

From Nativeness to Intelligibility: A Longitudinal Self-Study on the Evolution of Pronunciation Pedagogy in TEFL

ABSTRACT:

Over the course of several decades, pronunciation teaching within a TEFL program at a public university in Mar del Plata, Argentina, has undergone a gradual transformation. This self-study examines the pedagogical shifts that accompanied this process, transitioning from an early emphasis on native-like accuracy to a more intelligibility-focused approach. Throughout these years, a range of methodologies have been implemented, including task-based pronunciation teaching (TBPT), research-led activities (RLAs), the multimodal assessment task (MAT), and self-assessment strategies. These innovations supported the development of learner autonomy, contributed to more robust pronunciation skills, and helped create stronger connections between theoretical instruction and classroom practice. In later pedagogical stages, the PFIAP model was introduced, providing a structured framework that guided learners from perception to independent production. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was also incorporated to help students explore diverse linguistic contexts, emphasizing pronunciation's role in global communication. Using an Action Research (AR) framework, this study enabled ongoing reflection and refinement of instructional strategies. Findings support the effectiveness of research-informed, learner-centered approaches. Future studies could investigate the sustained impact of task-based and multimodal instruction, the role of ICC in developing pronunciation flexibility, and how the PFIAP model functions across different learning environments. This study emphasizes AR's role in refining teaching practices and offers insights for educators and researchers committed to innovative, evidence-based pronunciation instruction.

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1. Introduction

Pronunciation teaching has evolved significantly, moving from traditional methods focused on native-like accuracy to contemporary approaches emphasizing intelligibility and communicative adaptability. Historically, instruction was guided by the nativeness principle, where success was measured

by how closely learners approximated native speech (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This method often relied on imitation and repetition (Abercrombie, 1991). However, research shows that effective communication depends on intelligibility rather than native-like pronunciation (Levis, 2005), as long as an accent does not hinder understanding (Munro & Derwing, 1995). These findings led to a shift from accent reduction to fostering intelligibility across diverse multicultural communicative contexts (Byram, 2021; Sifakis, 2004). This longitudinal self-study examines the evolution of pronunciation instruction in a TEFL program, focusing on the shift from native-like goals to an intelligibility-oriented approach. It explores the use of task-based learning (TBL), multimodal assessment, and reflective practice to enhance learner autonomy and pronunciation proficiency.

It also explores how elements of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) can be meaningfully incorporated into teaching practices, alongside the use of the PFIAP model, to enhance pronunciation instruction and support clear communication in linguistically diverse settings. Framed within an action research (AR) methodology (Burns et al., 2022), this study also reflects on the author's professional trajectory, from student to teaching assistant to course leader, illustrating how pronunciation pedagogy has evolved alongside shifts in linguistic and educational paradigms (Burns, 2010). This article first provides a theoretical overview of the evolving approaches to pronunciation teaching, particularly those that have shaped, or been shaped by, the author's own pedagogical experience. Building on this foundation, it then documents the author's journey through action research, detailing pedagogical shifts and instructional adjustments implemented in response to emerging challenges. Finally, it discusses the broader implications for pronunciation instruction to prepare learners for effective participation in international and intercultural communicative contexts.

2. Background

The field of pronunciation instruction has evolved significantly over the last few decades, shifting from traditional approaches focused on native-like accuracy to communicative, learner-centered methods emphasizing intelligibility and intercultural competence (Levis, 2018). This shift mirrors wider developments in how language learning is understood, how teaching goals are set, and how English is used and perceived in today's global world (Baker, 2015).

2.1 From Native-Like Accuracy to Intelligibility

In the 1960s and 1970s, pronunciation instruction was dominated by the Audiolingual Method, grounded in behaviorist and structuralist principles. This method relied on repetition, mimicry, and memorization, aiming for native-like pronunciation (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The Nativeness Principle (Levis, 2005) guided this approach, with an emphasis on segmental features such as vowels and consonants. Achieving native-like accuracy was considered essential, and accent reduction was often the primary goal (Abercrombie, 1991).

The advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s and 1980s marked a shift in focus from rigid accuracy to greater emphasis on fluency, meaningful communication, and learner interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This shift brought greater attention to suprasegmental features, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, which came to be recognized as critical components of intelligibility in spoken English (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Low, 2015). The Intelligibility Principle (Levis, 2005) gradually replaced the Nativeness Principle as researchers such as Derwing and Munro (2005) demonstrated that learners could maintain an accent while still being easily understood.

