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study of teachers' beliefs“

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# 1. Introduction

Pronunciation teaching is frequently considered to be a rather neglected aspect of English language teaching, and this seems to also be reflected in the comparatively modest amount of research into second language teaching and learning which has taken pronunciation as its focus (cf. Pennington & Richards 1986: 207, Brown 1991: 1, Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 2, Lightbown & Spada 2013: 68). Although this lack of research has been increasingly remedied in recent years, it likely remains the case that the amount of consideration given to matters of pronunciation in many language teaching situations is disproportionate to the importance of phonological acquisition and the integral role it plays in developing language competence.

In order to investigate this potential discrepancy, the primary aim of this thesis is to shed light on the current situation of pronunciation teaching as a curricular component of Austrian secondary schools (*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen*). There are many possible ways to approach this task, however, and whereas previous studies concerning pronunciation have focused primarily on second language learners and their processes of acquisition, this study instead looks to practicing teachers as agents whose views and beliefs determine the approach toward pronunciation taken in the classroom.

Since the present study seeks first and foremost to determine and analyze teachers' beliefs concerning pronunciation and pronunciation teaching, the second chapter of this thesis first introduces and explores the concept of teacher beliefs to the extent that it is helpful for the present study. This includes examining first the role of the teacher and their value in designing situations for learning, but also the beliefs they can hold, where these beliefs can come from, how they can be determined, and how they relate to teaching practice. This is still a relatively new area of inquiry, and research into teacher beliefs is likely to yield even more stimulating insights in the future.

The third chapter of this thesis seeks to provide the reader with an initial orientation in the field of pronunciation teaching as the beliefs investigated in the present study pertain to this area of language teaching in particular. It is not the intention of this thesis, however, to offer an exhaustive or comprehensive historical exposition of the topic, and thus a certain degree of brevity will have to be forgiven in this regard. The focus is placed therefore on the often-cited issue of pronunciation teaching's neglect in relation to other aspects of language teaching, its role throughout the history of professional language teaching, its significance for modern language teaching, and its place in the curricula of Austrian secondary schools.

In the following two chapters, issues central to the teaching of pronunciation are explored in greater detail. Chapter four investigates the matter of pronunciation models, their selection by instructors for teaching purposes, and the necessary degree to which students ought to approximate

them (in other words, goals for pronunciation teaching). Chapter five discusses technical aspects by examining particular techniques for teaching pronunciation as well as feedback techniques and processes.

With the theoretical framework for the present study having been provided in the previous chapters, the study itself is turned to in the following chapters. Chapter six outlines the methodological particulars of the present study, including discussion of the research question, the development of the research tool, and methods of analysis. Chapter seven then illustrates the obtained results within thematic categories. Finally, these results are subjected to additional analysis in chapter eight, where hypotheses are tested on the basis of the empirical data.

## 2. Teacher beliefs

The beliefs, views, and thoughts of teachers are central to the present thesis. In this chapter, therefore, justification will first be provided for the value of the teacher as a subject of study. Next, the nature of research into teachers' beliefs is briefly described and potential origins and sources of teachers' beliefs are discussed. Then, it is very briefly explained how the beliefs of teachers can be determined by researchers. Finally, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practice is addressed.

### 2.1 The value of the teacher

As previously mentioned, the present study attempts to analyze particular aspects of teacher cognition in relation to pronunciation teaching. There are many justifications for this particular focus on the teacher, but the fact most salient for the study at hand is that, as Devon Woods (1996: 1-2) has observed, any two teachers can facilitate vastly different learning processes in students despite making use of identical curricula or even lesson materials. In all likelihood most responsible for this divergence is the individual nature of the cognitions of the teachers involved. Simon Borg (2006: 1) defines this cognition in rather simple terms as being the compilation of “what language teachers think, know and believe” and points out that it is an area of research which has recently experienced increasing interest in conjunction with changing conceptions of the work of the language teacher. Woods (1996: x) has described this shift as a transition from “conceptualizing teaching only in terms of teaching methodology or teaching behaviours” to instead “understanding the cognitive dimensions of teaching and the ways in which beliefs, attitudes and experience shape teachers' classroom actions and perceptions”. In other words, teachers are beginning to be looked at increasingly as “active, thinking decision-makers who play a central role in shaping classroom events” instead of being seen as slavish automatons whose sole task is the enforcement of a particular curriculum (Borg 2006: 1). Especially in state-run public schools, each teacher must individually *interpret* a curriculum which has been legislated from above and translate this interpretation into actual concrete practice in the classroom. It is in this way that the daily learning experiences of millions of school-aged children are shaped worldwide. In summary, it is because of the highly influential role that teacher beliefs and cognitions play in the language learning processes of students that these beliefs warrant detailed investigation. The systematic investigation of these beliefs and cognitions will be addressed in the following section.



