

University of Wollongong

Research Online

Faculty of Social Sciences - Papers (Archive)

Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities

2015

'My perspective changed dramatically': A case for preparing L2 instructors to teach pronunciation

Michael Burri

University of Wollongong, mburri@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/sspapers>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

'My perspective changed dramatically': A case for preparing L2 instructors to teach pronunciation

Abstract

Over the past two decades, pronunciation has slowly regained some of its former prominence in the second language (L2) classroom. Yet, despite this renewed interest, L2 instructors often perceive it to be one of the most challenging areas to teach. Specialists, therefore, suggest that preparing pronunciation teachers is a much needed area in the field of language teaching, but little is known about the education of pronunciation instructors and its potential impact on prospective teachers. This article reports on a qualitative case study in which questionnaires, focus groups, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were employed to obtain insights on the impact of a postgraduate pronunciation subject on 15 student teachers' cognition (beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and knowledge) about pronunciation pedagogy. Findings revealed that the subject had a notable effect on the development of participants' cognition about pronunciation instruction and its goal. Group work/discussions and comparisons of accents increased student teachers' awareness about the value of non-native English varieties and accents, which in turn facilitated a change in participants' beliefs that the objective of pronunciation instruction should not be accent elimination. The article concludes with a discussion about implications for L2 teacher educators and language instructors teaching English pronunciation in their classrooms.

Keywords

teach, pronunciation, perspective, my, changed, dramatically, case, preparing, l2, instructors

Disciplines

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Burri, M. (2015). 'My perspective changed dramatically': A case for preparing L2 instructors to teach pronunciation. *English Australia Journal: the Australian journal of English language teaching*, 31 (1), 19-37.

'My perspective changed dramatically': A case for preparing L2 instructors to teach pronunciation

MICHAEL BURRI

University of Wollongong

Over the past two decades, pronunciation has slowly regained some of its former prominence in the second language (L2) classroom. Yet, despite this renewed interest, L2 instructors often perceive it to be one of the most challenging areas to teach. Specialists, therefore, suggest that preparing pronunciation teachers is a much needed area in the field of language teaching, but little is known about the education of pronunciation instructors and its potential impact on prospective teachers. This article reports on a qualitative case study in which questionnaires, focus groups, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were employed to obtain insights on the impact of a postgraduate pronunciation subject on 15 student teachers' cognition (beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and knowledge) about pronunciation pedagogy. Findings revealed that the subject had a notable effect on the development of participants' cognition about pronunciation instruction and its goal. Group work/discussions and comparisons of accents increased student teachers' awareness about the value of non-native English varieties and accents, which in turn facilitated a change in participants' beliefs that the objective of pronunciation instruction should not be accent elimination. The article concludes with a discussion about implications for L2 teacher educators and language instructors teaching English pronunciation in their classrooms.

Introduction: Pronunciation instruction and teacher cognition

Being able to communicate intelligibly is generally regarded as critical to the success of today's global economy. Such success depends on effective communication between non-native speakers (NNS) of English who are now required to interact frequently with other NNSs as well as with native speakers (NS) for business purposes. Consequently, pronunciation has regained some of its former prominence over the past two decades (Jenkins, 2004), and specialists now propose that the goal of pronunciation teaching¹ should not be accent elimination because accented speech does not impair intelligibility (Munro, 2003; Thomson, 2014). The general attitude,

therefore, appears to be gradually 'shifting towards greater acceptance of non-native Englishes as possible pedagogical goals' (Litzenberg, 2014, p. 19). Yet, irrespective of this resurgence in interest in pronunciation and English varieties, for second language (L2) instructors pronunciation remains one of the most challenging areas to teach (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Macdonald, 2002; Setter & Jenkins, 2005). Reasons associated with why pronunciation teaching is challenging encompass a range of factors, including instructors' lack of confidence, inability to address pronunciation systematically, and uncertainty about what aspects of pronunciation to teach and how to use textbooks and materials in their classrooms effectively (Baker, 2011a). In addition, if English pronunciation is taught in L2 classrooms, the focus is mostly on segmentals (consonants and vowels) as suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm, intonation) are frequently viewed as difficult to teach (Breitkreutz, Derwing, & Rossiter, 2001; Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Urzúa, 2013; Wahid & Sulong, 2013).

These findings are somewhat surprising as experts argue for a balance between segmentals and suprasegmentals in contemporary pronunciation instruction (Grant, 2014), and various research has shown that teaching segmentals and/or suprasegmentals can result in noteworthy improvement of L2 learners' pronunciation (Couper, 2003; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Hahn, 2004; Saito & Lyster, 2012; Varasarin, 2007). Nevertheless, teachers' challenges are understandable, given that relatively few TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) programs include subjects on pronunciation pedagogy (Foote et al., 2011). To improve pronunciation practices, therefore, experts are stressing a need for increased educational opportunities for L2 instructors (Murphy, 2014b). However, as minimal research exists in this particular context, little is known about how teachers are equipped to teach pronunciation and what factors impact the development of second language teacher cognition (hereafter SLTC) – defined here as teachers' beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and knowledge (S. Borg, 2006) – about pronunciation pedagogy.

