

**THE INFLUENCE OF TRAINING ON EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND
ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION IN
SPANISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

LA INFLUENCIA DE LA FORMACIÓN EN LAS CREENCIAS Y
ACTITUDES DE LOS PROFESORES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA
EXTRANJERA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA PRONUNCIACIÓN EN
ESCUELAS SECUNDARIAS EN ESPAÑA

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ABSTRACT

EFL students in Spain are expected to have a good pronunciation when they finish secondary education. However, many times practitioners avoid teaching it. This study aims at investigating how training in general phonetics/phonology and pronunciation teaching affects EFL teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards pronunciation instruction in secondary schools in Spain. Thirty-eight teachers took an online survey from May to October 2023. A mixed-method analysis was conducted: first, three different linear mixed models were run to examine eleven different teachers' beliefs rated on a 7-point Likert scale; second, teachers' opinions on the instruction of different pronunciation features were examined with percentages. Results reveal

that those teachers who have received training show a more positive attitude, especially when having received training in pronunciation teaching. Besides, intonation stands as the most important feature to teach. These findings suggest that pronunciation should have a more prominent role within teaching professional development.

KEYWORDS: English as a foreign language; pronunciation instruction; teacher cognition; teacher beliefs; teacher professional development

RESUMEN

Pese a la falta de énfasis que los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera dan a la pronunciación inglesa dentro de sus aulas, es esperable y deseable que sus estudiantes finalicen la educación secundaria con una buena pronunciación. Con el fin de comprender y abordar esta inconsistencia, este estudio pretende investigar cómo la formación en fonética/fonología y en la enseñanza de la pronunciación influye en las creencias y actitudes que el profesorado de inglés tiene sobre su instrucción. Para llevarlo a cabo, durante los meses de mayo a octubre 2023, treinta y ocho profesores de secundaria cumplieron una encuesta virtual. Los resultados de esta se analizaron siguiendo una metodología mixta. En primer lugar, se analizaron once creencias valoradas en una escala de siete puntos con tres modelos lineales mixtos; seguidamente, se examinaron sus opiniones sobre diferentes aspectos de la pronunciación con porcentajes. Los resultados muestran que el profesorado con formación tiene una actitud más positiva, especialmente aquellos formados en la enseñanza de la pronunciación. Además, la entonación se considera el elemento más importante a enseñar. Estos resultados sugieren que la pronunciación debe tener mayor relevancia en los programas de formación docente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: inglés como lengua extranjera; enseñanza de la pronunciación; cognición del profesorado; creencias del profesorado; programas de formación docente

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, several studies have advocated for the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction to improve students' communication skills when teaching English as a second (ESL) or foreign (EFL) language (Derwing, 2008; Derwing and Munro, 2015; Isaacs, 2009; Levis,

2005, 2018; Saito, 2012, among others). However, many practitioners still avoid teaching it today. The lack of pronunciation teaching might directly affect students' ability to communicate in the target language (L2) and, ultimately, their learning outcomes (Delicado Cantero & Speed, 2015: 19).

To understand why some teachers are reluctant to introduce pronunciation practice in class, some researchers have investigated teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards pronunciation instruction. Many of these studies have shown that some practitioners do not know how or what to teach due to a lack of training, or they are unable to evaluate improvement, among other cognitions¹ that influence their teaching choices (Couper, 2016; Breitzkreutz, Derwing and Rossiter, 2001; Foote, Holtby, and Derwing, 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Macdonald, 2002). For this reason, studying teacher cognition [i.e., practitioners' beliefs and knowledge (Borg, 2003, 2006)] when it comes to deciding whether to teach pronunciation, and what is more effective to teach becomes relevant to enhance reflective pedagogy (Basturkmen, 2012: 283). In addition, it can help design better teacher training courses that focus on instructors' needs to teach pronunciation effectively (Burgess and Spencer, 2000; Buss, 2016; Nagle, Sachs, and Zárate-Sández, 2020).

Although the number of studies that examine the relationship between teacher cognition and pronunciation practices in the classroom has increased since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Huensch, 2019b: 14), most of them have been carried out in English-speaking countries (Burns, 2006; Burri and Baker, 2021; Burri, Baker and Chen, 2017; Burgess and Spencer, 2000; Couper, 2016; Breitzkreutz et al., 2001; Foote, et al. 2011; Macdonald, 2002). Only a few studies have been conducted in EFL settings (Buss, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Walker, 1999), where students have fewer opportunities to engage in the target language. This study, which belongs to a broader project concerning EFL teachers' pronunciation practices in Spanish classrooms, is a first step towards enlarging the existing literature on the issue. Particularly, this article examines how training in phonetics/phonology and pronunciation teaching might influence English teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards introducing pronunciation in EFL classrooms in secondary schools in Spain. It will also analyze teachers' opinions on the pronunciation features that need to be taught in class, and it will finally suggest improvements in teachers' professional development.

¹ Following Burry and Baker's (2021) description of the plural term 'cognitions', this article also uses it to group teacher's different beliefs, attitudes and knowledge.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Pronunciation instruction research versus practice

Whether to teach pronunciation in the ESL and EFL classrooms is still a hot topic nowadays. After long periods of neglect, many experts agree on the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction (Derwing, 2008; Derwing and Munro, 2015; Isaacs, 2009; Levis, 2005, 2018; Saito, 2012), especially when explicit training is applied within a communicative learning context (Isaacs, 2009: 5). Saito (2012) compiled fifteen quasi-experimental studies that aimed at investigating the effectiveness of pronunciation teaching. All the studies, except for two, showed significant improvement. On the other hand, those students who benefited from language-focused instruction within meaning-oriented settings could reach improvement in both controlled and extemporaneous speech. However, those who received decontextualized language practice tended to show improvement just in controlled tasks. Besides, students showed more lasting results when explicit pronunciation practice was carried out in a communicative context.