## 2.2 Research into teacher beliefs

Since teachers must be seen as performing the delicate and essential task of interpreting a curriculum and guiding students' learning experiences, it follows that it is worthwhile to investigate how they do so, if for no other reason than to determine how this process might be improved. Research into the cognitive processes of teachers began to be undertaken in the late 1960s and '70s and has already produced a rich and diverse assortment of concepts and terminology as well as fruitful intersections with related disciplines such as psychology and philosophy (Borg 2006: 35-39). Initial research, which was concerned with general education and later became known as "process-product research", was interested in teachers' thought processes and focused on determining the relationship between these and learning directly in order to maximize the success of the resultant learning "product" (Ryan 2004: 610). Since this initial aim of increasing teacher effectiveness, research into teacher beliefs has transformed and expanded to focus instead on "understanding teacher knowledge (used as an umbrella term for a range of psychological constructs), its growth and use" and plays an influential role in teacher education (Borg 2006: 35). In seeking to understand the nature of teacher cognition, researchers have attempted to ascertain, among other things, what teachers may have beliefs about, where these beliefs originate from, how they change over time, and how these beliefs are related to teachers' actual classroom behavior. Current answers to these questions will be addressed briefly in turn.

Borg (2003: 81) answers rather succinctly the question of what teachers have beliefs about by claiming simply that "teachers have cognitions about all aspects of their work". This explanation can of course be supplemented by stating that teachers may have beliefs about things as general as what it means to be a teacher or about the relative importance of a teaching subject for society. However, these beliefs can also be as specific as, to take an example from the field of language teaching, beliefs about the effectiveness of a particular technique in teaching the present perfect tense of English to a particular group of students. Importantly, teachers may also have beliefs about aspects of teaching of which they are also not consciously aware (cf. e.g. Borg 2011).

## 2.3 Sources of teachers' beliefs

The origin of teachers' beliefs concerning language teaching can be divided into three different sources, namely experiences made as a language learner prior to becoming a teacher, during teacher training, and finally while acting as a practicing teacher in the language classroom (Borg 2003: 86). According to Borg (2003: 86), "teachers learn a lot about teaching through their vast experience as learners," and the beliefs formed through this process become so fixed that they are "resistant to change even in the face of contradictory evidence". The consequence of this early formation of beliefs

and the resultant dominant role played by such beliefs is that the practice of any beginning language teacher will be primarily shaped by previous life experiences, and any knowledge acquired during teacher training or even while working as a practicing teacher will necessarily be forced to compete with these previously formed beliefs. In summary, “teachers’ prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualisations of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives” (Borg 2003: 88).

As already touched upon, the first significant challenge presented to beliefs formed during the course of previous experience as a language learner is the introduction of new knowledge and concepts which occurs during teacher education, most often as part of a university program. Such programs often contain elements including required reading, discussion, reflection exercises, or opportunities for practice teaching. For students with “inappropriate, unrealistic, or naive understandings of teaching and learning,” as Borg (2003: 88) claims students may have, teacher education is limited in what it may accomplish. Indeed some studies show that teacher education may only effect changes of a rather superficial nature in pre-service teachers (Borg 2003: 89). For example, students who had successful language learning experiences in school using a more traditional grammar translation method may, following teacher training, abandon this method in their teaching practice yet still feel that it is superior to a more communicative approach. At any rate, as Borg (2011: 378) demonstrates, teacher education works on multiple levels - not only can it provide future teachers with new knowledge which can be proceduralized, but through reflection exercises, beliefs can also be “made more apparent to teachers and assume a form that can be verbalized; teachers can learn how to put their beliefs into practice and also develop links between their beliefs and theory”. Thus it seems that the greatest effect that teacher training can achieve is to set the stage for further professional development during the next stage of belief formation by giving pre-service teachers the terminology and reflective ability to determine, express and articulate their beliefs precisely. These skills help teachers in training to truly become aware of their beliefs and make further reflection and revision possible, facilitating still further development.