Abercrombie (1991) was one of the earlier voices to argue that aiming for native-like pronunciation was unnecessary, and proposed intelligibility as a more realistic and pedagogically sound goal. Building on this perspective, Munro and Derwing's (1995) seminal study helped clarify key distinctions between intelligibility (whether the message is understood), comprehensibility (how easily it is understood), and accentedness (the degree to which speech diverges from native-speaker pronunciation patterns). Their findings demonstrated that learners could be highly intelligible despite noticeable accents, shifting pronunciation teaching toward communicative effectiveness rather than accent elimination.

2.2 Task-Based Pronunciation Teaching

As English increasingly served as lingua franca (ELF) among non-native speaker interactions (Jenkins, 2000; Luchini & Kennedy, 2013), the focus of pronunciation teaching began to move away from native-like norms. Levis (2005) captured this shift by formally advocating for intelligibility as the primary goal, marking a turning point in the field by the early 2000s. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) gained prominence during this period, integrating pronunciation into meaningful communicative tasks (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998).

Initially, TBLT emphasized fluency and accuracy in communicative settings, but pronunciation remained overlooked. It was not until 2004–2005 that TBLT principles were systematically incorporated into pronunciation teaching (Luchini, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Luchini & Chiusano, 2009). Luchini's (2005a) study demonstrated that embedding pronunciation within real-world tasks improved learning outcomes, challenging the traditional, decontextualized approaches that had long dominated the field.

In his studies, Luchini (2005b, 2006) further refined this perspective in which he explored the impact of task-based instruction on the development of pronunciation skills, highlighting the benefits of communicative, task-driven activities. This approach reinforced the need to integrate pronunciation instruction into a broader communicative curriculum (Luchini & Chiusano, 2009), marking a significant departure from repetitive drill-based methodologies.

2.3 Awareness, Attention, and Pronunciation Learning

Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis played a key role in pronunciation pedagogy, asserting that learners must consciously notice linguistic features to acquire them. This theory influenced pronunciation instruction by promoting activities that heighten learners' awareness of segmental and suprasegmental features, thereby improving intelligibility (Schmidt, 1995).

Ullman (2001, 2004) theorizes that language acquisition involves two complementary systems - a declarative system for lexical storage and a procedural system for rule-based grammar, each contributing differently to L2 learning. According to his model, explicit focus on phonological features helps transition knowledge from declarative (conscious) to procedural (automatized) memory. In pronunciation learning, this means that targeted awareness activities may facilitate the gradual internalization of prosodic features.

2.4 Technology and Pronunciation Instruction

The integration of technology into pronunciation teaching in recent years has opened up new possibilities for promoting learner autonomy and personalized instruction. Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT), mobile applications, AI-driven tools, and speech recognition software provide learners with real-time feedback, enabling independent practice (Levis, 2018).

Pennington (2021) highlights the transformative role of technology in tailoring pronunciation instruction to individual learner needs. By incorporating automated feedback and interactive exercises, these tools support a more flexible and self-directed approach to pronunciation learning, complementing traditional classroom instruction.

Pennington (2021) also underscores the shift away from native-speaker norms, advocating for pronunciation models that prioritize intelligibility and accommodate diverse English varieties. Her work aligns with the growing emphasis on pronunciation's role in global communication, reinforcing the need for flexible, adaptable instruction.

2.5 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Pronunciation Teaching

Challenging traditional, native-speaker-oriented models, Baker (2015) examines how ICC and ELF intersect, arguing that such models fall short in preparing learners for the realities of intercultural communication. In response, he calls for the integration of ICC into language education to equip learners with the necessary skills to communicate effectively in multilingual contexts (Luchini, 2024b).

Moving beyond native-speaker norms, Sifakis (2004) calls for a shift toward an English as an International Language (EIL) perspective in pronunciation instruction, which prioritizes intelligibility and inclusivity. This approach encourages learners to develop sensitivity to intercultural communication and become aware of the diverse English varieties they may encounter in real-world interactions.

2.6 Action Research in Pronunciation Teaching

Action research (AR) is a participatory and reflective methodology designed to address practical challenges in specific educational contexts, making it particularly effective in pronunciation teaching (Burns, 2010). Through this process, educators may systematically identify areas in need of improvement (Allwright, 1997; Burns et al., 2022), implement context-specific interventions, and critically reflect on their impact to refine pedagogical practices and support student learning outcomes (Burns, 2009, 2010). Given its cyclical nature of action and reflection (Faikhamta & Clarke, 2010), AR is well-suited for studies that seek to refine pedagogical approaches continuously.