The number of classroom-based studies in the field is still limited though (see Dewing and Munro, 2015, for a review), and many times teachers do not have access to them. Hence, research does not tend to filter to the classroom; practitioners usually decide what and how to teach based on their beliefs, knowledge, training, and curriculum limitations, which tend to have no research foundations.

2.2 Teachers' training and cognitions in pronunciation teaching

Despite agreeing with the positive impact pronunciation teaching can have in language students' learning process, many teachers remain hesitant about introducing explicit pronunciation instruction in their lectures (Saito, 2012: 848). In fact, they tend to consider they have not received enough training to teach pronunciation, so they do not feel confident and prepared to do it (Burns, 2006; Couper, 2016; Foote, Holtby, and Derwing, 2011; Henderson et al., 2012, Isaacs, 2009; Kirkova-Naskova et al., 2013; Levis, 2005; MacDonald, 2002; Nagle et al., 2020).

Several studies have paid attention to teacher cognition when teaching grammar or vocabulary and found that training plays an influential role in teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards their instruction (see Borg, 2003, for a review). As far as pronunciation is concerned,

fewer studies have been conducted (Baker and Murphy, 2011), but many agree that training has a positive effect on teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. Besides, most of them claim that practitioners request more and better training, especially on how to teach pronunciation (Burns, 2016; Burri, 2017 et al.; Burri and Baker, 2021; Buss, 2016; Couper, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Huensch 2019a, 2019b; Kirkova-Naskova, 2013; Macdonald, 2022; Nagle, Sachs and Zárata-Sánchez, 2018; Foote et al., 2011; Saito, 2012; Walker, 1999).

Nagle et al. (2018) conducted a survey study among instructors of Spanish as a second language in the United States. They found that teachers with more method-related coursework tended to believe more in the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction and tried to implement it in class. Interestingly, though, several participants in the study thought that native speakers were a better model. Huensch (2019a) surveyed a total of 127 Spanish, German and French teachers at twenty-eight public universities in the United States. A low number of the participants reported to have access to pronunciation training opportunities, and 67% of the ones polled stated they would like to receive more training. Nevertheless, most participants claimed to integrate pronunciation in their classes, and 73% of them felt comfortable teaching pronunciation. Therefore, Huensch suggests that belief and training might not be directly related. However, in a follow-up study examining pronunciation practices from three French and four Spanish teaching assistants of elementary courses by means of interviews and class observations, Huensch (2019b) observed that very short time was allocated to teaching pronunciation in class, and those assistants with more previous experience and training were the ones introducing more pronunciation practice in their lessons.

Within an ESL/EFL context, Breikreutz, Derwing and Rossiter (2001) surveyed English teachers in Canada, many of whom claimed that they would like to receive training in how to teach pronunciation; in fact, only 30% of the respondents had received pronunciation training. Ten years later, Foote et al. (2011) conducted the survey again and, although they observed that instructors considered that their training opportunities had increased, they thought they were not receiving enough professional development support to feel more confident when teaching pronunciation. In fact, 75% of the participants still claimed for more pronunciation training. Burns (2006) distributed a questionnaire among English teachers in Australia, with 147 respondents. Although many of them claimed to be confident when teaching pronunciation, they were still requesting additional training. Besides, some of them stated that pronunciation was not necessary. Buss (2016) also reported general positive attitudes towards pronunciation teaching among Brazilian EFL teachers. However, only 28.3% of the 60 practitioners who took

the survey reported having participated in an L2 pronunciation instruction course, and most of them were claiming for additional education as well.

2.3 EFL teachers' beliefs in Spanish education

Henderson et al. (2012) and Kirkova-Naskova et al. (2013) conducted the first survey among EFL teachers in different European countries. Again, teachers around Europe agreed on a need for more training programs. When examining Spanish participants, all of them thought that pronunciation was important compared to other linguistic aspects. However, as teachers, they considered they had to improve their pronunciation skills and, hence, requested further preparation. They added that there was a lack of time and investment in resources, and that they felt pressure to prioritize other aspects in their sessions due to the curriculum. Walker (1999) conducted a survey study among English teachers in Asturias (Spain) twenty years ago. Participants considered pronunciation relevant, but they admitted not knowing how to teach it. He concluded that good training could help them gain the confidence to introduce pronunciation in their classes.

To the author's knowledge, no more studies have focused on EFL teachers in Spain since then. Therefore, an analysis of the current Spanish situation to examine whether there have been advances is needed to investigate whether pronunciation research findings have finally filtered down into the classroom, and identify the teachers' needs to improve training programs (Buss, 2016). Along these lines, this study aims at examining how training influences the beliefs and attitudes EFL teachers in secondary schools in Spain have towards pronunciation instruction. To this end, the following hypotheses are stated:

H1. Teachers who have received training in phonetics/phonology will believe more in the benefits of pronunciation instruction compared to those who did not.

H2. Teachers who have received training in how to teach pronunciation will believe more in the benefits of pronunciation instruction compared to those who did not.

3. METHOD

3.1 Survey

An online survey was designed and administered via Outlook Forms. It consisted of forty-seven questions distributed in four sections: background, beliefs, training and teaching. This article will focus on the first three sections of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

The seventeen questions in Section 1 gathered information used to outline the participants' profile: they had to answer general questions about their age, gender, education and nationality, together with more specific questions on the type of institution they were teaching at, the educational level of their students and the number of students per class. Section 2 consisted of three different questions: First, participants were asked to classify the degree of relevance of different linguistic features (i.e., grammar, pronunciation, speaking, reading, listening and writing) in the EFL classroom. Second, they had to specify to which degree they agreed with eleven different statements on pronunciation teaching via a 7-point Likert scale. Some statements were adapted from previous survey studies in the field: statement 6, 8 and 10 were extracted from Breitzkreutz et al. (2001); statement 11 from Foote et al. (2011); and statement 1 from Nagle et al. (2018). The rest of them were designed by the author. Third, they chose the pronunciation features they thought are important to teach in class from a list given. Section 3 was made up of eight questions: participants were asked whether they had received training in pronunciation in general and how to teach pronunciation in particular, and when and where they received each type of training. Finally, they had to reflect on whether they needed more training to teach pronunciation in their classes.

