databases and services providing access to academic papers, i.e. *Google Scholar, Science Direct, SCOPUS, Springer Link, Web of Science, Wiley Online Library* (in alphabetical order). The key words "pronunciation teaching", "English", "experiment", "research" and their variations were used to identify the academic papers fulfilling the criteria for the analysis. To provide an overview of the most recent practices, the search was limited to the years 2014 and 2019. After filtering the papers from the databases, the review studies, book chapters and theses were excluded from the search. The final criterion for inclusion of the papers into the present review was their availability online. After filtering the search results with the aforementioned advanced criteria, the results were ordered according to the number of citations in the case of such databases as *Web of Science*, or based on their relevance in the case of, for instance, *Wiley Online Library* or *Science Direct*.

The next step of the paper selection excluded papers dealing with training pronunciation of other languages than English (e.g. French, Spanish, German) and only the papers written in English were accepted for the analysis.

The final step of the paper selection consisted of the overview of the abstracts to confirm the selected papers complied with the requirements to answer the research questions. The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. *What is the current interest of the EFL pronunciation improvement investigation? Are segmental or suprasegmental dominant? Is intelligible or native-like pronunciation the goal of these efforts?*
2. *What are the most effective methods and approaches to teach pronunciation in the EFL classroom?*
3. *Who are the subjects of the pedagogical instruction?*

The selected papers were found in *Asian Englishes, Computers & Education, International Journal of Applied Linguistics, International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education , Journal of Asia TEFL, Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, Journal of English for Academic Purposes, Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences (GlobELT: An International Conference on Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language, Antalya – Turkey), Speech Communication, System, TESOL Journal, IJET.*

International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, International Journal of Speech Technology,

The overview of the papers confirms that pronunciation and its teaching is an attractive topic for a wide range of peer-reviewed academic journals, In addition, the topic is discussed in journals of different orientation, e.g. applied linguistics, World Englishes, language system, language teaching. At the same time, a significant number of journals aims at studying the impact and benefits of using technology in education and learning.

Table 7: Overview of the studies

Study	Age	Learners	Number of participants	Pronunciation focus	Instruction	Intelligible /native-like pronunciation	Duration
Gooch, Saito & Lyster (2016)	Adult EFL learners (undergraduate students)	Korean speakers	22	/ɹ/	FonF	Native	4 days
Yenkimaleki & van Heuven (2019)	Interpreter trainees (19-24)	Farsi speakers	48	prosody	FonF	intelligible	12hours over 4 weeks
Ding et al.	Students of English (18-20)	Chinese Learners	40	Intonation	FonFS	native	3 hours per 20 weeks
Rezaei, Gowhari & Azizifar (2015)	20-35	Iranian speakers	40	assimilation	FonFS	American pronunciation features	3 months
Wang & Zhou (2019)	The college English Major students	Chinese	78	Theoretical background of phonetics and phonology	FonF	Native	1 semester
Hamada (2018)	18-21	Japanese learners	58	Selected segmental and suprasegmental features	FonFS	intelligibility	15 lessons
Rahimi & Ruzrokh (2016)	High school students	Iranian learners	56	Lingua Franca core features	FonFS	intelligibility	6 months (45 minutes , 2 times

							per week)
Liu, Zhu, Jiao & Xu (2018)	Junior middle schools students	Chinese Learners	64	Intonation	FonFS	Native	2 months
Hermans, Sloep & Kreijns (2017)	High school students	Dutch	70 + 60	6 pronunciation features	FonFS	Intelligible	
Hassandazadeh & Salehizadeh (2019)	14 - 35	Native speakers of Farsi	129	Lexical stress	FonF	Native	A series of mini-lessons, 8 week period
Wang & Young (2014)	Adult learners and 7 graders (college and junior school)	Taiwan	34	Enhancing English pronunciation	FonFS	Native	8 weeks of data collecti on
Sadat & Tehrani (2017)	Late teens and early twenties	Chinese, South Korean, Mongolian , Togolese, Ukrainian Vietname se	38	Lexical stress placement (16 rules)	FonFS	Native	9 weeks, 25 minutes

The research subjects

Without a doubt, the age of learners is an important factor in pronunciation acquisition; therefore, it provides an insight into the current target group of pronunciation instruction. Except two, all studies discussed in this chapter concentrated on the presentation of the original research into pronunciation improvement of adult learners of English, primarily university students who learn English either as their second or a foreign language. The only two exceptions were the studies by Hermans, Sloep & Kreijns (2017), who indirectly investigated the pronunciation improvement of secondary school students (some of them "aged under 18", p. 6) through the training of their teachers in CAPTT; and the study by Rahimi & Ruzrokh (2016) who trained Lingua Franca Core feature to high school students.