The experience of working as a language teacher on a regular and professional basis repeatedly exposes the teacher to novel situations to which he or she will respond, as has been established, largely with respect to his or her teacher cognition, i.e. beliefs about language teaching. This process begins with the decision-making required during the stage of lesson planning, which necessarily involves interpretation of the curriculum, and is followed up naturally by the sort of improvisational teaching, or “departures from lesson plans” which, according to Borg (2003: 94) “are the result of constant interaction between teachers’ pedagogical choices and their perceptions of the instructional context, particularly of the students, at any particular time”. Despite the individual nature of teachers’ beliefs

and practices, this instructional context must also be recognized as playing an important and often limiting role in the work of many teachers, presenting them with challenging situations and complicating the practical realization of their beliefs. Borg (2003: 94) lists “parents, principals’ requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardised tests and the availability of resources” as potentially relevant contextual factors. Ultimately, therefore, the concrete actions of language teachers are informed and shaped by their beliefs, yet at the same time tempered by the influence of context. These actions themselves, however, provide teachers with additional, potentially belief-transforming experiences (Borg 2003: 95). In this way, a spiral of professional development is created in which teachers can, with proper reflection, continually improve their practice.

It is also important to note that further augmentation or revision of teachers’ beliefs that occurs during their service as teachers is not only of a practical nature, but can also be the result of consultation or consideration of sources of a more theoretical nature. For example, teachers can of course continue to read academic journals and books or take part in further education courses. According to research, however, such activities serve mostly to raise awareness in practicing teachers, whose beliefs are at this stage relatively fixed and resistant to change (Kamiya & Loewen 2014: 205). This awareness must not be underestimated, however, as any reflection requires awareness. Thus such activities can serve to increase the possibility of disciplined reflection and enable further revision and improvement of one’s teaching at a later stage.

## **2.4 Determination of teachers’ beliefs**

We have thus far seen what constitutes teacher beliefs, where they come from, and how they may change over time. But how, in the first place, can the views of teachers be determined so that researchers may, for example, track their development over time? To this end, a number of methods have been devised and implemented by researchers. Borg (2006: 168) divides these methods broadly into the four categories of “self-report instruments,” “verbal commentaries,” “reflective writing” and “observation”. Methods belonging to each of these four categories possess particular goals as well as inherent advantages and disadvantages. Self-report instruments, for example, aim to “measure teachers’ theoretical orientations, beliefs or knowledge about an aspect of language teaching” (Borg 2006: 168). As the method used in the present study is a questionnaire and thus a self-report instrument, the particular merits of this method will be investigated in greater detail in a later chapter of this thesis. According to Borg, verbal commentaries “elicit verbal commentaries about teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, practical theories and related mental constructs” (2006: 168). Reflective writing attempts to “elicit through writing tasks teachers’ perceptions of their experiences, beliefs and

knowledge of the concepts they associate with particular aspects of language teaching” (Borg 2006: 168). Finally, observation seeks to “collect descriptions of real or simulated planning and teaching which can be compared to previously stated cognitions and/or provide a concrete context for the subsequent elicitation of cognitions” (Borg 2006: 168). This last category is connected to an issue which at this stage warrants further attention - the matter of the relation between teachers’ elicited or stated beliefs and their actual behavior in the classroom.

## **2.5 Beliefs and practice**

The relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice is considerably complex. According to Borg (2003: 91), teachers’ cognitions exercise a “powerful influence on their practices,” but, as he later qualifies, “these do not ultimately always reflect teachers’ stated beliefs, personal theories, and pedagogical principles”. What is the reason for this discrepancy? As Borg explains in a later publication (2006: 40), this “lack of congruence between teachers’ observed practices and their explicitly stated beliefs has been attributed to the influence on teaching of the social, psychological and environmental factors which exist in schools and classrooms and which teachers may perceive as external forces beyond their control”. For example, in a study conducted by Simon Borg and Saleh Al-Busaidi, it was shown that institutional constraints played a major role in complicating the realization of teacher beliefs concerning the desirability of learner autonomy (2012: 287). Here it once again becomes essential to recognize that teachers most commonly operate neither in a realm of complete freedom nor within an institutional straitjacket. Rather, their teaching is always a more or less balanced composite of external limiting factors and internal convictions. As previously mentioned, for example, teachers are very often required to adhere to a particular curriculum. Exactly how this curriculum is interpreted in a very practical and everyday sense, on the other hand, is up to each teacher individually, and he or she will most likely interpret it in a manner influenced by his or her underlying beliefs about the language learning and teaching process.