The survey was first sent for validation to five professors from different Spanish universities whose research expertise is English pronunciation teaching. After making the suggested modifications, the questionnaire was sent to the students of the master's degree in Bilingual Education at Nebrija University to conduct a pilot study. However, only two students replied, as most of the postgraduates that academic year were teaching in primary, not secondary schools. It was decided to open the survey to the general public in order to reach a wider population. Data was then collected through snowball sampling and social media posting: on the one hand, the survey was shared with colleagues who in turn shared it with their professional colleagues and, on the other hand, it was posted on Facebook teaching groups, Twitter and LinkedIn. For this article, the answers compiled during the first six months (between May and October 2023) will be examined.

3.2 Participants

From the forty-three professors who took the survey, five of them had to be discarded from the analysis, as they were not teachers of English. Thus, the answers of a total of thirty-eight practitioners were examined in this study. All the subjects were Spanish except for two of them who were British; thirty of them were female, seven male and one person preferred not to say;

The average age was 42.29 years of age, and the mean of teaching experience was 15.46 years. Figure 1 illustrates the provinces in Spain where the participants were teaching. The color represents the amount of people who participated from each province: red stands for six people, purple four, green three, blue two, yellow one, and gray zero:

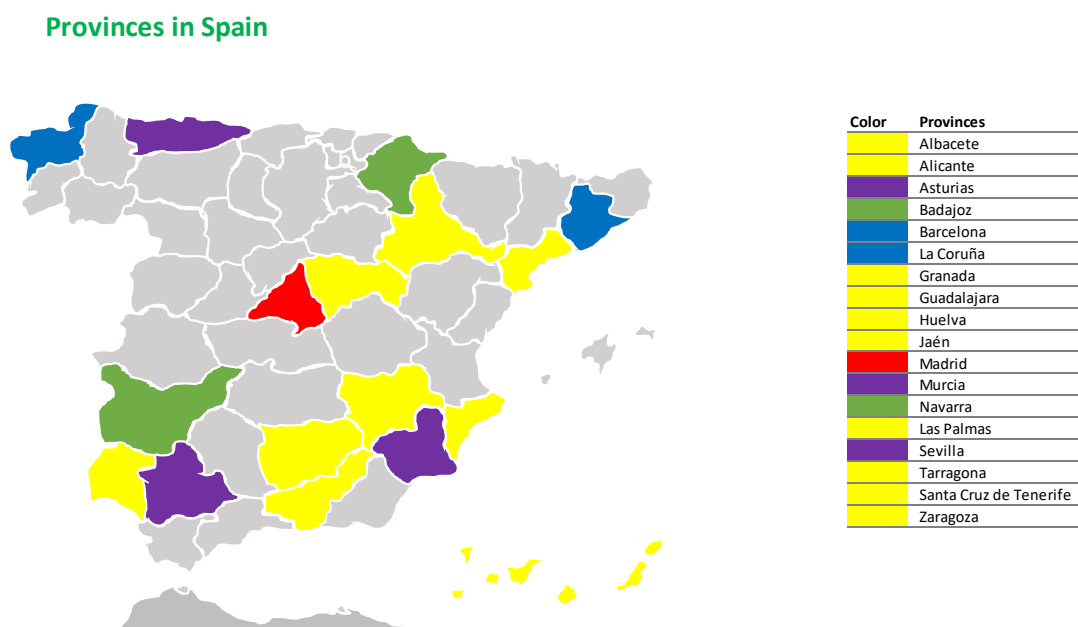


Figure1. Participants according to the province where they teach

Participants came from fifteen different provinces. The highest number of subjects were teaching in Madrid (six), followed by Asturias, Murcia and Seville (four from each); there were three people from Badajoz and three from Navarra, and two from Barcelona and La Coruña; finally, we had one participant from ten other provinces: Albacete, Alicante, Granada, Guadalajara, Huelva, Jaén, Las Palmas, Tarragona, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Zaragoza.

Regarding the type of institution, thirty participants were teaching at just one type of institution, while eight of them were working at two different ones: 47% of the participants were teaching at a public school, 18% at a private school, 5% at a charter school, 5% at a bilingual school, 11% at both a public and a bilingual school, 8% at a private and a public school, 3% at a charter and a bilingual school, and 3% at a private and bilingual school. Figures 2 and 3 show students' educational level of and the number of pupils per class respectively:

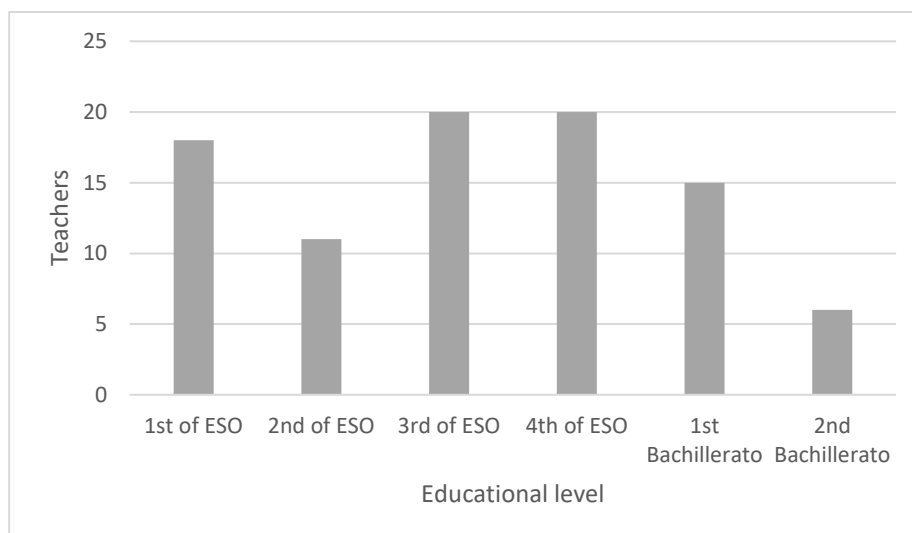


Figure 2. Students' educational level at which practitioners taught English

In Figure 2 the vertical axis represents the subjects of the study, while the horizontal axis represents the educational level at which they were teaching. As can be observed, participants had more experience at the last two courses of compulsory secondary education (3rd and 4th of ESO), followed by experience at the first level of compulsory education (1st of ESO) and the first level of non-compulsory education (1st of Bachillerato). A lot of the participants, hence, had experience in more than one level.