In one of the few studies of the cognition development of L2 pronunciation instructors, Baker (2011b) explored the development and relationship between cognitions held by five experienced English language teachers and their actual pronunciation teaching practices. Her work established that postgraduate education can have a substantial influence on SLTC about pronunciation pedagogy. However, the practitioners' cognition change was reported several years after their studies were completed and does not show us how cognition develops in the context of pronunciation teacher preparation. Hence, the present research involves a close analysis of student teachers' cognition growth during a postgraduate subject in order to provide recommendations for enhancing the preparation of pronunciation instructors and for pronunciation teaching in L2 classrooms.

Second language teacher education and student teacher cognition

With the global expansion of the English language, the importance of and demand for second language teacher education (SLTE) has increased worldwide (Burns & Richards, 2009). Nonetheless, research conducted in SLTE programs has generated inconclusive findings in terms of the impact teacher preparation has on the cognition of prospective teachers. Some studies show that, contrary to the aims of SLTE promoting cognition growth and teacher-learning (Richards, 2008), student teachers' cognition may change little over the duration of a program because pre-existing beliefs and knowledge are often resistant to change (M. Borg, 2005; Peacock, 2001; Urmston, 2003). Other research, however, provides evidence that education can facilitate change in student teachers' beliefs and knowledge (Farrell, 2009; Johnson, 1994; Wyatt, 2009; Wyatt & Borg, 2011). Busch's (2010) research, for example, shows that course content and the inclusion of experiential activities (e.g., tutoring L2 learners) are factors that positively affect the cognition development of student teachers. Additionally, Kurihara and Samimy (2007) found that an in-service program offered in North America had positive effects on the beliefs and practices of eight Japanese teachers of English in that the program fostered participants' awareness of teaching communicatively and, at the same time, assisted them in gaining confidence in their teaching practices.

Overall, SLTE and its impact on SLTC appears to be a complicated and multifaceted research area. The ambivalence of research findings can be attributed to the complexity of researching teachers' mental lives, and the experiences, objectives and well-established and often conflicting beliefs that student teachers bring to a program (S. Borg, 2006). Evidence also exists that prior L2 learning and early teaching experiences are powerful factors that often facilitate or limit the amount of content (e.g., knowledge of pronunciation and teaching practices) learned during educational programs (Baker, 2011b). An additional aspect worth mentioning is that although teacher preparation may result in initial behavioural changes, such as the adoption of particular teaching techniques, changes in beliefs and views about teaching might only occur to a limited extent because of the powerful influences that program requirements (e.g., standards and assessment) typically exert on student teachers (S. Borg, 2009; Gutierrez Almarza, 1996).

Significance of this study

Given the somewhat inconclusive and inconsistent evidence available on the impact of SLTE on student teacher cognition, this study will be of relevance to L2 teacher educators, and, at the same time, make an important and timely contribution to a growing body of literature on SLTC.² As discussed above, an important limitation

of previous work is that only minimal knowledge exists about the preparation of pronunciation instructors and how their cognition develops. Hence, by addressing this research gap, the study should yield valuable insights into the development and potential change of postgraduate students' beliefs and knowledge about pronunciation pedagogy and its goal. This in turn should assist L2 teacher educators in equipping future teachers with skills and knowledge necessary to teach pronunciation effectively. The findings should also affirm whether Murphy's (2014b) proposition of making more opportunities available to prepare L2 instructors to teach English pronunciation is justified. Therefore, the research questions to be explored in this paper are as follows:

- To what degree, if any, does a postgraduate subject on L2 pronunciation pedagogy have an impact on the development of student teacher cognition about pronunciation instruction?
- To what extent does the subject have an impact on student teachers' attitude towards the goal of pronunciation instruction?
- What factors facilitate this impact?

Methodology

Participants

The group of 15 participants in the study consisted of six Japanese, four Australian, three Hong Kong Chinese, one Pakistani and one Iranian student teacher. Seven had some teaching experience and only five of these seven teachers had experience teaching pronunciation, but all of them were either native speakers or highly proficient in English. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' demographic details.