The aforementioned facts suggest that most research into pronunciation training and improvement is concentrated on adult learners of English. One of the possible facts is that these learners present a convenience sample for the researchers most frequently at a university.

Linguistic background of the research subjects

Another important aspect of pronunciation acquisition is the mother tongue and the linguistic background of the learners. The presented studies were performed on the learners who come from a country where English is spoken as a foreign language (e. g. the Netherlands, Iran, China, South Korea). The study by Ding et al. (2019) took place in the USA, but involved Korean speakers (N=15) attending an ESL course and English native-speaking undergraduate raters (N=95) and the study by Sadat-Tehrani was carried out in Canada where English is one of two official languages.

In terms of their professional orientation, most studies sampled the participants from students of other study programs than English major and no study would concentrate directly on the pre-service teachers of English. The only study that dealt with the professional language users was the study by Yenkimaleki & van Heuven (2019) who trained pronunciation students of translation trainees and the study of Wang & Zhou (2019) who improved pronunciation of English Major students.

Pronunciation model

Literature has shown that the pronunciation models in the classroom have changed and the traditional prestigious models do not have to be sufficient in current communication when the communication between two non-native speakers is more frequent than the communication between a native speaker and a non-native speaker (Levis, 2005). From this perspective, the role of the pronunciation model has changed. In the presented studies, Rezaei et al. (2015) and Ding et al. (2019) aimed to practice and present a native model (American) and four studies did not focus on the native model. The study by Rahimi & Ruzrokh (2016) even trained the participants the features of Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core (2000).

Pronunciation focus of the pronunciation training

The first area of the presented research effort aims to identify the focus of pronunciation training. The two main areas are generally presented by the segmental or suprasegmental level of English.
In total, three studies concentrated on the segmental level.

The study by Gooch, Saito & Lyster (2016) concentrated on the development of pronunciation of /ɹ/ to Korean adult EFL learners by comparing the effects of

recasts and prompts. Hermans et al. (2017) concentrated on the practice of six main segmental issues of the Dutch learners of English – voiceless dental, non-aspirated plosives, æ, linking /r/yen sound and əʊ.

On the other hand, four studies concentrated on the suprasegmental level. The study by Rezaei et al. (2015) concentrated on the formal training of assimilation by its observation performed by Iranian learners. In the study, the members of the experimental group received explicit instruction on assimilation rules, which included elements "such as voice assimilation, flapping of intervocalic T in an American accent, dentalisation, bilibialisation, nasalisation, palatalisation, labio-dentalisation, etc." (p. 199). Sadat-Tehrani (2017) concentrated on teaching 16 rules of English stress placement to second language learners of English. The study by Liu, Zhu, Jiao & Xu (2018) concentrated on pronunciation, intonation and total effect by using the smartphone app *Fluent English*. Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven (2019) studied the computer-assisted training of prosody by comparing them with instructor-based prosody teaching in Farsi speaking by interpreter trainees. The participants were evaluated in comprehensibility, accentedness and the correct use of word stress and sentence stress.

The remaining studies were of mixed character. The study by Rahimi & Ruzrokh (2016) taught the LFC features to one group of the learners and the other group of approximated the native British accent to investigate if the practice improves the learners' intelligibility. The participants were not taught the non-core features. The instruction of both groups was based on the communicative language teaching and followed the model of teaching pronunciation as designed by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010).

The study by Wang & Zhou (2019) did not specify the focus of its training, but claimed to improve pronunciation in general by watching and dubbing native speakers, therefore implying native pronunciation was used as a model and the training involved practising the English segments as a screenshot of the instructional video of the phoneme /m/ is provided as an illustration of the pronunciation training process. The process of pronunciation training was preceded by the instructional video of the theoretical explanation of the pronunciation feature.

Neither Wang & Young (2014) did not specify the target pronunciation forms of their ASR-based CALL system used in the training, but the imitative tasks required the participants to record full sentences into the system.

Instruction in pronunciation improvement
The choice of the practice method is the fundamental element in pronunciation improvement. The effective methods should be chosen with the respect to the age of the learners, the focus of the training and should address the context in which the pronunciation features are improved and later used. The final criterion was

studied by Saito (2015) who in his meta-analysis divided studies into two types: studies with focus-on-form (FonF) and focus-on-formS (FonFS).

While the focus-on-form involved into pronunciation practice also communicative aspect and allowed learners to practice communicatively meaningful tasks, contrary to focus-on-formS type of instruction that is based on the practice of accurate pronunciation by drills and repetition (Saito 2012).

According to this classification, the **FonF** studies are represented by 4 studies.