This longitudinal study adopts AR for three main reasons. First, it allows the researcher to respond directly to challenges in pronunciation teaching, and thus facilitates the transition from traditional methods to approaches integrating ICC. Second, the spiral nature of AR supports continuous observation, implementation, and adjustment of instructional strategies to align with classroom realities (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Finally, AR empowers educators to enhance teaching methods that draw on both intelligibility-focused and intercultural approaches, so that pedagogical decisions remain evidence-based and responsive to students' needs (Burns et al., 2022; Cohen et al., 2011). Table 1 outlines the steps taken in this AR process and illustrates their role in implementing pedagogical changes and guiding decisions in pronunciation instruction within the context of this self-study.

Table 1

Steps taken in the AR Process for Teaching Pronunciation

| Step | Description |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Identifying the puzzle area | Identifying challenges in teaching practice: Shifting from nativeness-oriented approaches to intelligibility in pronunciation instruction, integrating theory with practice to enhance free speech production, preparing students for intercultural communication, and training them in research to inform their future teaching practices. |
| Planning the action | Developing interventions to address the challenge, such as activities that connect theoretical concepts with real-world pronunciation use. |

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| Implementing the action | Applying the planned interventions in the classroom, allowing students to practice pronunciation in various communicative contexts while engaging in research-led activities to support their learning. |
| Observing the outcomes | Monitoring the effects of the intervention by collecting data on student performance, feedback, and classroom interactions. |
| Reflecting on the process | Evaluating the intervention's success and determining if modifications are needed, leading to further cycles of action and refinement. |

Note. Author's own work

This cyclical framework ensures that pronunciation instruction evolves dynamically, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Through continuous planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, AR fosters an adaptable and responsive learning environment (Burns et al., 2022).

Complementing the AR design, the adoption of a longitudinal perspective enhances the study's capacity to trace developmental patterns over time. Longitudinal research is particularly valuable in pronunciation studies because it captures the incremental and often non-linear nature of L2 phonological development (Nagel, 2021). It also accounts for individual variation, providing a more thorough understanding of how both learners and the teacher himself evolve throughout the process. By adopting a longitudinal perspective within the AR cycle, this study offers a richer view of how instructional changes may shape learners' intelligibility and intercultural adaptability over time. It also brings into focus the evolving role of the teacher, whose own pedagogical trajectory unfolds alongside that of the students.

3. Methodology

3.1 Context and Participants

The present AR was carried out in the context of Oral Discourse II (ODII), a one-semester course focused on suprasegmental phonology, offered in the second year of an English Teacher Education program at a public university in Mar del Plata, Argentina. ODII, which builds on the segmental phonology foundation from the first year, focuses on stress, rhythm, and intonation. It consists of 8 weekly hours and is taught by four instructors specializing in theoretical foundations, phonological discourse analysis, free speech and reflective tasks, and reconstruction tasks to refine pronunciation.

This longitudinal self-study involved both student teachers and the author, who led the ODII course. Between 1989 and 2024, River Plate Spanish-speaking students aged 19-27, with English proficiency levels ranging from B2 to C1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, were enrolled in ODII. The author, a native Spanish speaker and English teacher with extensive experience in pronunciation instruction, traced his progression from student to assistant to course leader, offering reflections grounded in personal practice that contributed to understanding the evolution of pronunciation teaching approaches.

3.2 Overview of challenges and future directions

This section introduces Table 2, which outlines the pedagogical trajectory of the teacher-researcher, serving as both the foundation and the central driving force of this self-study and AR project. This AR study traces key experiences from 1989 to 2024, each characterized by distinct pedagogical approaches and outcomes. To illustrate the evolution of teaching practices more clearly, these experiences have been divided into stages, each covering specific time periods.

Throughout these stages, reflective practice and self-assessment guided continuous adjustments in teaching methods (Dickerson, 1989; Sardegna, 2022). Although no formal records, such as pre- and post-

test results, exist from the earliest phases, reflective insights, along with teaching materials and course documentation, have been central to reconstructing and reporting findings throughout this research trajectory. This progression led to the adoption of TBL, followed by the integration of a CARC into ODII, the incorporation of RLAs, the MAT, the PFIAP model and ultimately, the inclusion of ICC in pronunciation teaching.