Table 1

Background of Participants

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender; age range	First language	Second language studied (years)	Pronunciation teaching experience; type of teaching experience (years)
Koki	M; 20-25	Japanese	English (10)	No teaching experience
Hiro	M; 20-25	Japanese	English (10)	No teaching experience
Mai	F; 31-35	Japanese	English (10)	No; high school in Japan (6)
Aoi	F; 26-30	Japanese	English (15)	Yes; high school in Japan (5)

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender; age range	First language	Second language studied (years)	Pronunciation teaching experience; type of teaching experience (years)
Mio	F; 41-45	Japanese	English (10)	Yes; high school in Japan (6)
Ken	M; 36-40	Japanese	English (10)	Yes; high school in Japan (14)
Rio	M; 26-30	Persian	English (7)	Yes; tertiary level in Iran (8)
Hayley	F; 20-25	Cantonese	English (since kindergarten)	No teaching experience
Mark	M; 20-25	Cantonese	English (since kindergarten)	No teaching experience
Kirsten	F; 20-25	Cantonese	English (since kindergarten)	No teaching experience
Grace	F; 20-25	English	Indonesian (1)	No teaching experience
Charlotte	F; 20-25	English	Spanish (2)	No teaching experience
Alizeh	F; 31-35	English, Urdu	Italian (since age 11)	No teaching experience
Lucy	F; 46-50	English, Dutch	German (since high school)	No; high school and primary school in Australia (20)
Georgia	F; 56-60	English	French (4)	Yes; tertiary level in Australia (15-20) and primary school in Australia (2)

Key: M = male; F = female

Pronunciation subject

A 13-week postgraduate subject on pronunciation pedagogy served as the research site. As Table 2 shows, the subject consisted of weekly topics covering a range of areas of English pronunciation. Each lesson began with a theoretical session in which the lecturer covered the weekly topic in depth. The second part of the lesson was typically dedicated to pedagogical applications of some of the newly learned theoretical principles. These pedagogical sessions often encompassed a strong focus on having the student teachers personally experience some of the pronunciation teaching techniques. The last part of the lesson was typically spent on analysing speech samples to help teacher candidates improve their overall phonological awareness.

Although the overarching aim was for student teachers to learn about the most prominent areas of contemporary pronunciation pedagogy depicted in Table 2, one of the distinct objectives of the subject was to help students obtain an appreciation

of the existence of different English varieties and accents (EVA), along with the view that the goal for pronunciation teaching should be to accommodate such variety. An important component of increasing student teachers' awareness and appreciation of EVA was the inclusion of Kachru's (1985) concept of inner, outer and expanding circles to reflect the use of World Englishes. However, instead of allocating a separate module covering the goals of pronunciation instruction and EVA, throughout the semester the lecturer advocated the value of incorporating EVA in L2 classrooms, and regular discussion sessions were held in which students were able to share and reflect on EVA-related issues and subsequent implications for L2 teaching. Overall, the subject comprised a collaborative approach to learning how to teach pronunciation.

In regards to required readings and assessment components, *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010) was featured as the core text, and three assessment tasks were implemented in the subject. For the first task the students had to provide an overview of pronunciation practices commonly used in their home country; the second task was an in-class quiz focusing on technical aspects of English; and the third task consisted of a linguistic analysis of an L2 learner speech sample including subsequent recommendations for how to address the learner's pronunciation needs.

Table 2
Overview of Pronunciation Subject

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Overview of pronunciation instruction	
2	Teaching pronunciation through multimodalities	
3	Vowels (1)	
4	Vowels (2)	Task 1 due
5	Syllables, word stress and phrasal stress	
6	Tone units, sentence stress and rhythm	
7	Intonation	
8	Consonants (1)	
9	Consonants (2) and connected speech	
10	Teaching techniques	Task 2: In-class quiz
11	Fluency development and integrating pronunciation into the curriculum	
12	Pronunciation and spelling	
13	Presentations	Task 3 due

Role of the researcher

The researcher did not teach or participate in any of the lessons in order to remain unobtrusive and to carefully observe the study participants (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, at the beginning of the semester, it was clearly communicated to everyone that the researcher was not involved in any of the assessment in the subject. This was discussed explicitly in the hope to establish good rapport with the participants and, at the same time, gain their trust so that they might share their perspectives, thoughts, ideas, beliefs and concerns freely (Merriam, 1998).