However, there is also another important explanation for discrepancies between teacher beliefs and practices. Nobuhiro Kamiya, describing the findings of Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis’ 2004 study, claims that the “difference in the degree of mismatch between inexperienced and experienced teachers may be ascribed to the varying degree of proceduralization of technical knowledge that they have” (2014: 12). In other words, beginning teachers may have acquired, for example during their teacher education, a great deal of knowledge concerning language teaching, but they may have not yet had the time or opportunity to be confronted with circumstances and situations which allow, after reflection, this knowledge to be converted into routine practice. Though many might view a lack of congruence between the beliefs a teacher claims to have and his or her practice in the classroom as a

failure to perform or a lack of professional integrity, Kamiya encouragingly states that this “is a natural phenomenon and may even be a process during professional development, and thus, could be regarded as an opportunity rather than a fault or shortcoming” (2014: 13). The concept of a process seems indeed to describe the nature of the discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and practices quite well, since teachers acquire new knowledge as they teach, which then needs to be newly proceduralized, which will not occur at the same rate for any two teachers. Thus, if teachers continue to practice and thereby learn more about their profession, their practices will always be representative of a slightly earlier stage of their cognition.

## 2.6 Summary

To summarize, this chapter has sought to demonstrate first and foremost the value of studying the teacher as an important actor in the field of language teaching and learning. It has been shown that teachers play a vital role in the conception and execution of everyday learning experiences for language students all over the world. This is done to a large extent on the basis of beliefs which: (1) encompass all aspects of a teacher's work, (2) stem from three main sources (viz. experiences made as a language learner, during teacher training, and as a practicing teacher), and (3) possess plasticity or the capacity to change over time. Initially, beliefs are forged during early experiences as a student, but are then subsequently shaped by the process of teacher training and finally by experiences made as a practicing teacher. Various methods exist by means of which researchers can discover the content of teachers' beliefs. For the present study, the most important among these is the self-report instrument of the questionnaire. These beliefs as they are identified by such methods do not necessarily reflect actual teaching practice, however, as has been demonstrated. In the words of Kamiya (2014: 12), it is “better to call the relationship between stated beliefs and classroom practices fluid rather than fixed”. This is the result of both contextual limitations and the inherent nature of the process of learning to teach. The next chapter of this work will first examine issues of importance for the teaching of pronunciation before these will then be linked in the following chapter to the concept of teacher beliefs and their relevance for the present study.

### 3. Pronunciation in the ELT curriculum

Languages are complex, and teaching them is no less complex. Within any language system, various sub-systems compete for the attention of the learner, and teachers must therefore always determine which aspects to prioritize during the learning process. Pronunciation is only one among many other potential candidates for didactic focus, and, as this chapter describes, has often been neglected as a result. Following elaboration on this issue of neglect, the scientific studies of phonetics and phonology, along with the more didactically-oriented pursuit of pronunciation, will be placed into historical context. The last two sections expound on pronunciation's current importance in both modern language teaching in general and, more specifically, in the Austrian secondary school curriculum.

#### 3.1 The neglect of pronunciation teaching

It has often been stated that pronunciation is a generally disregarded aspect of language learning and teaching (e.g. Brown 1991: 1, Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 2, Jenkins 2000: 3, Kelly 2000: 13). This neglect manifests itself in various ways. Regarding institutional stances on pronunciation teaching, it has been claimed that many curricula, by virtue of their communicative orientation, do not pay much attention to matters of pronunciation (Jenkins 2000: 3). One explanation which has been put forward for this failure to reconcile pronunciation with a communicative approach to language teaching is the traditional view of pronunciation “as a component of linguistic rather than communicative competence or as an aspect of accuracy rather than of conversational fluency” (Pennington & Richards 1986: 207). This view has also been reflected by, in contrast to the abundance of materials available for teaching grammar communicatively, a practical dearth of communicatively-oriented pronunciation teaching materials. Teresa Pica, writing in 1984, described how “[c]urrent pronunciation materials thus offer nothing in the way of learner involvement in meaningful exchange and problem-posing tasks” (Pica 1984: 333). Another explanation proposed for the absence of pronunciation materials in textbooks written to be marketed internationally is the controversial issue of the model to be used for such materials. In order to circumvent the conflict altogether, it has been suggested, such textbooks “avoid explicit reference to phonology and leave it to the teacher's discretion and knowledge of local needs” (Hedge 2000: 269). Thus lacking support from both curricula and teaching materials, it should not be surprising that teachers also played a role in the neglect of pronunciation teaching in recent years.