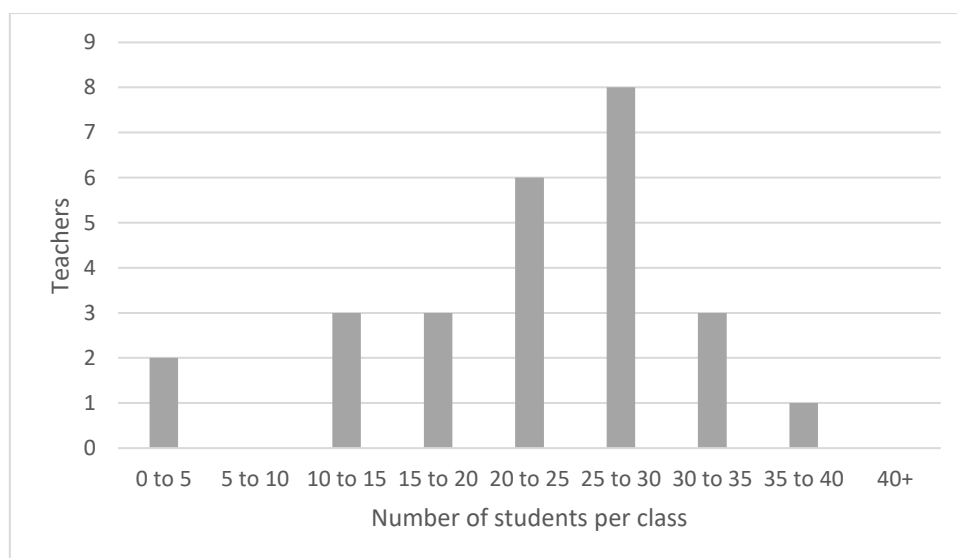


Figure 3. Number of students that the participants had per class

As for the number of students per class, most of the subjects were teaching in overcrowded classes (see Figure 3): 47% of the subjects had more than twenty students per class, twenty-five to thirty students being the most chosen option. This is not surprising as

almost half of the teachers who took the survey worked at public schools, which have a bigger ratio of students per class.

3.3 Data analysis

To examine the effect of training in general pronunciation (i.e., phonetics/phonology) and/or how to teach pronunciation in teachers' beliefs, three mixed models analyses were conducted: on the one hand, all the statements in question nineteen were examined together and, on the other hand, positive and negative statements on pronunciation instruction were analyzed separately. Paired-samples t-tests with all the statements were conducted to further study whether training affected certain beliefs. This information will be complemented with a descriptive analysis based on means (*M*), modes and standards deviations (*SD*). In addition, the subjects' thoughts on whether they need more training to teach pronunciation, and which are the most relevant pronunciation features to teach will be represented with figures and percentages.

4. RESULTS

Eleven different statements were analyzed. Table 1 shows the results on the teachers' thoughts regardless of the training received. As observed, participants strongly agree with the first four statements, so they believe that teaching pronunciation is important and it improves communicative skills in general, and more specifically students' intelligibility and fluency, with an average above 5.8 for each of the items.

Participants also agree with the following three statements, although to a lesser extent, with an average between 4 and 5.5. It seems that, although they are aware of the importance of pronunciation instruction, participants are not that sure about the fact that teaching it explicitly might be beneficial, that it implies lasting results, and that it should be taught by English native speakers. Finally, participants generally disagree with the last four statements: they do not think teaching pronunciation is boring, that it can only be taught with students of a particular language level, and that training affects their competence to teach pronunciation. However, standard deviations are high for every statement, which suggests a wide variability among subjects. This is especially interesting for the last statement, as only four of the participants answered they did not need more training to teach pronunciation in class (see question 28 in Appendix 1).

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MODE</i>
Teaching pronunciation is important.	6.34	1.38	7
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	6.05	1.18	7
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	6.16	1.15	7
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	5.84	1.33	7
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	5.26	1.37	6
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes.	4.32	1.82	4
Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	4.13	1.98	4
Teaching pronunciation is boring.	3.29	2.24	1
I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	3.13	2.12	1
Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	2.24	1.65	1
Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	2.74	1.67	1
<i>Note:</i> 7-point Likert scale 1 = not at all 7 = totally agree. <i>M</i> = means. <i>SD</i> = Standard deviation.			

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of question 19 “To what extent do you agree with the following statements” with all the participants (*N* = 38)

So as to examine whether receiving training or the type of training received influenced subjects' beliefs, participants were classified into four different groups: teachers who received general pronunciation training (PT), teachers who did not receive general pronunciation training (NPT), teachers who received training in pronunciation instruction (PIT), and teachers who did not receive training in pronunciation instruction (NPIT). As displayed in Table 2, those teachers who received training strongly agree with the first four statements, but the average gets slightly lower among those who did not receive training. In fact, the difference increases when comparing those subjects who received training in how to teach pronunciation with those who did not.