The study by Gooch et al. (2016) aimed to improve the pronunciation of /ɹ/ over the four 1-hour sessions taking place for two weeks. The study compared two approaches to pronunciation teaching – recasts and prompts and the study followed the form-focused instruction. The participants were assigned to three groups – FFI-only, the FFI-recast and the FFI prompt groups and two groups also received corrective feedback besides the explicit articulatory instruction. The performances of the participants were judged by 5 NS listeners with teaching English as a foreign or second language. The participants practised the target sound in "meaning-oriented tasks" (p. 120), more specifically argumentation. Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven (2019) compared instructor-based pronunciation teaching with the participants receiving no treatment and computer-based pronunciation training. The control group listened to authentic speakers with an American accent, the instructor-based group worked on raising the awareness of the English prosody by theoretical explanation followed by practical exercises. The computer-based group were trained by the Accent Master software. After completion of the course, all three groups were asked to perform a post-test with spontaneous task assessed by three judges. Wang & Zhou (2019) made students videos with English pronunciation instruction and English spoken films and let them dub videos. After the class, the students were supposed to review the lesson online and complete the tasks using email or BBS. Hassanzadeh & Salezizadeh (2019) concentrated on the improvement of the word stress in three groups – the output group, the input enhancement group and the corrective feedback group. All three groups watched the same vodcast and concentrated on the same target vocabulary; however, the form changed.

The **FonFS** was represented by 8 studies.

Zhou & Wang (2019) improved the learners' pronunciation by "watching the videos of English pronunciation, seeing the film of the English version and dubbing the cartoons and TV plays in English" (p. 170). The study rooted in the network-based teaching mode that was based on the Piaget's constructivism theory of learning and included the use of such network means as QQ or email that were used to collect the students' work by the teacher. Therefore, the students' work extended beyond the classroom time and students could benefit from the feedback received by the teacher for their work outside the classroom. Rezaei et al. (2015)

employed Iranian speakers in an experiment consisting of "a treatment, which was a formal training of phonetic rules" (p. 199) and compared their data to the experimental group receiving no treatment in a pronunciation test taken after 12 weeks of the treatment program based on the "Applied English Phonology by Mehmet Yavas" (ibid.). Liu et al. (2018) used the smartphone app Fluent English to improve the pronunciation, intonation and total effect. The participants performed a task in the intelligent "imitating-speaking" mode (p. 336) and the app gave them the automatic speech assessment. The app allowed students to listen to dialogues, read after the dialogues and receive feedback and score. The app also used colour codes to indicate the students' progress, as well as allowed the learners to communicate with its other users to receive help, which supported their collaboration in pronunciation improvement. Rahimi & Ruzrokh (2016) improved the pronunciation of speakers in of two groups based on the communicative language teaching model of teaching pronunciation as designed by Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) discussed in chapter 1, therefore the stages included description and analysis, listening discrimination, controlled practice, guided practice and communicative practice. Sadat-Tehrani (2017) followed the presentation, practice, production model in teaching the word stress with the elements of task-based language teaching in the review stage of the experiment (focus on form). The participants in the Wang & Young (2014) study were asked to practice and record their own production into the ASR-based CALL system over a period of eight weeks. The pronunciation training was performed fully virtually, without any in-person feedback from an instructor. The sole feedback was generated from the system. Hamada (2018) analysed the impact of the IPA shadowing and haptic shadowing in two-step quasi-experimental studies. In the first part of the experiment, Hamada divided the participants of the quasi-experimental study into two groups after the pre-test consisting of reading four sentences – the haptic-shadowing group individually studied the rules of suprasegmental phonology and could discuss them with the instructor during the summarising session. The IPA shadowing group studied one of the selected suprasegmental features with the instructor during one session. Both groups worked for 30 minutes during 15 sessions overall. Neither of both groups vocalised the practised pronunciation aspects. In the study by Ding et al. (2019) the learners were asked to practice intelligibility and fluency over a period of 3 weeks. Each week, they attended the laboratory three times for 30-minute sessions. The first week they practised 8 sentences, the second week they reviewed them and added 8 new sentences and eventually, they practised 24 sentences in the last week of the training. The pronunciation exercises consisted of say-listen-repeat, listen-repeat, backward build-up tasks. Liu & Tseng (2019) treated the participants in 12 sessions over a period of 36 days. Each session was a 3-day cycle. The scripted tasks consisted of a loud reading of texts in an EFL

textbook; the unscripted speech consisted of speaking feedback and comment on the text. Both speeches were approximately 10 minutes long. Hermans et al. (2017) tried to improve the pronunciation of the Dutch learners of English in six error types through the use of CAPTT. The errors were treated in individual lessons, which included information, video and audio material and practice material. The students shadowed and recorded the practised target features at their own pace and they were introduced to phonetic symbols and visualization of articulation. Both teachers and students could evaluate the recordings.