Research design and data analysis

The study featured a case study design. Since questionnaires on their own generally provide insufficient data for studies investigating SLTC (S. Borg, 2006), several instruments were used and the data triangulated: (1) a questionnaire – consisting of multiple-choice and open-ended items – distributed by the lecturer of the subject at the beginning of the semester to collect information; (2) four focus groups, with each group consisting of 3–5 participants and meeting three times (Weeks 5, 9, and 12) during the semester; (3) weekly classroom observations of the 3-hour lecture; (4) a second questionnaire – consisting of only the multiple choice items of the first questionnaire – administered at the end of the semester; and (5) a 30- to 45-minute semi-structured interview with seven participants. Purposeful sampling was applied to obtain the perspective of seven of the 15 participants on particular themes that were identified during the semester. The observations were videotaped, while the focus groups and semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded with a digital voice recorder. Upon the completion of the semester, all of the qualitative data were transcribed verbatim. Using Nvivo 10, themes were coded according to a set of pre-existing codes that Baker (2011c) developed in her doctoral research examining SLTC and pronunciation pedagogy. As new themes were discovered, the set of codes was expanded, grouped into categories and then arranged into conceptual displays to make the qualitative data more manageable (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings and discussion

Impact of pronunciation subject on student teachers' cognition development

The focus group, observation and interview data collected in this study clearly demonstrated that the subject had a substantial impact on the participants' cognition development. Yet, the degree of cognition change reported by the participants varied noticeably. A statement from one of the participants, Lucy, for example, encapsulated the overall effect the subject had on her cognition about pronunciation instruction:

I think [pronunciation is] very important and I've gone completely from the beginning of the course thinking, 'What's this about? I don't understand this! Is this really important?' to 'I think this actually really is quite critical'. (Final interview)

Taking the subject allowed Lucy to realise the critical importance of pronunciation in language teaching. Inevitably, the impact on learning about pronunciation may have been reinforced because of her limited knowledge about the topic prior to commencing the semester. During an in-class discussion held in Week 11, Rio echoed Lucy's sentiment about not knowing much about pronunciation before the start of the subject:

. . . before having this class with you, I didn't know this much about intonation. Yeah, I know you got intonation, rising, falling, that's it, and what is the stress, just this, but about prominence and other things I didn't know. Now that I just come here I learn more things. The things that I was teaching [my students] was something like this, but unconsciously. I was just teaching them but I didn't know that what I'm teaching them. After passing this course, now I'm aware to different specific details about pronunciation and we can control it. (Observation/Week 11)

As can be gleaned from Rio's quote, he had gained experience teaching pronunciation in his home country, even though he possessed limited understanding of how to teach it. His awareness of pronunciation, however, increased over the course of the semester. In fact, enabling participants to gain new perspectives on a variety of issues related to pronunciation teaching seems to have been one of the most prominent outcomes of the subject. When asked about the most valuable part of the semester, Aoi explained that her perception of English varieties had changed as a result of taking the subject:

For me, getting new perspectives on pronunciation is the most valuable thing because I think I mentioned it before, but when I was in Japan, American or British English was the role model for us and most of the students and most of the Japanese English teachers think so. So, they never think about the variation of Englishes . . . but when I came here I realised we don't need to speak like native speakers . . . and we don't be ashamed of my very Japanese accented English . . . and, fortunately, we have many classmates from other countries so communicating is enough, even [if] some part, some pronunciation is not so perfect. So, this is the most valuable thing for me. My perspective changed dramatically. (Focus Group 2, Interview 3)

Attaining a new perspective on English varieties and, at the same time, coming

to realise that her own pronunciation does not need to be native-like in order to communicate with her fellow student teachers reflects the impact the subject had on Aoi's cognition, and quite possibly on her self-perception of being a legitimate English speaker. A similar change in perspective was also expressed by Grace when she talked about the benefits of meeting postgraduate students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds:

It kind of changed my views, yeah, because I didn't really know much about this topic (i.e., English varieties) or anything. So it did definitely change my opinion on everything. Well not everything, I did have a good opinion but it just changed my opinion on what should be taught and how things should be taught . . . (Final interview)

Studying alongside student teachers from different countries allowed Grace to experience different English accents and varieties, a process which shaped and changed her views and understanding of pronunciation pedagogy and its goals. The influence these social interactions had on student teachers' cognition is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section. Nonetheless, the statements included above clearly show that the subject did indeed have a powerful impact on these postgraduate students' SLTC development. Hence, the study provides evidence that preparing pronunciation instructors is not only important (Murphy, 2014b) but also effective in terms of developing student teachers' beliefs and knowledge about pronunciation instruction.

Attitude of student teachers towards the goal of pronunciation instruction

The second part of this study focused on the impact of the subject on participants' attitude towards the goal of pronunciation teaching, and on factors that facilitated this impact. An analysis of the two questionnaires revealed that student teachers' perception of the goal of pronunciation instruction changed over the course of the semester.³ As is evident in the third column of Table 3, in the first questionnaire 38.4% of participants indicated that 'maybe' the goal of pronunciation teaching was the elimination of an accent, whereas in the second questionnaire participants' beliefs shifted to either agreeing or disagreeing with no one selecting the 'maybe' category, indicating that participants' cognition about this matter had solidified at the end of the semester.⁴