	<i>PT (N = 30)</i>			<i>NPT (N = 8)</i>			<i>PIT (N = 18)</i>			<i>NPIT (N = 20)</i>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MODE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MODE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MODE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MODE</i>
Teaching pronunciation is important.	6.37	1.47	7	6.25	1.04	7	6.50	1.42	7	6.20	1.36	7
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	6.10	1.21	7	5.88	1.13	7	6.72	0.46	7	5.45	1.32	6
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	6.17	1.23	7	6.13	0.83	6	6.67	0.69	7	5.70	1.30	7
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	6.00	1.26	7	5.25	1.49	7	6.44	0.78	7	5.30	1.49	7
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	5.33	1.35	6	5.00	1.51	4	5.44	1.29	5	5.10	1.45	4
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes.	4.33	1.92	3	4.25	1.49	4	4.39	2.09	3	4.25	1.59	4
Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	4.00	2.05	2	4.63	1.69	4	4.06	2.15	6	4.20	1.85	4
Teaching pronunciation is boring.	3.07	2.20	1	4.13	2.36	6	3.28	2.27	1	3.30	2.27	1
I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	2.77	1.96	1	4.50	2.27	7	3.00	2.33	1	3.25	1.97	1
Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	2.03	1.63	1	3.00	1.60	3	1.89	1.57	1	2.55	1.70	1
Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	2.47	1.59	1	3.75	1.67	3	2.44	1.79	1	3.00	1.56	4
<i>Note: PT = pronunciation training. NPT = No pronunciation training. PIT = Pronunciation instruction teaching. NPIT = No pronunciation instruction teaching. 7-point Likert scale 1 = not at all 7 = totally agree. M = means. SD = Standard deviation.</i>												

Table 2. Descriptive analysis question 19 "To what extent do you agree with the following statements" divided according to the training received

A similar tendency is observed with the following three statements, except for the remark on native speakers being a better option when it comes to teaching pronunciation, as in this case those who have not received training of any type show a higher average. Regarding the last four statements, averages tend to be lower, but teachers disagree more if they have received training of any kind. In fact, the average for those who did not receive training stands between 3 and 4 in most of the cases, showing that they agree rather than disagree with these statements. However, standard deviations are still over 1 in most of the cases, showing again a great variability in opinions.

In order to study the effect of training in the teachers' judgement in more detail, a linear mixed models analysis was carried out with the statements as the dependent variable, and general pronunciation training and training in how to teach pronunciation as the independent ones. Subjects were considered a random effect:

Effect	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
General pronunciation training	1, 34.00	5.471	*.025
Training in how to teach pronunciation	1, 34.00	4.632	*.039
General pronunciation training *training in how to teach pronunciation	1, 34.00	2.265	.142

Note. * $p < .05$. Random effects grouping factor: 'Teacher'.

Table 3. Linear mixed model with all the statements in question 19 as dependent variable ($N = 11$)

As shown in Table 3, both general pronunciation training and training in how to teach pronunciation were found to be significant ($p = .025$ and $p = .039$ respectively), but not its interaction ($p = 0.142$). Hence, having received some type of training seems to influence teachers' beliefs on teaching pronunciation.

To further examine to what extent the type of training received influenced subjects' beliefs in teaching pronunciation in the EFL classroom, statements were divided into two groups: on the one hand, "positive" statements, i.e., the first five statements in Table 1, as these remarks advocate for a beneficial impact of teaching pronunciation; on the other hand, "negative" statements, i.e., the remaining six statements in Table 1, since these are remarks that tend to discourage pronunciation instruction. To this end, two more linear mixed models analyses were run, both with general pronunciation training and training in how to teach pronunciation as independent variables, and subjects as a random effect. Positive and negative

statements were treated as two separate dependent variables. Table 4 summarizes the results obtained from the analysis of the positive statements:

Effect	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
General pronunciation training	1, 34.00	0.474	.496
Training in how to teach pronunciation	1, 34.00	5.268	*.028
General pronunciation training*training in how to teach pronunciation	1, 34.00	0.456	.504

Note. * $p < .05$. Random effects grouping factor: ‘Teacher’.

Table 4. Linear mixed model with positive statements in question 19 as dependent variable ($N = 5$)

As displayed, training in how to teach pronunciation was found to be significant ($p = .028$), but not general pronunciation training ($p = .496$) or the interaction ($p = .504$). Hence, it seems that teachers who received specific training in teaching pronunciation have a more positive attitude towards pronunciation instruction, since they advocate more for explicitly teaching pronunciation in class, and believe more in its relevance and its impact on students’ communicative skills, fluency and intelligibility.

When examining the results of the linear mixed models analysis with the negative statements as the independent variable (see Table 5), it appears that training in how to teach pronunciation does not have an effect on the subjects’ opinions ($p = .319$), but general training in pronunciation does, as this factor was found to be significant ($p = .032$). However, the interaction between the two was not statistically significant ($p = .228$):

Effect	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
General pronunciation training	1, 34.00	4.997	*.032
Training in how to teach pronunciation	1, 34.00	1.021	.319
General pronunciation training*training in how to teach pronunciation	1, 34.00	1.507	.228

Note. * $p < .05$. Random effects grouping factor: ‘Teacher’.

Table 5. Linear mixed model with negative statements in question 19 as dependent variable ($N = 6$)

These results suggest that, if teachers have been taught about phonetics/phonology, they are more likely to reject negative statements regarding the long-term impact of teaching

pronunciation on students, the fact that it is boring or should be done by native speakers, or that it is just effective with low-level or highly-motivated students.

Paired-samples t-tests regarding question nineteen were also conducted to further study the difference in opinions among the subjects and the consistency of their beliefs. As illustrated in Appendix 2, most of the t-tests showed statistical significance (in bold), so it seems that there is a pattern and a connection between the different thoughts, especially when we focus on the difference between positive and negative statements on pronunciation teaching. No interconnection could be established between some of the positive statements, though: believing that teaching pronunciation is important does not mean that it enhances students' communicative skills ($p = .220$), or intelligibility ($p = .438$) at the same time; thinking that pronunciation improves communicative skills does not imply believing that it also improves intelligibility ($p = .378$) or fluency ($p = .198$), or that the last two go hand in hand ($p = .090$).