The effectiveness of the instruction

The results of the research study by Wang and Zhou (2019) indicate that network-based English Phonetics Teaching Mode can be effective for English-Major students. The data collected by the questionnaire also revealed that after the experiment, the increase in using the Internet for educational purposes by the participants increased by more than 40% to the final 65.8%. The study of Rezaei et al. (2015) proved that the learners who received explicit instruction on the rules of the English assimilation in 12 sessions, scored a significantly higher than the participants in the control group in the pronunciation test performed after the experiment. In the study by Gooch et al. (2016) that compared the effect of recasts and prompts on the students' pronunciation, the significant differences were identified in the prompt group (an explicit request to correct the target sound) in both, controlled and spontaneous tasks; the recast group (correction provided by the instructor in the form of a model pronunciation of the word after the student's mistake) only showed significant improvement in the controlled task in the pre-test and post-test results. Liu et al. (2018) maintain that the use of Fluent English app in the "imitating-speaking" mode allowed its users to make significant progress in pronunciation, intonation and total effect in comparison to the participants in the control group. Rahimi & Ruzrokh (2016) found out that "integrating LCF syllabus in teaching pronunciation enhances the intelligibility of language learners in comparison with a standardised British English instruction" (p.152) In Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven's study (2019), the CAPT and IBPT groups improved significantly from the control group; however, the difference between the first two groups was not significant. Sadat-Tehrani (2017) study elicited a significant difference in the post-test after following the presentation-practice-presentation model. Wang & Young (2014) study indicate the beneficial effect of the ASR-based CALL system pronunciation training program, with the potential to improve the pronunciation of adult learners. Liu & Tseng (2019) have identified different conditions for a different type of output – the scripted speech benefits from explicit instruction; the unscripted speech benefits from the context. Ding et al. (2019) confirmed that the use of the Golden Speaker Builder improved the learners' fluency and comprehensibility; however, it did not address the issues of

the participants' improvement at the phoneme level. Hermans et al. (2017), who trained teachers in using CAPTT and then used it in the classroom, identified improvement in 5 of six trained pronunciation features. Hassanzadeh & Salehizadeh (2019) concluded that the phonetical overload of students is not suitable for language learners and none of the experimental approaches has a long-term effect. Only the output-oriented group has the highest impact on the short-term results. This is in line suggestions with the teachers in Chapter 3 of this publication that the goal of instruction should concentrate only on the crucial elements. The only study that did not directly benefit from the computer-assisted pronunciation training was the study by Hamada (2018) who found out that both approaches, IPA shadowing and Haptic shadowing, improved comprehensibility, segments and suprasegmentals of the participants; however, the haptic shadowing group experienced a more significant improvement.

5.3 Conclusions

The current interest of research in pronunciation improvement aims to address the actual needs of the learners (based on their mother tongue); therefore, a relatively balanced number of studies investigated the improvement of segmental and suprasegmental features and their combination. Most studies still relate to native accents, in the analysed studies General American is more popular among researchers. Even if intelligibility improvement is investigated, native accents tend to take the role of a point of reference.

Concerning the methods and approaches, two main approaches were compared—FonF and FonFS. In the studies, FonFS is the dominant of the two concepts. Several studies benefited from the use of CAPT in the classroom. Irrespective of the approach the researchers applied, all studies displayed a certain improvement, either achievement of specifically set goals or statistically significant improvement of the participants' performance in a post-test. This leads to the conclusion that any practice of pronunciation is better for students' pronunciation than no practice, even if there is not a universal method or approach that would be suitable for the needs of all learners of all ages and linguistic backgrounds. All studies aimed at improving the pronunciation of late teenage or young adulthood.

Finally, research interest in pronunciation teaching has been growing and the number of scientific studies available in academic literature confirms it. The overview of analysed studies revealed that most pronunciation improvement still takes place in a laboratory, outside the classrooms. This leads to the conclusion that these research attempts have not found their way into the actual teaching practices yet.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

Teaching English pronunciation requires the attention of all participants of the educational process – teachers, learners, researchers and education policymakers. Even though research in teaching and improving pronunciation is very fruitful, there is no conclusion on the ultimate method, approach or a technique that would provide learners with native-like pronunciation; therefore, more realistic goals must be set for all types of English language learners.

The main aim of this publication was to provide the overview of the current state of pronunciation teaching based on three sources of original data: (1) the review of recent teaching practices in the global context, (2) views of university teachers of phonetics and phonology and (3) views of students of the course of phonetics and phonology at a Slovak university. In addition to these research efforts, an investigation into the status of pronunciation in the official pedagogical documentation in Slovakia used as a point of departure to the presented publication.