The first two columns of Table 3 provide a potential explanation for the change in participants' thinking. Based on the second questionnaire, it appears that, although several participants still had their doubts about non-native English varieties, as a result of taking the pronunciation subject, some of them began to question the

legitimacy of a native-speaker model and started to see the value of English varieties used in outer circle (e.g., Englishes spoken in Nigeria, Singapore or India) and expanding circle (e.g., Englishes used in Japan, Russia or Vietnam) contexts (Kachru, 1985). This emerging perspective most likely affected some of the participants' perceptions of the pedagogical goal of pronunciation instruction.⁵ Hiro's comment made towards the end of the semester, for example, lends support to this proposition in that he expressed concerns about teaching a native model of English pronunciation to Japanese students:

But if we emphasise too much like native model maybe [the students] become unwilling to speak because [they think] 'oh, very Japanese sound' so it's kind of risky to focus on the perfect model too much. They will hesitate to pronounce . . . (Focus Group 1, Interview 3)

Table 3
Areas of Impact

	L2 learners prefer to listen to outer circle English varieties		L2 learners prefer to listen to expanding circle English varieties		Goal of pronunciation teaching is accent elimination	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
Strongly agree/ agree	7.7% (1)		7.7% (1)		7.7% (1)	15.4% (2)
Maybe	23.1% (3)	53.9% (7)	15.4% (2)	53.9% (7)	38.4% (5)	
Strongly disagree/ disagree	69.2% (9)	46.1% (6)	76.9% (10)	46.1% (6)	53.9% (7)	84.6% (11)

Notes: Raw figures (number of participant responses) are in parentheses; Q1 = Questionnaire 1; Q2 = Questionnaire 2

It is worth noting that, as Table 4 shows, NS and NNS perceptions about outer and expanding circle English varieties changed. More specifically, although the NS category included one shift from agreeing with non-native Englishes to 'maybe' (see both NS Q1 columns), overall, NS and NNS beliefs slightly shifted from disagreeing to beginning to see some value (i.e., 'maybe') in outer and expanding circle English varieties (see NS and NNS Q2 columns).

Table 4

NS and NNS Perception of Outer and Expanding Circle English Varieties

	L2 learners prefer to listen to outer circle English varieties				L2 learners prefer to listen to expanding circle English varieties			
	NS		NNS		NS		NNS	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
Strongly agree / agree	25% (1)				25% (1)			
Maybe	25% (1)	75% (3)	22.2% (2)	44.4% (4)		100% (4)	22.2% (2)	33.3% (3)
Strongly disagree /disagree	50% (2)	25% (1)	77.8% (7)	55.6% (5)	75% (3)		77.8% (7)	66.7% (6)

Notes: Raw figures (number of participant responses) are in parentheses; NS = native English speaker; NNS = non-native English speaker

This positive shift in cognition of NSs and NNSs is particularly intriguing as Murray (2003) suggested that NSs tend to be more accepting of non-native English varieties than NNSs, as findings generated by the present study suggest that participants' attitudes can be influenced by instruction, regardless of their first language (L1).

The next question then must be asked as to why the pronunciation subject had an influence on participants' perception of English varieties and accents (EVA), especially since the subject did not contain a specific module dealing with this particular issue. The fact that accent is central to our identity (Goodwin, 2014; Jenkins, 2007) may provide a plausible explanation. In other words, taking a pronunciation subject that included content on English varieties and different accents may have allowed at least some of the participants to experience a sense of belonging and self-worth, and therefore their perception changed towards accepting non-native varieties of English. However, an examination of the qualitative data revealed an alternative perspective. Figure 1, derived from focus group, observation and interview data, shows that group work/discussions and accent comparison stimulated the participants' awareness of EVA. Because these factors were intricately intertwined in that they encompassed characteristics of EVA, group work/discussions and comparisons of the lecturer's and participants' accents increased student teachers' awareness of EVA, which then led to a change in beliefs about the goal of pronunciation instruction.