Table 2

Evolution of Pronunciation Teaching and Pedagogical Stages

| Pronunciation Teaching Evolution | Stage (Date & Role) | Pronunciation Teaching Approach | Main Factors Triggering Change | Main Features & Results |
|---|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Audiolingual Method (1960s-1970s) - Nativeness Principle (Levis, 2005) | Stage I: 1989-1991 (Student) | Audiolingual Method; Native-like pronunciation (O'Connor & Arnold, 1961) | Recognized gaps in spontaneous speech production | Focus on segmental accuracy, mimicry, phonetic transcription, use of RP ¹ model. No formal data, but students struggled with intelligibility. |
| Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (1980s-1990s) - Emphasis on suprasegmental features (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) | Stage II: 1991-1994 (Assistant) | Continuation of traditional approach | Noticed limited transfer of pronunciation skills to spontaneous speech | Repetition drills did not improve fluency; recognized need for a communicative shift. |
| Discourse Intonation & Prosody Awareness (1990s) - Shift towards meaning-based pronunciation teaching | Stage III: 1995-1996 (Assistant) | Introduction of Discourse Intonation (Brazil et al., 1980); Pilot study with Bradford (1988) | Exposure to Discourse Intonation approach at a conference | Emphasis on meaning and prosodic functions. Students reported increased awareness of intonation functions. |
| Discourse Intonation Implemented (Late 1990s) - Revised pronunciation models | Stage IV: 1996-1997 (Assistant) | Discourse Intonation fully adopted (Brazil, 1997) | Positive pilot test feedback and need for more communicative pronunciation training. | Simplified phonetic-tonemic dictations, increasing pass rates but reducing challenge. Adjustments aimed to raise difficulty, boost motivation, and ensure sustained learning. |
| Blended Attitudinal & Discourse-Based Models (Late 1990s) - Incorporating functional prosody | Stage V: 1997-1999 (Assistant) | Blended Attitudinal Approach + Discourse Intonation: User-friendly approach | Need to balance segmental and suprasegmental training | Adjusted dictations, enhanced engagement with intonation patterns. More students passed oral assessments, but |

¹ Traditionally linked to educated speakers from southern England, Received Pronunciation (RP) represents the standard accent of British English. Defined exclusively by its phonological features, RP is classified as an accent rather than a dialect itself, as it does not affect grammar or vocabulary (Roach, 2009).

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| | | for teaching intonation ² | | spontaneous application remained a challenge. |
| Task-Based Learning (TBLT) Emerges (2000s) - Focus on meaningful communicative tasks | Stage VI: 2000-2002 (Assistant) | User-friendly approach (Allwright, 1984); Spontaneous production added | Recognized need for spontaneous speech practice | Limited focus on form (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Sheen, 2002), emphasis on meaning. Increased fluency, but accuracy still an issue. |
| Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Formalized (2002-2006) - Pronunciation training embedded in real-world tasks | Stage VII: 2002-2006 (Assistant) | TBLT (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003) | Research on effectiveness of task-based learning | Pronunciation learning embedded in communicative tasks. Pre/post-test results showed moderate pronunciation improvement ($p = 0.04$). |
| Traditional vs. Communicative Methods Compared (2007) - Evaluating different methodologies | Stage VIII: 2007 (Course Leader) | Return to traditional drills and RP models for comparison | Need for comparative study | Pre-post comparative study showed traditional drills resulted in less improvement in spontaneous speech. |
| ELF Awareness (2008-2012) - Expanding global intelligibility models | Stage IX: 2008-2012 (Course Leader) | Lingua Franca Core introduced (Jenkins, 2000); Maintained traditional elements; Introduction of Communicative Awareness-Raising Component (CABC). | Growing awareness of ELF principles and the need for pronunciation training beyond native-like models. | Traditional controlled exercises supplemented with ELF-based awareness. CABC increased awareness of intelligibility and global varieties. |
| Expansion of Communicative and Awareness-Raising Tasks (2013-Present) - Research-driven pronunciation instruction | Stage X: 2013 (Course Leader) | Refinement of Communicative and Awareness-Raising Tasks | Research findings on intelligibility and ELF | Research-based pronunciation analysis, focus on intelligibility (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Pre/post-tests confirmed significant pronunciation awareness improvement ($p = 0.007$). |
| Refinement of the CABC (2017-2019) | Stage XIII: 2017-2019 (Course Leader) | CABC refined with research-led tasks and exposure to English varieties | Need for balanced curriculum. | CABC expanded to include research tasks on intelligibility, comprehensibility, and exposure to different accents. Increased student engagement in pronunciation learning. |

² The user-friendly approach to teaching English intonation, coined and created by the ODII instructors at the time, integrates Discourse Intonation (Brazil, 1997) with the Attitudinal Approach (O'Connor & Arnold, 1961). It simplifies the use and meanings of intonation patterns while maintaining a level of challenge that fosters engagement, enabling learners to intuitively grasp pitch, stress, and rhythm in alignment with ODII objectives.