The collected data indicate that the lack of clearly defined goals in the sphere of pronunciation is reflected in the relatively low knowledge and skills of Slovak learners of English in the sphere of pronunciation. This lack of knowledge is reflected in the unrealistic expectation of learners coming to university from the course of phonetics and phonology. The learners perceive the course should provide them with an accent-reduction training, but university teachers aim to provide learners with a more profound insight into the role of an acoustic layer of the English language. Additionally, university teachers also set different goals for English major students and general learners of English, which adds to the basic misconception of the role of pronunciation in communication and education. This basic misunderstanding could be explained and the overall quality of pronunciation of Slovak learners of English could be improved if a systematic program for teaching pronunciation in Slovakia was developed. The necessary steps should include:

1. Formulating precise criteria for pronunciation instruction and goals within the National Curriculum and other pedagogical documentation.
2. Opening the discussion on the importance of pronunciation among a teacher of English in Slovakia complemented by creating a support system for the teachers. The support system should include material for all types of teachers:

3. Revising sessions for the teachers who are not familiar with the theoretical aspects of pronunciation crucial for communication,
4. Pronunciation improvement classes for teachers who are not confident with their own pronunciation,
5. Providing methodological workshops presenting teachers with the latest trends in pronunciation teaching for different types of learners.
6. Creating teaching materials, handbooks and online information sources readily available for teachers at all levels of education. The authors of the tailor-made teaching materials should consider targeting the materials for learners with specific pronunciation issues rooted in their mother tongue.

The proposed suggestions for improvement of conditions of teaching pronunciation teaching should be based on the recent practices in pronunciation teaching that include:
- Meaningful and integrated pronunciation practice supporting the autonomous approach of learners to pronunciation improvement,
- The respect to learners' preference of learning strategies allowing teachers and learners to choose materials of their choice inside and outside the classroom setting
- Presentation of a greater variety of native and non-native foreign accents of English to English learners to introduce them also with other than standard prestigious accents of English and prepare them for communication with non-native speakers

Following these recommendations with the respect to creating conditions for pronunciation teaching as well as to practices involved in the process, pronunciation teaching in Slovakia could make a step forward towards the overall improvement of the pronunciation of Slovak learners of English.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Teachers' interview questions

1. Professional background

How long have you been teaching pronunciation/phonetics and phonology? Which courses do you teach, and when? How many hours a week? Is it sufficient?

2. Attitudes to pronunciation/phonetics and phonology

What was your relationship to pronunciation/phonetics and phonology as a student? Has your attitude changed after you started teaching it?

3. The importance of pronunciation/phonetics and phonology

In relation to other courses you teach/other linguistic disciplines, how do you perceive the importance of pronunciation/phonetics and phonology? Do you think the pronunciation of the speaker/learner relates to their overall competence in a foreign language?

4. Preferences

Are there any aspects of pronunciation/phonetics and phonology you prefer to teach? Are you confident to teach all of them? How did you gain your confidence? Do you think only native speakers can teach pronunciation?

5. Aims

What is the aim of your course? What should your students know after your course?

6. Pronunciation model

Which pronunciation model do you teach/describe/prefer? Which model do your students prefer? What pronunciation should your students have (intelligible or native-like)? Do you let your students develop their own accent?

7. Pronunciation practice

Which activities do you include in your lessons? Have you excluded any? What is the ratio of authentic and non-authentic materials? What is your students' feedback (usefulness of the course, suggestions)?

Do you think it is useful to:
- Drill minimal pairs
- Practice transcription
- Use textbook exercises
- Use authentic materials
- Self-evaluation and peer-evaluation
- Communicative teaching
- Explicit instruction on pronunciation mechanism and explanation of rules

8. Opinion on lower levels of education

Do you have experience with teaching at primary or secondary schools? If yes, did you teach pronunciation? Observing your students at the university, do you think they come well-prepared regarding pronunciation? Would you suggest any changes? Do you think there is an age limit for pronunciation training?

9. Effect of pronunciation training/teaching phonetics and phonology

Do you think pronunciation training/teaching phonetics and phonology has a long-term effect on students? If you teach your students in later semesters of their study, can you see any qualitative changes in their pronunciation? Are there students resistant to pronunciation training?

10. Is there anything you would like to add?

(Based on Macdonalds, 2002; Buss, 2015; Koike, 2016 and Uchida & Sugimoto, 2016),

Appendix 2: Interview sample

RESPONDENT 1

Ako dlho sa venujete učeniu výslovnosti angličtiny?
Na vysokej škole alebo aj na... celkovo? 10 rokov? Vysoká škola je 7 rokov a okrem vysokej školy ďalšie tri, čiže tých 10 by to malo byť.

Aké iné predmety vyučujete?
Ono bolo viac predmetov, momentálne je to táto fonetika a didaktika anglického jazyka a v minulosti to bolo aj niekoľko predmetov, taká tá praktická angličtina.

A v ktorých ročníkoch?
Fonetika je prvý ročník zimný semester aj letný fonetika 2, a didaktika je zas v magisterskom štúdiu, prvý a druhý ročník.