Adam Brown (1991: 1) has described pronunciation as “an aspect of language which is often given little attention, if not completely ignored, by the teacher in the classroom”. In milder terms, Derwing & Munro (2005: 379) have described many teachers as being “reluctant to teach

pronunciation". This reluctance does not, however, prevent teachers from occasionally being compelled to address issues of pronunciation in the classroom, since, as will be shown later in this chapter, pronunciation is a vital component of effective communication. Nonetheless, it has been claimed that "when it is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to a particular problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being strategically planned" (Kelly 2000: 13). In other words, teachers seem to lack an understanding of the necessity of pronunciation training which would allow them to conceive a conscious and deliberate approach to the issue. According to Derwing & Munro, teachers have "limited knowledge about how to integrate appropriate pronunciation instruction into second language classrooms" (2005: 383). This should not be understood as a lack of interest in pronunciation, however. Very often, neglect of pronunciation teaching in the language classroom is the result of a corresponding neglect in teacher training. Derwing & Munro (2005: 389), for example, describe how the majority of teachers surveyed in a Canadian study claimed to have had received no training whatsoever in how to teach pronunciation. Consequently, though it is not uncommon for teachers to receive a certain degree of pronunciation training themselves, they are very likely to be severely under-informed concerning matters of pronunciation *instruction*. According to Derwing & Munro (2005: 389), "in many instances L2 instructors are apparently left to teach themselves how to address pronunciation with their students".

Along with policy-makers, textbook authors, teachers and teacher training programs, researchers have also shown a degree of neglect concerning the topic of pronunciation teaching, as expressed, for example, by the significant scarcity of pronunciation-related articles having been published in academic journals between 1975 and 1988 (Brown 1991: 2). Derwing and Munro have described how most research investigating second language skills has focused on matters of grammar or vocabulary rather than pronunciation (2005: 380). It is indeed quite probable that the frequent failure to incorporate pronunciation into communicate approaches to language teaching, as previously described, stems from this reliance on what Derwing and Munro (2005: 380) have referred to as "commonsense intuitive notions". They go on to argue that such a "complete reliance on anecdotal evidence and personal impressions in language pedagogy has serious drawbacks" and should thus be replaced by empirical studies capable of providing valid and replicable results (Derwing & Munro 2005: 380).

The severity of the situation described thus far has been deemphasized, it must be mentioned, by certain authors who see circumstances improving. Smit and Dalton, (2000: 229), for example, have claimed that "[i]n the 1990s the field of ELT saw a renewed interest in pronunciation" which could be determined by "a series of publications from various major publishers". According to Rodney H. Jones, "pronunciation teaching is experiencing a new resurgence, fuelled largely by the increasing awareness of the communicative function of suprasegmental features in spoken discourse"

(Jones 1997: 103). It would seem, however, that increased interest in pronunciation teaching, publication of pronunciation-related teaching guides, or even awareness of pronunciation's importance do not necessarily result in an improved standard of pronunciation teaching methods or materials. Jones (1997: 104) claims that:

... most commercially produced course books on pronunciation today present activities remarkably similar to the audiolingual texts of the 1950s, relying heavily on mechanical drilling of decontextualized words and sentences. While professing to teach the more communicative aspects of pronunciation, many such texts go about it in a decidedly uncommunicative way. The more pronunciation teaching materials have changed, it seems, the more they have stayed the same.

In regards to the particular situation of second language pronunciation instruction in Austrian secondary schools, it must be noted, at any rate, that textbooks currently in use have been found to be markedly lacking in their treatment of features of pronunciation (cf. Hasenberger 2012: 92). Additionally, students attaining their qualification at the University of Vienna to become teachers of English continue to receive only training in practical phonetics and oral communication skills, but not necessarily in the techniques of teaching pronunciation skills to their future students.