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|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Remote Learning & Multimodal Assessments (2020-2021) - Digital tools & independent learning | Stage XIV: 2020-2021 (Course Leader) | Remote learning shift; Introduction of Multimodal Assessment Task (MAT) (Luchini, 2024) | COVID-19 pandemic required new teaching approaches | Increased self-assessment, independent reflective learning. |
| Hybrid Learning & Self-Monitoring (2022-2023) - Blended approaches for flexible learning | Stage XV: 2022-2023 (Course Leader) | Hybrid model; Refinement of the MAT | Increased reflective and communicative engagement with pronunciation | Hybrid instruction; Enhanced self-monitoring and reflective tasks. |
| ICC Integration (2024-Present) - Expanding pronunciation pedagogy | Stage XVI: 2024 (Course Leader) | PFIAP model; Integration of ICC; Focus on pronunciation adaptability in global settings | Staged-pedagogical model, emphasis on global communication needs | A 5-stage instructional model grounded in scaffolding principles; emphasized global intelligibility, cultural adaptability in pronunciation teaching. Ongoing data collection; preliminary results suggest enhanced ICC awareness. |

Note. Author's own work

After analyzing Table 2, which outlines the stages, characteristics, and changes introduced in ODII, the next section will explore some of the most impactful innovations that appear to have shaped pronunciation instruction over time, particularly within the author's context and based on his experience. This discussion aims to provide an overview of how these developments may have contributed to the gradual refinement of pronunciation teaching, potentially enhancing both intelligibility and instructional effectiveness in this specific setting.

4. Discussion: Key Takeaways and Their Impact on Pronunciation Instruction

4.1 Task-Based Pronunciation Teaching (TBPT) (2002-present)

TBPT was introduced in 2005 (Luchini, 2005a, 2005b, 2006) as a novel approach since, until that time, Task-Based Learning (TBL) had only been applied to grammar and vocabulary instruction. Recognizing the potential of TBL to enhance pronunciation learning, this method was developed to integrate pronunciation practice into communicative tasks. The innovation was triggered by students' persistent pronunciation difficulties, particularly in suprasegmental features, which indicated the need for more dynamic, communicative methodologies. As a result of the positive outcomes observed with this new approach, a component bearing these same features was implemented shortly after its introduction, further reinforcing the communicative focus of pronunciation instruction. A typical class following this approach consists of the following steps:

1. **Exposure:** Learners listen to native and non-native English speakers using target pronunciation features.
2. **Noticing:** Students identify key pronunciation patterns through guided exercises.
3. **Controlled Practice:** Structured drills are introduced in context-based tasks.

4. **Communicative Tasks:** Learners engage in meaningful interactions using pronunciation features.

5. **Reflection and Feedback:** Students analyze their performance and receive targeted feedback.

Results showed a 75% improvement in suprasegmental awareness and fluency, with students reporting greater confidence in oral production. Qualitative feedback highlighted enhanced motivation and increased self-awareness of pronunciation errors. The pedagogical implications suggest that task-based approaches enhance both fluency and accuracy by embedding pronunciation practice into communicative contexts, making it an effective alternative to traditional methods.

4.2 Communicative Awareness-Building in Pronunciation Instruction (CABC) (2008-2012, Revised in 2017-2019)

The CABC emerged as a direct result of the new approach devised in 2005 (Luchini, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). Most of its features were adapted to be taught as a dedicated block within the class, providing an additional perspective on pronunciation instruction. This innovation sought to build upon the principles of TBPT by incorporating explicit awareness-raising strategies, encouraging students to self-monitor and reflect on their pronunciation patterns (Sardegna, 2011).

The main features of this component included metacognitive training, self-assessment tasks, guided pronunciation journals, and analytical listening exercises. Students engaged in reflective activities aimed at helping them identify personal pronunciation challenges, track their progress, and develop autonomous learning strategies (Luchini, 2012). Incorporating these activities facilitated a more intentional and conscious approach to pronunciation learning, a fact that enabled students to better understand their phonological patterns and enhance overall intelligibility (Luchini, 2015).