Po koľkých dvoch rokoch sa vraciate k študentom?
Tri-štyri

Aký bol Váš vzťah k predmetu fonetika a fonológia ako študent?
Tak u mňa bol veľmi pozitívny, aj keď zo začiatku asi ako každý študent som bol trocha zľaknutý kvôli tým technickým záležitostiam a termínom a tak ďalej, lebo predsa tá fonetika je trocha iná ako tie ostatné predmety. Nehovorím, že ľahšia, ťažšia, lepšia, horšia, ale je trocha iná. Ale ja som mal vždy výslovnosť tak, že som k tomu inklinoval, takže môj vzťah bol dobrý aj ako študenta.

Ako sa Váš vzťah k predmetu zmenil po tom, ako ste ho začali učiť?
Vzťah asi ostal rovnaký, myslím si, že stále k tomu inklinujem rovnako, akurát, samozrejme, že už trocha za tie roky trošku viac som tomu porozumel, vôbec nie som určite žiadny expert ani nejaký ťažký profesionál, ale čiže je tam ešte nejaký väčší rešpekt pred tým všetkým, ale vzťah je teda veľmi veľmi pozitívny. Chcem to učiť aj ďalej a veľa pedagógov to nechce učiť, to viem. Ale čo ešte možno súvisí s touto otázkou je, že napísal som si dve učebnice, jednu na segmenty a jednu na suprasegmenty, kde som sa to snažil podať jazykom takým bližším týmto 19-, 20-ročným študentom, takže to mi tiež dosť takto pomohlo. Vzťah je dobrý.

Ako vnímate dôležitosť nácviku výslovnosti/učenia fonetiky a fonológie v súvislosti s výučbou ostatných jazykových rovín?
No tak tu je odpoveď pre mňa jednoduchá, lebo razím túto teóriu roky, je to veľmi veľmi dôležité, lebo slovenská a anglická výslovnosť sú veľmi veľmi odlišné,

takže tu treba venovať veľkú dôležitosť nácviku. Veľa času. Zásadne nehovorím, že iné systémy – gramatický, lexikálny a funkčný a tak ďalej, že majú byť kdesi na druhej koľaji, to určite nie, ale tá dôležitosť je veľmi vysoká, veľmi veľká. Tá výslovnosť anglická je ďaleko ťažšia ako možno v niektorých iných jazykoch, lebo tie odlišnosti – je ich tam proste viac. To je veľká dôležitosť.

Myslíte si, že výslovnosť hovoriaceho alebo učiaceho sa súvisí s jeho celkovou kompetenciou v cudzom jazyku?
Určite áno. Keď má niekto dobrú, lepšiu výslovnosť, tak jeho celková performancia, ústny prejav, je podľa mňa pozitívnejšia ako u niekoho, kde je tá výslovnosť slabšia, čiže dá sa tam možno skryť viacero chýb možno za ten jeho ústny prejav, ktorý veľmi úzko súvisí s výslovnosťou, takže áno.

Čo si myslíte o vyučovaní anglickej výslovnosti?

Milí respondenti,

dovoľujem si Vás osloviť ako svojich budúcich kolegov, učiteľov angličtiny, a chcem Vás požiadať o zodpovedanie stručného dotazníka, ktorý zisťuje Vaše názory na vyučovanie výslovnosti a jeho dôležitosť v cudzojazyčnom vzdelávaní. Dotazník je anonymný, preto sa, prosím, nepodpisujte a v komentároch neuvádzajte žiadne informácie, na základe ktorých by ste mohli byť identifikovaná/-ý. Vaše odpovede budú zaručene anonymné. Dáta získané dotazníkom budú slúžiť na výskumné účely. S Vašimi prípadnými otázkami ma neváhajte kontaktovať. Za spoluprácu a Váš čas Vám vopred ďakujem,

Hana Vančová

1. Váš vzťah ku KAJL PdF TU: (označte krížikom)
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu alebo viac odpovedí

☐   študent/ka 1. ročníka Bc. stupňa

☐   študent/ka 2. ročníka Bc. stupňa

☐   študent/ka 3. ročníka Bc. stupňa

☐   študent/ka 1. ročníka Mgr. stupňa

☐   študent/ka 2. ročníka Mgr. stupňa

☐   absolvent/ka

☐   učiteľ/ka z praxe

☐   uchádzač/ka o štúdium

☐   Iná…

2. Angličtina je pre mňa …
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu odpoveď

◯ materinský jazyk

◯ druhý jazyk

◯ cudzí jazyk

3. Angličtine sa venujem (po anglicky sa učím) .... rokov.

4. Moje najvyššie vzdelanie v angličtine:
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu alebo viac odpovedí

☐ maturitná skúška

☐ medzinárodný certifikát

☐ štátna skúška

☐ Iná...