No link could be established among some negative statements either: rejecting that pronunciation instruction translates into permanent changes does not mean that natives are the ones who should teach pronunciation ($p = .593$); believing that teaching pronunciation is boring does not advocate for native teachers either ($p = .063$), but it is neither connected to a lack of training ($p = .713$), nor a thought that only high-motivated students can improve their pronunciation ($p = .120$). Finally, beliefs in scarce training and high-motivated students do not seem to be related ($p = .317$).

As for the pronunciation features that they think are more important to teach in class, intonation was chosen by thirty-four out of the thirty-eight participants as the most relevant one (see Figure 4):

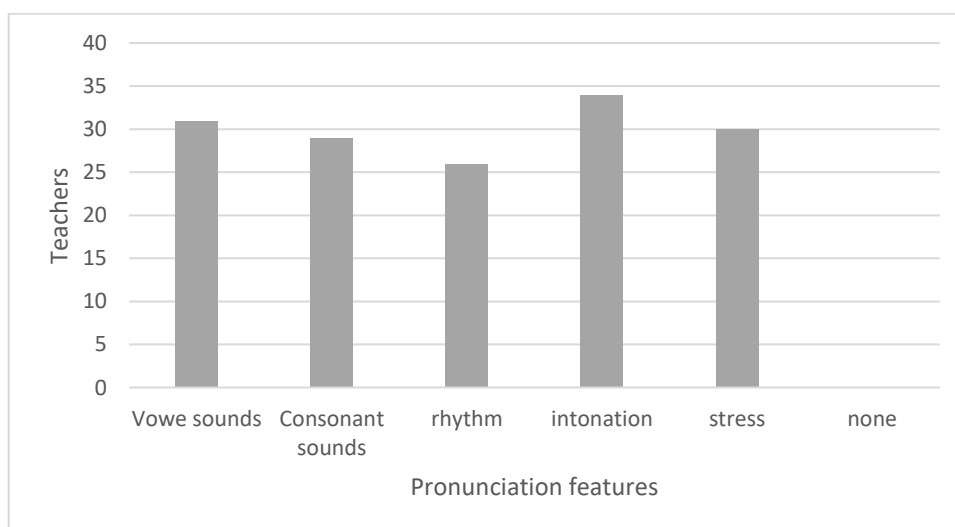


Figure 4. Answers to question 20: “Which of these pronunciation features do you think are important to teach in class?”

Vowel sounds were considered important to teach by thirty-one participants and stress by thirty of them. Consonant sounds and rhythm were the features that were found the least relevant, although they were still chosen by twenty-nine and twenty-six of the subjects respectively, which is more than two thirds of the participants. None of the teachers who took the survey chose the option “none”, which suggests that, despite the scarcity of training received and their own cognitions on pronunciation teaching, all of them believe pronunciation should be introduced in the EFL classroom to some extent.

5. DISCUSSION

This article mainly aimed at examining to what extent teachers’ training influences their beliefs and attitudes towards pronunciation teaching, which was found significant both when considering pronunciation training in general ($p = .025$) and specific training in how to teach pronunciation ($p = .039$). As a whole, participants strongly believed that pronunciation teaching is important and that it improves students’ communicative skills, intelligibility and fluency, which goes along the lines of previous research in the field (Couper, 2016; Derwing, 2008; Derwing and Munro, 2015; Foote, Holtby, and Derwing, 2011; Henderson et al., 2012; Huensch, 2019b; Isaacs, 2009; Levis, 2005, 2018; MacDonald, 2002; Nagle et al., 2018, 2020; Saito, 2012). However, no statistical connection was found between these ideas, which suggests that, despite research supporting the benefits of pronunciation instruction in students’ communication, this knowledge does not always filter down to regular practitioners. Besides, respondents seemed to be hesitant about having to teach pronunciation explicitly, and disagreed with the idea that native speakers should be the ones doing it, especially when having received training in pronunciation instruction. This finding runs counter to Nagle et al. (2018)’s, whose participants thought natives were a better model, but is comparable to Brazilian EFL teachers’ thoughts in Buss’ (2016) study.

On the other hand, it is striking that, although most of the subjects disagree with the fact that they were not good at teaching English pronunciation because they lacked training, 89% of them stated the need for more training to introduce pronunciation in their lessons. This relates to Burns’ (2006) findings in which participants reported to feel confident when teaching English, but they requested further training. In any case, there is a demand for more training, as in previous studies on the field (Burns, 2016; Burri, 2017 et al.; Burri and Baker, 2021; Buss, 2016; Couper, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Huensch 2019a, 2019b; Kirkova-Naskova, 2013;

Macdonald, 2022; Nagle, Sachs and Zárate-Sánchez, 2018; Foote et al., 2011; Saito, 2012; Walker, 1999).

Regarding the pronunciation features participants favored, intonation is considered the most important to teach, as in Burgess and Spencer's (2000) study. These results, then, support more recent studies that encourage teaching suprasegmentals (Derwing and Munro, 2015; Levis, 2005). Nevertheless, the rest of the features were also considered important, which suggests that every aspect should be tackled in class to provide a holistic learning progress.

When investigating the impact of different types of training, some interesting remarks can be made: First, training in how to teach pronunciation is significant when examining positive thoughts about pronunciation teaching ($p = .028$). Thus, results show that teaching practitioners techniques, methodologies, activities, materials, etc., to introduce pronunciation in class makes them feel more positive towards teaching pronunciation (Hypothesis 2). These findings support Burgess and Spencer (2000) and Walker's (1999) study, whose subjects also claim for more training in teaching pronunciation. On the other hand, Spanish teachers at Nagle et al.'s (2018) study who had received methods-oriented training also found pronunciation instruction more beneficial, and they were more inclined to teach it. In Huensch (2019b) those teachers with more experience and training were also the ones to teach pronunciation more often. Indeed, it would be interesting to examine whether that is also the case with the participants of this study.