4.3 Research-Led Activities (RLAs) in Pronunciation Teaching (2013-present)

RLAs were introduced in response to the need for greater exposure to diverse English accent varieties, including both native and non-native models. This pedagogical strategy aimed to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application while integrating teaching and research. Through the analysis of varied speech samples, students were able to develop a more detailed understanding of pronunciation, particularly in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility (Luchini & Alves, 2021; Luchini & Galante, 2024a). The procedure followed in the RLAs included:

1. **Listening to International Speakers:** Students listened to recorded conversations between non-native English speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
2. **Transcription Exercise:** They transcribed the conversations using specialized software, focusing on intelligibility and comprehensibility issues.
3. **Identifying Communication Breakdowns:** Students analyzed instances where communication was affected by pronunciation issues.
4. **Categorizing Phonological Features:** Using Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core (LFC) model, they classified pronunciation errors into segmental and suprasegmental categories.
5. **Presentation and Reflection:** Students presented their findings, linking their analysis to theoretical concepts and reflecting on how pronunciation affects global communication.

Results demonstrated significant gains in students' analytical skills, with 85% reporting that RLAs enhanced their ability to critically assess pronunciation. Additionally, statistical analysis showed that students who engaged in research-based tasks improved their phonological awareness by 40%. Qualitative feedback indicated increased engagement and interest in pronunciation as an academic field.

4.4 The MAT (2020-present)

The MAT was incorporated as a response to the need to balance different types of awareness: qualitative and quantitative (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010). Over time, I observed that while students were able to use technical terms correctly and define them accurately, they often struggled to grasp their real communicative value and meaning. This gap in understanding highlighted the necessity of integrating both types of awareness into pronunciation instruction. The MAT emerged as a space to bridge this gap, allowing students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application and foster a deeper comprehension of pronunciation in real-world communication (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010). This approach incorporates self-assessment, production tasks, and multimodal resources, allowing students to evaluate their pronunciation performance holistically (Luchini, 2024a; Luchini & Galante, 2024b). The procedure in the MAT follows these steps:

1. **Listening and Analysis:** Students watch a model speaker and analyze pronunciation features.
2. **Self-Recording:** They record themselves mimicking the speech sample.
3. Comparative Evaluation: They compare their recordings with the model, identifying areas for improvement.
4. **Peer Feedback:** Students exchange feedback with peers on their pronunciation.
5. **Final Reflection:** They submit a self-assessment report reflecting on their learning process.

Results indicated a 90% increase in learner confidence, with 78% of students showing measurable improvement in prosody and rhythm. However, some students expressed the need for additional practice in prosodic features. Qualitative feedback suggested that students found MAT to be engaging and effective in identifying their strengths and areas for improvement (Luchini & Galante, 2024b).

4.5 The PFIAP Model in Pronunciation Instruction (2024-present)

The PFIAP model (Perception, Focalization, Internalization, Application & Production) is a structured pedagogical framework designed to facilitate language acquisition through a sequential and scaffolded process (Luchini, 2023, 2024). Rooted in cognitive and constructivist learning theories, this model emphasizes active student engagement, scaffolded instruction, and reflective learning. It was developed to address the need for a more structured approach to teaching pronunciation, particularly stress and rhythm (Cutler, 2015; Low, 2015), ensuring that learners progress from perception to autonomous production. Traditional pronunciation instruction often failed to guide learners effectively through phonological development, leading to fragmented understanding and limited practical application. To bridge this gap, the PFIAP model follows five interconnected stages:

1. Perception students watch/listen to authentic speech samples, focusing on input comprehension while being implicitly exposed to stress and rhythm patterns;
2. Focalization using their interlanguage and available resources, learners analyze prosodic features, comparing English rhythm and stress patterns with those of their L1;
3. Internalization students are introduced to rules governing stress in English, are engaged in controlled practice activities, including loud reading and guided repetition;
4. Application students engage in pronunciation-focused communicative tasks with peer and teacher feedback;

5. Production learners create and record their own spoken projects, demonstrating mastery of stress and rhythm.

When implemented in ODII, the PFIAP model led to notable improvements in students' ability to recognize and produce stress and rhythm patterns. A related study by Luchini and Galante (2025), conducted in a bilingual secondary school, focused on teaching the role and importance of stress and rhythm in English as key elements for conveying meaning. In that context, 85% of learners reported increased awareness of these suprasegmental features, while 80% acknowledged their complexity but recognized their communicative value. Further evidence of the model's effectiveness comes from Berardo and Luchini (2024), who examined its impact on teaching contrastive nuclear stress to EFL learners in another private secondary institution. Both studies were carried out in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and showed significant learners' gains. In the latter, results revealed notable improvements in accurate stress placement in the experimental group, particularly in non-final positions (from 11.29% to 54.56%, $p < .001$; Cohen's $d = .95$). Together, these findings highlight the PFIAP model's value as a research-informed framework that enhances phonological awareness, supports prosodic development, improves learner performance, and makes abstract concepts more accessible through a structured and systematic instructional approach.