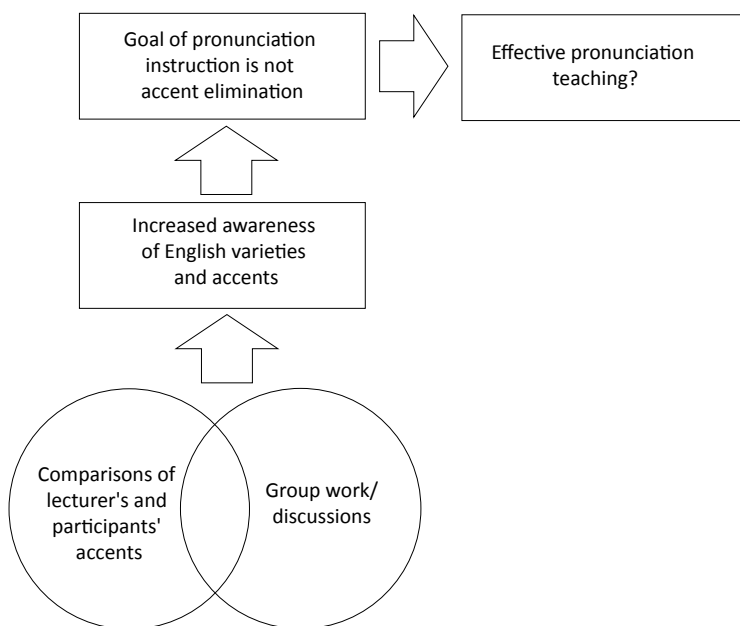


Figure 1: Factors stimulating awareness of EVA

As depicted in Figure 1, the lecturer's use of group work seemed to have played an important role in facilitating participants' awareness of EVA. Because the class consisted of student teachers from several different countries, the lecturer provided students with frequent opportunities to construct knowledge collaboratively, and, at the same time, receive ample exposure to various Englishes and accents, a process that evidently fostered EVA awareness. Ken, for example, expressed his appreciation about having classmates from different countries because it allowed him to experience different accents:

Yeah, lots of international students in the class and they have, even native speakers, they have their own accent and that one is a good experience for me.
(Focus Group 2, Interview 3)

Besides group work, regular discussions and comparisons of accents appeared to have been a pivotal factor in facilitating participants' awareness of EVA. On many occasions throughout the semester, the lecturer would ask the Australian students to pronounce certain words, or the NNSs to enunciate words typically pronounced by L2 learners of their native language. At other times, the lecturer would use her Canadian accent and compare it with Australian English, American English and several non-native English varieties. All of this exposure – in conjunction with group work with students from diverse countries – allowed the class to draw comparisons between native and non-native English varieties, a procedure that enabled many

of the participants to become increasingly aware of EVA. Importantly, this newly gained awareness appears to have then contributed to a change in most of the student teachers' beliefs about the goal of pronunciation instruction not being accent elimination.

Implications for L2 instructor preparation and L2 teaching

The findings of this study have important implications for teacher educators preparing L2 teachers. First and foremost, given that increased awareness of EVA likely facilitated a change in some of the participants' perceptions about the goal of pronunciation instruction, teacher educators should consider the powerful influence EVA can have on their student teachers' cognition and therefore follow Celce-Murcia's (2014) and Murphy's (2014a) recommendation of raising prospective teachers' cognisance of the reality that English consists of many native and non-native varieties. As the findings showed, this could be achieved by incorporating tasks, such as using group work and explicit discussion sessions, requiring student teachers to reflect on accent-related issues. The notion of English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2007) could also be incorporated into education contexts. ELF is not 'a single lingua franca norm to which all users should conform' (Jenkins, 2007, p. 19), and it promotes mutual intelligibility between interlocutors of different first languages; hence, utilising the concept would not only provide opportunities to nurture future teachers' sensitivity to EVA, but most likely heighten their awareness and appreciation of the fact that attaining a native-like accent is an unrealistic and even unfair goal for most L2 learners (Murphy, 2014a). Not having to strive for something unrealistic may then help L2 teachers address their students' pronunciation-related needs. At the same time, it might reduce the pressure on prospective L2 teachers, which could be particularly liberating for non-native teachers lacking confidence in their ability to teach English (Butler, 2007; Kourieos, 2014).

Whether a newly gained perspective on the goal of pronunciation instruction and an increased appreciation of EVA will lead to effective pronunciation teaching (see Figure 1 above) is at this point, of course, speculative and subject to further research. The study, however, provided promising evidence that the preparation of pronunciation teachers can result in positive cognition development, and that including and embracing the rich diversity of EVA in a postgraduate subject on pronunciation pedagogy is likely to contribute to student teachers being well-informed and equipped effectively. These outcomes may pave the way to improved pronunciation teaching practices in L2 classrooms.

Consequently, the study findings also have important implications for L2 instructors teaching pronunciation in their classrooms. The fact that participants became more

accepting of non-native English accents/varieties during the subject suggests that the inclusion of EVA might not be as problematic as L2 teachers without such preparation may think it is. The findings, therefore, corroborate Murphy's (2014a) proposition that non-native accents should be included in L2 learning contexts.⁶This would likely facilitate L2 teachers' understanding that having an accent does not automatically mean for a speaker to be unintelligible (i.e., not possible to understand) (Munro & Derwing, 1995); instead, intelligible speech needs to be the target to which L2 learners should aspire so they can make themselves understood in English more easily (Couper, 2006). Focusing on non-native accents as aspirational models in L2 classrooms may also hold the advantage of learners not needing to feel pressured into attaining native-like pronunciation. As research has demonstrated, some L2 learners may, in fact, be unwilling to strive for a native model in the fear of facing social pressure because of their ethnic group affiliation (Gatbonton, Trofimovich, & Magid, 2005).