Second, the practitioners who participated in the survey tend to think more negatively about pronunciation teaching when they have not received general pronunciation training ($p = .032$). EFL and ESL programs are of a very diverse nature, so some programs include pronunciation, whereas others do not. If teachers-to-be were not taught general phonetic and phonological concepts regarding how English pronunciation works, they might find explaining those an arduous task, which can end up negatively affecting their opinion on its effectiveness. For instance, if teachers do not know about the meaning connotations of the different English intonation patterns, it would be impossible for them to explain them to their students in a comprehensible manner. Results seem to support that idea (Hypothesis 1). Hence, these outcomes further strengthen the relevance of including pronunciation in this type of programs if teachers are expected to help students with their pronunciation (Burri et al., 2017: 125).

6. CONCLUSION

This article has explored the impact of training in the perception that English teachers have of pronunciation instruction in Spanish secondary schools. As discussed, the trainings under study seem to influence teachers' cognitions. Although participants consider teaching pronunciation important, those who did not receive either general pronunciation or pronunciation instruction training tend to think more negatively about it, while the latter also tend to feel more insecure.

Hence, the more training received, the more confident and positive about teaching pronunciation. As suggested by previous researchers, teacher training programs should tackle pronunciation, and provide more materials, resources and methods (scientifically proven when possible) that can help practitioners' professional development (Isaacs, 2009; Walker, 1999). This is especially interesting for foreign language teachers who share their students' mother tongue, as they had learned the language themselves first, so they can guide learners through the learning process more easily (Buss, 2016; Couper, 2016; Murphy, 2014).

Although a higher number of participants is needed to provide a clear and solid map of teachers' beliefs and attitudes in Spain, this study should be seen as a first attempt to tackle how teacher cognitions and training towards pronunciation teaching are related, adding up to the studies conducted in the field. For future research, it would be advisable to contact governmental institutions and/or particular schools to guarantee more participants from different provinces. That measure might help reach a wider population that better represents the current situation of the country and allow researcher to compare the particular circumstances of different provinces, as education is a regional competence in Spain.

Follow-up studies will focus on how training might affect practitioners' teaching choices from different perspectives. First, the features to teach: not only would it be interesting to investigate if trained practitioners introduce pronunciation in their lessons more (Nagle et al., 2018), but also which features are specially taught (segmentals – vowels and consonant sounds – and/or suprasegmentals – intonation, rhythm and stress), and which type of training favors the instruction of one aspect or another; second, the methods and techniques used in class: both researchers and English practitioners have suggested different approaches but, are teachers following them? If so, which ones? Are recent research findings guiding the teaching methods that are currently used, or do teachers follow rather conservative techniques that they learned long ago because they do not have access to these findings? Finally, teachers in secondary schools tend to follow a textbook, so looking at the type of materials and resources they use

could also help us understand why they are teaching one particular aspect, using a specific approach, or thinking pronunciation is either funny or boring to teach.

All in all, by examining the current situation from both the teachers' beliefs and practices perspectives, specific needs could be detected, which could encourage improvements in teacher training programs (Burgess and Spencer, 2000; Buss, 2016; Nagle, Sachs, and Zárate-Sández, 2020). Training teachers-to-be in how to conduct language-focus instruction in communicative settings when teaching pronunciation (Saito, 2012) or how to integrate pronunciation in the curriculum allocating more time to its instruction (Huensch, 2019b) with updated hands-on activities will help bridge the gap between research and practice, while boosting their confidence to include pronunciation in their classes. Indeed, this initiative will positively contribute to their professional development, answering the recurring demands of EFL teachers in Spain and, luckily, other countries.

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APPENDIX 1. THREE FIRST SECTIONS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON PRONUNCIATION TEACHING

Pronunciation teaching practices at secondary schools in Spain

Researchers at Nebrija University are conducting a national survey to study teachers' knowledge, training and instruction of English pronunciation in ESL/EFL classroom at Spanish secondary schools. The questionnaire is divided into four parts (background information, beliefs, training and teaching). When you want to change the section, please click on “Siguiete”. You will not be allowed to continue with the following section unless you answer all the compulsory questions, marked by an asterisk. You should answer to 47 questions in total. When finished, please click on “Enviar” to submit your answers. By submitting your answers you consent the use of the information provided for research purposes. This survey will take just 10 minutes of your time.

Section 1

Background information

1. Age:

2. Gender:

3. Nationality:

4. Master's degree:

5. Province in Spain where you teach:

6. Town/City:

7. English teaching experience (years):

8. Type of institution at which you work:

- Public school
- Private school
- Charter school
- Bilingual school

9. Students' age level:

- 1st E.S.O.
- 2nd E.S.O.
- 3rd E.S.O.

- 4th E.S.O.
- 1st Bachillerato
- 2nd Bachillerato

10. If working in two or more different institutions, specify the students' age in each:

11. How many students do you have per class?

- 0-5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- 15-20
- 20-25
- 25-30
- 30-35
- 35-40
- +40

12. If working in two or more different institutions, specify the students' number in each:

13. How many English hours do students take per week?

229

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- +6

14. If working in two or more different institutions, specify the number in each:

15. Are all the students Spanish natives?

- Yes
- No

16. Which other languages do students speak?

17. If working in two or more different institutions, specify the students' mother tongues in each:

Section 2

Beliefs

18. Classify the following linguistic features that, in your opinion, are most relevant in the classroom (the first one would be the most important to teach, while the last one would be the least important):

- Grammar
- Pronunciation
- Speaking
- Reading
- Listening
- Writing

19. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 = not at all; 7 = totally agree):

- Teaching pronunciation is important.
- Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.
- Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.
- Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.
- Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.
- Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes.
- Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.
- Teaching pronunciation is boring.
- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.
- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.
- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.