## **3.2 Phonetics and pronunciation teaching in historical context**

As the previous section has illustrated, pronunciation teaching has not always taken center stage in the teaching of modern foreign languages. At differing historical junctures, opinions have ranged from viewing pronunciation teaching and learning as a matter of primary importance in the teaching and learning of the target language to utter disregard, with teachers seeing it as a waste of valuable classroom time and teaching energy. In this section, the discussion of pronunciation teaching will be placed into its historical context and connections will be drawn to the birth of phonetics as a modern science. Additionally, the role allotted to pronunciation by the various methodologies, approaches, and trends which have sprung forth in the teaching of modern languages will also be examined.

### **3.2.1 Phonetics and pronunciation prior to the 19th century**

As indicated above, the study of the sounds of language and the related area of pronunciation teaching have received much attention through the years, with both fields now possessing venerable traditions. An embryonic interest in the sounds of language was doubtless present in the enterprise of creating the world's first alphabetic or phonemic scripts, of which the Greek adaptation of the Phoenician script beginning roughly around the middle of the 8th century BCE thus represents the first such enterprise (Swiggers 1996: 261-267). According to MacMahon's more reserved estimate, the "study of the analysis of speech sounds can be traced back to at least 500 BCE, to the work of certain Sanskrit grammarians" (MacMahon 2013: 105). From this point of departure in Ancient India,



which is conventionally attached to the personality of Pāṇini and his reference grammar *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, one sees interest in topics of pronunciation and phonetics appear in other areas of the ancient world such as Ancient China, where Sanskritic literature was studied by Buddhists, or Ancient Greece, where, as previously mentioned, there is evidence for “an intuitive sense of the phoneme by the originator(s) of the first alphabetic writing system for Greek” (MacMahon 2013: 108) but also aesthetic concerns related to public speaking. In Ancient Rome, for example, pronunciation was primarily linked to issues of rhetoric (MacMahon 2013: 108-109). The decline of the Classical civilizations represented a significant caesura for many intellectual traditions, and phonetics was no exception.

A revival of European interest in phonetics would first take place a millennium later in the separate cases of the Icelandic scholar known as the First Grammarian and the English monk known as Orm, both of whom lived and worked in the 11th century and sought to improve the orthography of their native vernacular languages (MacMahon 2013: 111). Medieval developments can also be found in Arab and Persian phonetics. The Persian grammarian Sībawayhi initiated the study of Arabic phonology, which was closely linked to “questions of the correct recitation of the Qur’ān” (MacMahon 2013: 109). Perhaps most significantly, however, medieval Arab scholarship greatly furthered the study of the anatomical foundations of speech.

Following the European Middle Ages, the Renaissance is the historical period characterized by the explosive advancement of scientific endeavors which was made possible by the invention and proliferation of the printing press. Additionally, with the increasing promotion of vernacular languages and their respective orthographies, it was also a time of accelerated scholarly production in the realm of phonetics. This resulted in the accumulation of various spelling reforms, descriptions of general phonetics, and anatomical descriptions of the mechanisms of speech production (MacMahon 2013: 112-114). Among the numerous advances taking place, one development in particular possessed a curious prescience. Francis Lodwick, a London merchant and member of the Royal Society, proposed in 1686 the creation of a universal phonetic alphabet (MacMahon 2013: 114). Despite the increased attention granted to the analysis of language and speech production by certain scholars, most language teachers did not make use of linguistic analysis in their work, since up until the 18th century “it was still common practice to teach languages by living contact with them, whether in their oral or their written form” (Titone 2004: 264).

In the 18th century, a new “method” appeared which would dominate the field for the next hundred years. This method, referred to as the “grammar-translation” method, was in fact simply the reapplication of techniques already employed for centuries. Greek and Latin had been learned in Europe since the Middle Ages, primarily for the purposes of reading and translating ancient works, and as the study of modern living languages became more popular, the techniques used to learn the

ancient languages were implemented for the study of the living languages of the day as well. The method “emphasised the teaching of formal grammatical rules and translating foreign language written texts into one's mother tongue with detailed grammatical analysis” (Weihua 2004: 250). Thus it should not be surprising that “[o]ral work was reduced to an absolute minimum” (Titone 2004: 265). The method had worked well enough for scholars of the ancient languages, but after almost a century of dominance also as the accepted method of modern foreign language learning and teaching, the grammar-translation method gradually became the subject of increasing criticism. These criticism would eventually coalesce to result in the revolutionary Reform Movement of the late 19th century.