When working with English accents, L2 teachers need to understand that accents are often connected to a speaker's identity in complex, social and psychological means (Goodwin, 2014). Thus, when teaching in contexts where English is spoken as an L1 (e.g., in Australia, Canada, UK, USA, New Zealand), L2 instructors should embrace diverse accents and focus on intelligible pronunciation in their classrooms in order to help learners avoid suffering social consequences and potential discrimination due to their accents (Derwing & Munro, 2014; Munro, 2003). Emphasising intelligibility over native-like pronunciation would, at the same time, disempower the unrealistic and often sociopolitical notion of accent elimination (or reduction) being the solution to solving L2 students' pronunciation challenges (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Thomson, 2014). The study's implications for L2 instructors are, therefore, inevitably connected to implications for preparing instructors to teach English pronunciation in their classrooms, providing an even stronger argument for the importance and inclusion of a pronunciation pedagogy subject in TESOL programs.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that the pronunciation subject had an impact on student teacher cognition; nonetheless, the change in cognition reported in this paper might have been a reflection of the particular constellation of participants in the study. Since more NNSs than NSs took part in the research, and most of the participants had experience with learning an L2 and had been exposed to different accents in the past, this group of participants may have been particularly receptive to learning about accents. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand how pronunciation teachers are prepared and how their cognition develops during a

subject on pronunciation pedagogy. Also, even though the present study indicated that the perception of NSs and NNSs changed towards the usefulness of non-native English varieties in L2 classrooms, future research needs to be conducted to examine whether differences exist between NS and NNS cognition development. Findings derived from this kind of research would most likely reveal new perspectives that would contribute to effective pronunciation teacher preparation. Nevertheless, this present research makes an important contribution to the fields of SLTE and SLTC in that it provides some valuable insights into the cognition development of postgraduate student teachers learning to teach pronunciation. Given the positive cognition transformation several of the participants experienced over the course of the pronunciation subject, this study not only lends support to Murphy's (2014b) claim that preparing pronunciation instructors can be effective, but it provides compelling evidence that the preparation of pronunciation teachers should be given a more central role in SLTE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Amanda Baker, Honglin Chen and the two reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. I would also like to thank the student teachers who participated in this study.

REFERENCES

- Baker, A. A. (2011a). Discourse prosody and teachers' stated beliefs and practices. *TESOL Journal*, 2(3), 263–292.
- Baker, A. A. (2011b). ESL teachers and pronunciation pedagogy: Exploring the development of teachers' cognitions and classroom practices. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference, Sept. 2010*. (pp. 82–94). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.
- Baker, A. A. (2011c). *Pronunciation pedagogy: Second language teacher cognition and practice* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University, GA.
- Borg, M. (2005). A case study of the development in pedagogic thinking of a pre-service teacher. *TESL-EJ*, 9(2), 1–30.
- Borg, S. (2006). *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. London: Continuum.
- Borg, S. (2009). Language teacher cognition. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 163–171). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Breitkreutz, J., Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2001). Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(1), 51–61.
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (2009). Second language teacher education. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 1–8). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Busch, D. (2010). Pre-service teacher beliefs about language learning: The second language acquisition course as an agent for change. *Language Teaching Research*, 14(3), 318–337.
- Butler, Y. G. (2007). Factors associated with the notion that native speakers are the ideal language teachers: An examination of elementary school teachers in Japan. *JALT Journal*, 29(1), 7–40.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2014). Teaching English in the context of world Englishes. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 63–70). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning / Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J. (2010). *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Couper, G. (2003). The value of an explicit pronunciation syllabus in ESOL teaching. *Prospect*, 18(3), 53–70.
- Couper, G. (2006). The short and long-term effects of pronunciation instruction. *Prospect*, 21(1), 46–66.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2014). Accent and intelligibility: Cracking the conundrum. *Speak Out!*(50), 12–17.
- Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., & Wiebe, G. (1998). Evidence in favor of a broad framework for pronunciation instruction. *Language Learning*, 48(3), 393–410.
- Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2009). Critical reflection in a TESL course: Mapping conceptual change. *ELT Journal*, 63(3), 221–229.
- Foote, J. A., Holtby, A. K., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). Survey of the teaching pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 1–22.
- Foote, J. A., Trofimovich, P., Collins, L., & Urzúa, F. (2013). Pronunciation teaching practices in communicative second language classes. *The Language Learning Journal*, 1–16.