5. Moje skúsenosti s vyučovaním angličtiny:
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu alebo viac odpovedí

☐ žiadne - zatiaľ angličtinu len študujem (prejdite na otázku č. 7)

☐ angličtinu vyučujem (prejdite, prosím, na otázku č. 6)

☐ angličtinu doučujem v súkromí (prejdite, prosím, na otázku č. 7)

☐ Iná...

6. Ako dlho a na akom stupni a type školy vyučujete?

7. Krížikom označte svoj postoj k uvedeným výrokom:
Nápoveda k otázke: 1= úplne súhlasím; 2 = skôr súhlasím; 3 = neviem posúdiť; 4 = skôr nesúhlasím; 5 = úplne nesúhlasím

	1	2	3	4	5
Výslovnosť je v cudzojazyčnej komunikácii dôležitá.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Pri hovorení v cudzom jazyku si uvedomujem svoju výslovnosť.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Svoju výslovnosť v cudzom jazyku si chcem zlepšiť.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Cieľom výučby výslovnosti je výslovnosť imitujúca rodeného hovoriaceho.	○	○	○	○	○
Ak by som mal/-a lepšiu výslovnosť, bol by som v angličtine sebavedomejšia/-í.	○	○	○	○	○
Myslím si, že momentálne mám dobrú výslovnosť.	○	○	○	○	○
Myslím si, že vyučovanie anglickej výslovnosti na základných školách je na dobrej úrovni.	○	○	○	○	○
Myslím si, že vyučovanie anglickej výslovnosti na stredných školách je na dobrej úrovni.	○	○	○	○	○
Myslím si, že vyučovaniu správnej výslovnosti sa v učebniciach angličtiny venuje dostatočná pozornosť.	○	○	○	○	○
Myslím si, že moji učitelia mi boli/sú vo výslovnosti dobrým vzorom.	○	○	○	○	○
Študovať anglickú výslovnosť je náročné.	○	○	○	○	○
Niekedy zámerne pri hovorení v angličtine mením a prispôsobujem svoju výslovnosť.	○	○	○	○	○
Ako učiteľka/učiteľ kladiem/budem klásť dôraz na výslovnosť svojich žiakov/študentov.	○	○	○	○	○
Učenie výslovnosti je rovnako dôležité ako učenie gramatiky či slovnej zásoby.	○	○	○	○	○
Doterajší spôsob učenia sa výslovnosti mi vyhovoval.	○	○	○	○	○
Precvičovanie transkripcie mi pomohlo v zlepšovaní mojej výslovnosti.	○	○	○	○	○
Imitovanie nahrávok/piesní/filmov a i. mi pomohlo v zlepšovaní mojej výslovnosti.	○	○	○	○	○

Cvičenia na rozlišovanie slov (napr. minimal pairs) mi pomohli v zlepšovaní mojej výslovnosti.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Úlohy na doplňovanie slov do textu na základe výslovnosti mi pomohli v zlepšovaní mojej výslovnosti.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Teoretické informácie o výslovnosti mi pomohli uvedomiť si niektoré aspekty výslovnosti.	○ ○ ○ ○ ○

8. Keď hovorím po anglicky, chcem vyslovovať ako rodený hovoriaci.
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu z odpovedí a vysvetlite svoje dôvody.

☐ áno

☐ nie

☐ Prečo?

9. Keď hovorím po anglicky, sústreďujem sa viac na zrozumiteľnosť než prízvuk.
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu z odpovedí a uveďte svoje dôvody.

☐ áno

☐ nie

☐ Prečo?

10. Keď hovorím po anglicky, na výslovnosti mi nezáleží.
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu z odpovedí a uveďte svoje dôvody.

☐ áno

☐ nie

☐ Prečo?

11. Preferujem výslovnosť:
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte jednu alebo viac odpovedí

- [ ] britskú

- [ ] americkú

- [ ] austrálsku

- [ ] kanadskú

- [ ] inú...

- [ ] žiadnu

12. Pri nácviku správnej výslovnosti v škole mi pomohlo
Nápoveda k otázke: Vyberte najviac tri odpovede.

- [ ] imitovanie rodených hovoriacich počúvaním nahrávok

- [ ] teoretické vysvetlenie výslovnostného javu

- [ ] transkripcia slov (nácvik, čítanie transkripcie)

- [ ] spätná väzba od vyučujúceho

- [ ] spätná väzba od spolužiakov

- [ ] hry zamerané nácvik výslovnosti

- [ ] poukázanie na výslovnostné chyby a ich dôsledky

- [ ] Iné...