4.6 Integrating ICC into Pronunciation Instruction (2024-present)

Responding to the increasing need for learners to communicate effectively across diverse linguistic contexts, pronunciation instruction began to incorporate elements of ICC to support the development of context-sensitive pronunciation skills. Traditional pronunciation instruction often prioritized native-like accuracy, neglecting the reality of ELF. The ICC component aimed to enhance students' adaptability and awareness of different accents while promoting intelligibility over native-like pronunciation (Luchini, 2024b). This innovation was implemented through a structured sequence of pronunciation tasks, ensuring that students could develop both phonological and intercultural awareness in a cohesive manner. The activities followed were:

1. Attitude Questionnaire: Students completed a questionnaire to explore their attitudes and behaviors toward accented speech and ICC.
2. Speech Sample Assessment: Five recorded speech samples, each representing a distinct accent, were evaluated by students, who rated them according to criteria of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and ICC.
3. Video Presentations: As part of the task, students produce a 2-3-minute video presentation in which they analyzed an assigned speech sample using theoretical frameworks concerning intelligibility, comprehensibility, and ICC. Their analysis also included reflections on L1 to L2 transfer issues.

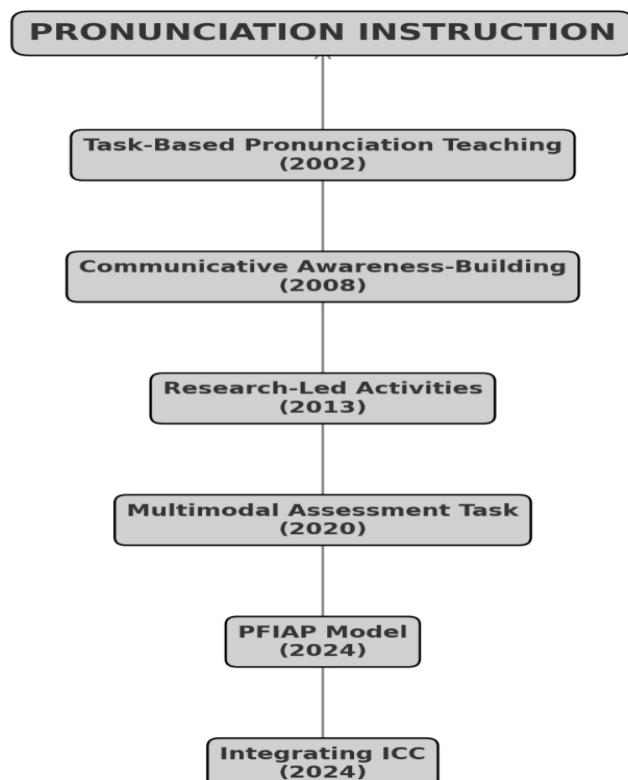
Statistical results showed that 85% of students demonstrated increased adaptability in pronunciation when engaging in cross-cultural interactions. Qualitative feedback revealed that students felt better equipped to navigate multilingual settings and adjust their pronunciation based on context. The pedagogical implications emphasize the importance of incorporating ICC into pronunciation instruction, ensuring that students are equipped to communicate effectively in multilingual environments (Luchini, 2024b). Future research could explore the role of tele-collaboration in fostering ICC within pronunciation instruction, examining how virtual exchanges with speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds contribute to students' adaptability and pronunciation development (Dugartsyrenova & Sardegna, 2018).

The trajectory of pronunciation instruction in ODII reveals a continuous evolution towards more communicative, research-informed, and pedagogically structured approaches. The innovations introduced at different stages of the course ranging from task-based instruction to the integration of intercultural communicative competence, have significantly contributed to enhancing students' pronunciation skills by fostering both theoretical awareness and practical application. Statistical and qualitative data demonstrate that these approaches have led to measurable improvements in supra-segmental awareness, intelligibility, and learner confidence, while also promoting self-regulated learning (Dickerson, 1989). By progressively refining the instructional framework, these innovations have not only addressed existing pedagogical gaps but have also set a foundation for sustainable, adaptable pronunciation instruction. Moving forward, the integration of pronunciation with broader communicative competencies, such as intercultural awareness, will remain crucial for equipping students to handle authentic language use in diverse, real-world contexts.

This ongoing pedagogical transformation highlights the importance of adopting flexible, research-informed approaches that effectively integrate pronunciation teaching with the changing demands of language learners in an increasingly globalized world.

Chart 1 illustrates the evolution of pronunciation instruction by mapping key innovations in a hierarchical structure, showing how each approach has influenced subsequent developments. At the core is TBPT, which laid the foundation for later methodologies, including the CABC, RLA, the MAT, the PFIAP model, and the integration of ICC.