20. Which of these pronunciation features do you think are important to teach in class?

- vowel sounds
- consonant sounds
- rhythm
- intonation
- stress
- none

Section 3

Training

21. Have you ever received explicit pronunciation training?

- Yes
- No

22. How?

- A subject during my Bachelor's degree
- A subject during my master's degree
- A course at work
- Sporadic workshops and conferences
- I have not received any specific training

23. If any other explicit training, specify which one:

24. Do you think that your own pronunciation needs more training?

- Yes
- No

25. Have you ever received explicit training in how to teach pronunciation to EFL students?

- Yes
- No

26. How?

- A subject during my Bachelor's degree
- A subject during my master's degree
- A course at work
- A course outside work
- I have not received any specific training

27. If any other explicit training, specify which one:

28. Do you think that you need more training to teach pronunciation in the EFL classroom?

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX 2. PAIRED-SAMPLE T-TESTS WITH STATEMENTS IN QUESTION 19

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p	Cohen's d	95% CI for Cohen's d	
						Lower	Upper
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	1.247	37	.220	0.202	-0.120	0.522
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	0.784	37	.438	0.127	-0.193	0.446
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	2.077	37	*.045	0.337	0.008	0.662
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	4.201	37	*< .001	0.681	0.324	1.031
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	6.225	37	*< .001	1.010	0.613	1.397
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	5.369	37	*< .001	0.871	0.492	1.241
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Teaching pronunciation is boring.	7.020	37	*< .001	1.139	0.724	1.544
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	7.932	37	*< .001	1.287	0.850	1.714
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	10.842	37	*< .001	1.759	1.244	2.264
Teaching pronunciation is important.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	9.394	37	*< .001	1.524	1.049	1.989

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p	Cohen's d	95% CI for Cohen's d	
						Lower	Upper
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	-0.892	37	.378	-0.145	-0.463	0.176
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	1.310	37	.198	0.213	-0.110	0.533
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	2.986	37	*.005	0.484	0.145	0.818
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	5.912	37	*< .001	0.959	0.569	1.340
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	4.938	37	*< .001	0.801	0.431	1.163
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Teaching pronunciation is boring.	6.440	37	*< .001	1.045	0.643	1.437
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	8.058	37	*< .001	1.307	0.867	1.737
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	10.614	37	*< .001	1.722	1.213	2.221

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p	Cohen's d	95% CI for Cohen's d	
						Lower	Upper
Pronunciation teaching improves students' communicative skills.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	9.530	37	* < .001	1.546	1.068	2.015
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	- Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	1.742	37	.090	0.283	-0.044	0.60
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	- Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	3.761	37	* < .001	0.610	0.260	0.953
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	- Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	5.816	37	* < .001	0.943	0.556	1.322
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	8.299	37	* < .001	1.346	0.900	1.78
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	10.275	37	* < .001	1.667	1.168	2
Pronunciation teaching improves students' intelligibility.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	9.227	37	* < .001	1.497	1.027	1.957
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	2.408	37	*.021	0.391	0.058	0.718
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	4.532	37	* < .001	0.735	0.372	1.090

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p	Cohen's d	95% CI for Cohen's d	
						Lower	Upper
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	4.307	37	* < .001	0.699	0.339	1.050
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- Teaching pronunciation is boring.	5.477	37	* < .001	0.889	0.508	1.261
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	6.918	37	* < .001	1.122	0.710	1.525
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	9.394	37	* < .001	1.524	1.049	1.989
Pronunciation teaching improves students' fluency.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	8.284	37	* < .001	1.344	0.898	1.780
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	- Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	2.792	37	*.008	0.453	0.116	0.784
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	- Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	2.926	37	*.006	0.475	0.136	0.807
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	- Teaching pronunciation is boring.	4.496	37	* < .001	0.729	0.367	1.084
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	5.511	37	< .001	0.894	0.512	1.267
Pronunciation has to be	- Pronunciation teaching does not	8.255	37	* < .001	1.339	0.894	1.774

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p	Cohen's d	95% CI for Cohen's d		
						Lower	Upper	
explicitly taught in class.	work with low-level students.							
Pronunciation has to be explicitly taught in class.	Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	6.365	37	* < .001	1.033	0.633	1.423	
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	0.540	37	.593	0.088	-0.232	0.406	
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	Teaching pronunciation is boring.	2.364	37	*.023	0.384	0.051	0.711	
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	2.636	37	*.012	0.428	0.093	0.757	236
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	5.295	37	* < .001	0.859	0.482	1.228	
Teaching pronunciation does not generally result in permanent changes	Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	4.259	37	* < .001	0.691	0.333	1.042	
Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	Teaching pronunciation is boring.	1.918	37	.063	0.311	-0.017	0.635	
Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	2.420	37	*.021	0.393	0.060	0.720	

Measure 1	Measure 2	t	df	p	Cohen's d	95% CI for Cohen's d	
						Lower	Upper
Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	5.696	37	* < .001	0.924	0.539	1.301
Pronunciation is better taught by native speakers.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	4.342	37	* < .001	0.704	0.345	1.056
Teaching pronunciation is boring.	- I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	0.371	37	.713	0.060	-0.259	0.378
Teaching pronunciation is boring.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	3.337	37	*.002	0.541	0.197	0.879
Teaching pronunciation is boring.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	1.592	37	.120	0.258	-0.067	0.580
I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	- Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	2.168	37	*.037	0.352	0.022	0.677
I am not good at teaching pronunciation because I have not received enough specific training.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	1.014	37	.317	0.164	-0.157	0.484
Pronunciation teaching does not work with low-level students.	- Pronunciation teaching is only effective with highly-motivated students.	-2.665	37	*.011	-0.432	-0.762	-0.097

Note. * $p < .05$. The paired-sample t-tests that showed statistical significance are highlighted in bold.