### **3.2.2 Phonetics and pronunciation teaching in the 19th century and beyond**

In 1886 a small group of language teachers banded together to form the Phonetic Teachers' Association, later renaming themselves in 1897 to become the International Phonetic Association (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 196). It is this very organization which can be credited with the creation of the most internationally recognized phonetic alphabet in use in the world today, known as the International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA. Though the importance of this advancement was far-reaching for the language teaching profession, it represented only one facet of a fundamentally new approach to the teaching of modern foreign languages which was “in part derived from the new linguistic sciences that were beginning to emerge from the universities of Europe and America” (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 189). Advocates of reform in the late 19th century therefore combined a shared dissatisfaction with the grammar-translation method, a novel application of scientific rigor to language study, and an increased respect for the spoken word. As Howatt & Widdowson state, “[w]hat this meant in classroom terms was a much more prominent role for the teaching of pronunciation, supported by the new knowledge of phonetics” (2004: 189). Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 3) summarize the main principles of the Reform Movement thus:

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

The demands placed on language teaching by the Reform Movement eventually resulted in the formulation of the Direct Method, which “was first introduced in France and Germany by its supporters and later was recognised officially by the Governments of Germany, France and Belgium (1900-02)” (Weihua 2004: 177). The success of the method is evidenced by the fact that “[a]n international congress of modern language teachers was held in 1898 in Vienna and decided that the direct method should be used in all elementary teaching of foreign languages” (Weihua 2004: 177). As the method was greatly influenced by observations of children acquiring their first languages,

pronunciation was “taught through intuition and imitation; students imitate a model - the teacher or a recording - and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition” (Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 3).

Pronunciation remained an integral part of a new method which appeared in the middle of the 20th century. Audiolingualism shared much with the direct method, yet incorporated new scientific elements as it was “based on structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology” (Byram 2004: 58). The method enjoyed a period of dominance before a new shift would occur and alter the role of pronunciation in the role of foreign language instruction. According to Lightbown & Spada (2013: 68), “[w]hen the audiolingual approach was replaced by other ways of teaching, attention to pronunciation was minimized if not totally discarded”.

As behaviorist psychology was forced by developments in cognitive psychology to surrender a great deal of its dominance, so was the audiolingual approach, with its emphasis on the spoken language and pronunciation, displaced by the cognitive approach. This new approach integrated cognitive psychology with Noam Chomsky’s transformational-generative grammar to create a language learning method which “deemphasized pronunciation in favor of grammar and vocabulary” (Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 5). Though the cognitive approach to language teaching was rather successful, the period of the 1970s also saw the development of a series of alternative language teaching methods, including the Silent Way and Community Language Learning (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 5-8). Each of these methods had its own approach to pronunciation shaped by the particularities of its underlying set of assumptions and techniques. For example, in the Silent Way method, pronunciation was valued highly and taught with the help of color-coded charts and rods. Pronunciation also played an important role in Community Language Learning, which made use of recording equipment to help improve students' language skills and focused on the needs of the learner. Pronunciation’s role in foreign language instruction would experience another significant shift with the general adoption of Communicative Language Teaching, or CLT, which is the leading method today.

Pronunciation teaching today has been greatly influenced by the principles of CLT, a method which originated in the 1970s and is closely connected to the concept of communicative competence. Thus, communicative language teaching seeks to enable learners to express, interpret, and negotiate meaning in the second language (Savignon 2004: 124). In this regard it is a highly flexible method adaptable to various learning contexts and “can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research” (Savignon 2004: 126). Because of its emphasis on communication rather than formal accuracy, CLT was at first practiced in a manner which largely ignored pronunciation (Lightbown & Spada 2013: 68). This resulted eventually in the often-cited neglect of the field of pronunciation

teaching which has been addressed above. Since the conception of CLT, however, much research has been conducted and the vital role played by pronunciation in the construction and interpretation of meaning has come to be much better understood.

### **3.3 The importance of pronunciation in modern language learning**

Although at first misunderstood in the context of CLT, pronunciation has in recent years experienced a degree of renewed respect for its role in the language learning classroom. Joan Morley (1991: 513) has referred to it as “an essential component of communicative competence” and has stated that it is therefore “clear that pronunciation can no longer be ignored”. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck & Smit (1997: 115) have even deemed good pronunciation “indeed indispensable for adequate communication in a foreign language”. And there are in fact various reasons speaking for pronunciation's elevation from its previous disregard.