Figure 1. Hierarchical Evolution of Innovations in Pronunciation Teaching



Note. Author's own work

a Figure created using OriginPro (OriginLab Corporation, 2024)

By organizing these innovations chronologically, the chart highlights their cumulative impact, demonstrating how pronunciation instruction has progressively incorporated communicative, research-based, multimodal, and intercultural dimensions. This visualization provides a clear understanding of how each innovation has shaped and enhanced pronunciation teaching, making it more dynamic, structured, and adaptable to real-world communication needs.

5. Pedagogical Implications

The most important takeaways from this longitudinal self-study underlies key shifts and innovations in pronunciation teaching that may have significant pedagogical implications. These findings can serve as a reference for other educators and researchers looking to improve pronunciation instruction in diverse learning contexts.

1. Shift from nativeness to intelligibility – The transition from a native-like pronunciation model to an intelligibility-based approach represents a fundamental change in pronunciation pedagogy. Rather than focusing on accent reduction, the study emphasizes the importance of making learners comprehensible in real-world communication. This shift aligns with global communicative needs and the role of ELF.
2. TBPT enhances learning – Integrating pronunciation instruction within communicative tasks leads to more meaningful and effective learning. The findings suggest that pronunciation instruction is most effective when integrated with broader communicative and contextualized learning practices, rather than approached in isolation.
3. Metacognitive and self-assessment practices empower learners – Self-assessment, guided pronunciation journals, and analytical listening exercises play a crucial role in pronunciation learning. Encouraging learners to reflect on their pronunciation progress enhances their autonomy and ability to self-correct, leading to more sustained improvements over time.
4. RLAs foster awareness of pronunciation in global communication – Exposure to different English accents and the exploration of intelligibility and comprehensibility issues in different speech samples help learners become more adaptable communicators. This approach broadens students' understanding of pronunciation and moves beyond traditional native-speaker benchmarks, preparing them for real-world linguistic diversity.
5. MATs improve pronunciation development – The introduction of the MAT, which involves self-recording, peer feedback, and comparative analysis, leads to higher learner engagement and significant pronunciation gains. Allowing students to evaluate their own and others' pronunciation fosters greater awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement.
6. The PFIAP model provides a structured framework for pronunciation Learning – The five-stage model (Perception, Focalization, Internalization, Application, Production) offers a clear pathway for developing pronunciation skills systematically. The findings suggest that scaffolding pronunciation instruction through structured phases enhances learners' ability to internalize and apply suprasegmental features effectively.
7. ICC enhances pronunciation adaptability – Integrating ICC into pronunciation instruction helps students become more aware of different accents, enhance their capacity to adapt their speech patterns according to varying communicative contexts and interlocutor needs. The findings show that training students to analyze speech samples with varied accents increases their adaptability and intercultural awareness.

8. Pronunciation instruction should be dynamic and research-informed – The study highlights the importance of continuous innovation and reflection in pronunciation teaching. By integrating TBPT, the MAT, RLAs, and ICC, pronunciation instruction becomes more effective, engaging, and applicable to real-world communication.

Pronunciation teaching must move beyond static, native-speaker-centered approaches to embrace intelligibility, self-regulated learning, and intercultural awareness. These findings provide a research-backed foundation for improving pronunciation instruction and can be applied in various teaching contexts to enhance both learner confidence and communicative effectiveness.

6. Conclusions

In this longitudinal self-study, the integration of TBPT, the MAT, RLAs, and the PFIAP model played a central role in enhancing learners' suprasegmental awareness, autonomy, and communicative effectiveness. Moreover, the incorporation of ICC further enriched pronunciation instruction by fostering greater adaptability in multilingual communication settings. The implementation of AR has been pivotal in this transformation, as it has enabled systematic reflection, cyclical pedagogical refinements, and the advancement of pedagogical practices grounded in empirical research. By capturing both the challenges and achievements of pronunciation pedagogy, AR has supported continuous professional growth and contributed to narrowing the divide between theoretical research classroom implementation. Future research would benefit from examining the sustained effects of task-based and multimodal pronunciation teaching on learners' overall communicative competence. Furthermore, the exploration of the role of ICC in pronunciation learning across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts could offer deeper insights into its effectiveness. To ensure that pronunciation pedagogy remains dynamic, learner-centered, and in line with the evolving demands of global communication, educators and researchers should continue to engage in reflective, research-led teaching, and use AR as a tool for continuous refinement and innovation.

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