13. Výslovnosť si zlepšujem ...
Nápoveda k otázke: Označte všetky relevantné odpovede.

- [ ] samoštúdiom pomocou učebníc s cvičeniami

- [ ] pozeraním zábavných seriálov, filmov a videí

- [ ] pozeraním inštruktážnych videí zameraných na výslovnosť

- [ ] počúvaním hudby

- [ ] komunikáciou s rodeným hovoriacim

☐ s iným spolužiakom

☐ s iným učiteľom

☐ vyhľadávaním si výslovnosti neznámych slov

☐ využívaním nahrávok v elektronických/online slovníkoch

☐ nijako

☐ inak...

14. Sem môžete doplniť svoje ďalšie komentáre
a postrehy:

Appendix 4: Sample questionnaire answers (Item 10)

- Chcem mať vlastný štýl. Chcem vedieť pekne vyslovovať ale zároveň nenapodobnovať žiaden akcent zo žiadnej krajiny
- Lebo to podľa môjho názoru nie je úplne možné, pokiaľ človek nežije v zahraničí alebo nie je v dennom kontakte s native speakermi
- britska anglictina je pre mna naj a preto by som sa k nej rada aspon trosku priblizila
- keď vyslovím niečo nesprávne, znižuje sa mi sebavedomie v speakingu
- Neberiem to ako dôležité.
- Lebo správna výslovnosť je súčasťou reči, ktorá ako celok bez jednej zo svojich častí môže fungovať iba čiastočne.
- Chcem sa tomu čo najviac priblížiť, ale nemyslím si, že v bežnej komunikácii (mimo vyučovania) na tom až tak záleží
- Lebo aj cudzinci učiaci sa slovenský jazyk majú svoj vlastný prízvuk, nenapodobnuju ten náš. Pre native speakrov je náš prízvuk dobre počúvateľný.
- Správna výslovnosť je neoddeliteľná súčasť jazyka
- Tak u nás všetko vedie k Oxford English, maturity sú podľa tohto štandardu.
- To sa mne už nikdy nepodarí, som príliš starý, ale chcel by som sa čo najviac zlepšiť.
- Pride mi to prirodzenejsie
- Treba sa zamerať na zrozumiteľnú komunikáciu, nie na stopercentnú imitáciu výslovnosti
- Výslovnosť je dôležitá a taktiež človek znie viac profesionálne, ak sa ich výslovnosť aspoň trochu približuje k výslovnosti rodených hovoriacich.
- Cítim sa tak viac sebavedomejšia a ludia, ktorí sú Native speakeri mi lepšie porozumeju.
- Keďže slovenský jazyk a výslovnosť sa od anglickej dosť líši, myslím si, že dosiahnuť úplne 100% výslovnosť ako rodený hovoriaci je veľmi náročné.
- Bol, a stále je to môj cieľ.
- Pretože vtedy reálne človek zvládne jazyk ako taký
- Aby sa jazyk co najviac priblizil autentickemu jazyku
- Znie to prirodzenejšie. Lepšie sa to počúva.
- kvôli porozumeniu toho, čo hovorím
- Nie je možné imitovat iba jeden spôsob výslovnosti (Britská, americká, australská, indická...)

90

- viacero aspektov iných typov AJ (napr. US) sa spolu prelína a rodení jedinci si uvedomujú túto skutočnosť
- Aby reč znela plynulo a spontánne.
- Na svete je toľko národnosti hovoriace anglickým jazykom a ani v Británii nerozprávajú domáci rodený anglicania strednej aj vyššej vrstvy spisovne
- aby mi daný ľudia dokázali čo najlepšie porozumieť a cítili sa komfortne pri komunikacií so mnou
- Zbytočne sa snažiť o nemožné veci. Takejto výslovnosti sa dá priblížiť, no vždy bude počuť accent.
- Nejde o to, aby som mala výslovnosť ako rodený hovoriaci, ale o to, aby bolo slovo vyslovené správne a zrozumiteľne.
- Je to relatívne, kazdy hovori mierne odlisne.
- Páči sa mi, ako to znie; ľudia si myslia, že nie som Slovák; príde mi to profesionálnejšie; vadí mi keď niekto nevie slovensky vyslovovať, tak aj pret
- Ako rodený hovoriaci je veľmi neprvdepodobné, že by som sa naučila, no snažila by som sa čo najviac k tomu priblížiť,aby nedošlo k prípadným nedoruzum
- Lebo to nikdy nebudem, tak nebudem ani takto premýšľať
- Výslovnosť slov je v slovníkoch uvádzaná podľa výslovnosti spisovného štandardu cieľoveho jazyka a tento štandard je pre mňa východiskom.
- Lebo ma to teší
- je to prirodzenejšie, krajšie a profesionálnejšie
- Nechcem mať iný/zahraničný prízvuk
- Nehanbim sa za svoj prizvuk