- Gatbonton, E., Trofimovich, P., & Magid, M. (2005). Learner's ethnic group affiliation and L2 pronunciation accuracy: A sociolinguistic investigation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 489–511.
- Goodwin, J. (2014). Teaching pronunciation. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 136–152). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning / Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Grant, L. (2014). Prologue to the myths: What teachers need to know. In L. Grant (Ed.), *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching* (pp. 1–33). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Gutierrez Almarza, G. (1996). Student foreign language teachers' knowledge growth. In D. Freeman & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 50–78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hahn, L. (2004). Primary stress and intelligibility: Research to motivate the teaching of suprasegmentals. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(2), 201–223.
- Jenkins, J. (2004). Research in teaching pronunciation and intonation. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 109–125.
- Jenkins, J. (2007). *English as a lingua franca: Attitude and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, K. E. (1994). The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of pre-service English as a second language teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10(4), 439–452.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and the literature* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kourieos, S. (2014). The knowledge base of primary EFL teachers: Pre-service and in-service teachers' perceptions. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(2), 291–300.
- Kurihara, Y., & Samimy, K. (2007). The impact of a U.S. teacher training program on teaching beliefs and practices: A case study of secondary school level Japanese teachers of English. *JALT Journal*, 29(1), 99–122.
- Litzenberg, J. (2014). Pre-service teacher perspectives towards pedagogical uses of non-native and native speech samples. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. doi: 10.1111/ijal.12084
- Macdonald, S. (2002). Pronunciation – views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3–18.

- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Munro, M. J. (2003). A primer on accent discrimination in the Canadian context. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20(2), 38–51.
- Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (1995). Foreign accent, comprehensibility and intelligibility in the speech of second language learners. *Language Learning*, 45(1), 73–97.
- Murphy, J. (2014a). Intelligible, comprehensible, non-native models in ESL/EFL pronunciation teaching. *System*, 42(0), 258–269.
- Murphy, J. (2014b). Teacher training programs provide adequate preparation in how to teach pronunciation. In L. Grant (Ed.), *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching* (pp. 188–224). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Murray, H. (2003). Swiss English teachers and Euro-English: Attitudes to a non-native variety. *Bulletin VALS-ASLA*, 77, 147–165.
- Peacock, M. (2001). Pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning: A longitudinal study. *System*, 29(2), 177–195.
- Phipps, S. (2007). What difference does DELTA make? *Research Notes*, 29, 12–16.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). Second language teacher education today. *RELC Journal*, 39(2), 158–177.
- Saito, K., & Lyster, R. (2012). Effects of form-focused instruction and corrective feedback on L2 pronunciation development of /ɹ/ by Japanese learners of English. *Language Learning*, 62(2), 595–633.
- Setter, J., & Jenkins, J. (2005). Pronunciation. *Language Teaching*, 38(1), 1–17.
- Thomson, R. (2014). Accent reduction and pronunciation instruction are the same thing. In L. Grant (Ed.), *Pronunciation myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching* (pp. 160–187). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Urmston, A. (2003). Learning to teach English in Hong Kong: The opinions of teachers in training. *Language and Education*, 17(2), 112–137.
- Varasarin, P. (2007). *An action research study of pronunciation training, language learning strategies and speaking confidence* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Victoria University, Melbourne.
- Wahid, R., & Sulong, S. (2013). The gap between research and practice in the teaching

of English pronunciation: Insights from teachers' beliefs and practices. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 21, 133–142.

Wyatt, M. (2009). Practical knowledge growth in communicative language teaching. *TESL-EJ*, 13(2), 1–23.

Wyatt, M., & Borg, S. (2011). Development in the practical knowledge of language teachers: A comparative study of three teachers designing and using communicative tasks on an in-service BA TESOL programme in the Middle East. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(3), 233–252.

ENDNOTES

¹The terms 'teaching' and 'instruction', as well as 'teacher' and 'instructor' are used interchangeably in this study.

²The study is part of the author's doctoral research exploring postgraduate student teachers' cognition development.

³It is important to note that two participants were excluded from the questionnaire analysis because they did not complete the second questionnaire.

⁴Although Aoi reported gaining a new appreciation of English varieties (see first section of findings), in the second questionnaire she agreed with the goal of pronunciation instruction being accent elimination (hence the shift to 15.4 percent in Q2). This inconsistency supports previous research showing that cognition change is often a complex process (M. Borg, 2005; Phipps, 2007).

⁵It should be noted that the two questions about non-native English varieties asked about L2 learners' listening preferences and not about student teachers' actual goal for pronunciation teaching and learning. Hence, it is possible that other factors contributed to participants' perception of accent elimination not being the objective of pronunciation instruction.

⁶Murphy (2014a) provides an excellent overview of tasks that L2 teachers may utilise to work with non-native speech samples.

Michael Burri is a PhD candidate in the School of Education at University of Wollongong. He has taught and conducted research in Australia, Canada and Japan in a variety of contexts, and his research interests include teacher education and pronunciation pedagogy.

mikeburri@gmx.net