Most essentially, pronunciation is crucial to any processes of oral meaning-making. This is true on both a segmental and suprasegmental level. For example, even highly proficient (including L1) language users require a considerable degree of segmental accuracy in order to understand messages (Jenkins 2000: 39). In the case of less advanced language learners, who tend to mispronounce a range of phonemes, this fact can seriously threaten their oral intelligibility (Kelly 2000: 11). Furthermore, it can be a very frustrating experience for a learner to be forced to continually repeat oneself in order to be understood (Kelly 2000: 12). It has been often argued that suprasegmental aspects are of even greater importance to communicative success. According to Thornbury (2015: 37), “[n]ative speakers, for example, frequently identify the non-native-like use of stress, rhythm, and intonation as being a greater bar to intelligibility, and a stronger marker of accent, than the way individual vowel and consonant sounds are produced”. Indeed it seems that stress plays a very important role in the decoding of strings of speech into individual words, and thus, if stresses are misplaced, this can negatively impact “the listener's ability to process entire chunks of the speaker's message” (Jenkins 2000: 42).

In addition to aiding the listener in the demarcation of word boundaries, suprasegmental elements of pronunciation also serve a variety of other important purposes. Among the many functions performed by intonation (cf. Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994: 52), for example, is the use of tone contours to convey subtle information regarding the speaker's emotions, mood or attitude (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 231, 245-247). As a result, learners making unintentional use of improper intonation patterns could run the risk of being misinterpreted as rude, impolite, or disinterested. This is a factor which should not be underestimated, since, as Kelly (2000: 12) argues, “[e]ven though

these difficulties are subtle, they are very real, and worthy of investigation and remedial action in the classroom”.

Pronunciation does not only serve particular purposes in language use, but it is also inextricably linked to the entire process of oral communication. In other words, a teacher simply cannot avoid addressing matters of pronunciation, for “whatever the age and stage of his pupils or students, he will time and again find himself tackling questions of pronunciation. He may do it well, or he may do it badly; he may be satisfied with his handling of it, or he may not; but there is no escaping it” (Abercrombie 1949: 114). Similarly, pronunciation cannot be graded in the way that other aspects of language, such as grammar or vocabulary. Although a teacher might, for example, introduce more difficult grammatical tenses or vocabulary at a later stage of the learning process, “learners are ‘thrown in at the deep end’ as far as pronunciation is concerned” since any language simply requires all its phonemes from the start (Brown 1991: 3). For these reasons, it would make sense for any teacher to recognize and respect the significance of pronunciation’s role in language learning.

Along with being an indispensable part of oral communication, pronunciation is also inseparably linked to other language skills. Most obvious among these links is the connection to listening comprehension. According to Brown (1992: 5), learners who are made aware of natural phonological processes including simplification of consonant clusters, elision, and assimilation will be much better prepared to interpret and understand spoken language. Brown also describes the contribution that pronunciation can make in enabling students to understand the various accents of spoken English (1992: 5). Ideally, pronunciation should then be incorporated into the learning and practice of related skills. Neil Naiman (1992: 164) takes an even stronger approach, stating that “[p]ronunciation can and should always be integrated into all aspects of language teaching and reinforced in all classes”. In a similar vein, Pennington and Richards (1986: 208) argue that “it is artificial to divorce pronunciation from communication and from other aspects of language use, for sounds are a fundamental part of the process by which we communicated and comprehend lexical, grammatical, and sociolinguistic meaning”.

It should not be left unmentioned at this stage that pronunciation also undeniably serves, regardless of whether or not this is justified, as an informal indication of one’s competence in a second or foreign language. In other words, speaking is for learners a “skill by which they are judged while first impressions are being formed” (Hedge 2000: 261). Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit (1997: 115) have also identified the role that pronunciation plays in informal judgments of this sort, stating that “[g]ood pronunciation is ... to a large extent responsible for one’s first impression of a learner’s L2 competence”. Such evaluations can even go so far as exposing language learners to discrimination as a result of their accented speech (cf. Derwing & Munro 2009: 486). While it may be an undesirable state of affairs for learners to experience their linguistic competence being informally assessed largely

on the basis of their pronunciation skills, this is a situation which is unlikely to change in the near future. It is perhaps partly for this very reason that many learners are cited as being very motivated to improve their pronunciation skills (cf. Brown 1991: 1-2, Kelly 2000: 13). If students desire so strongly to improve their pronunciation skills, it could then only be considered negligent for teachers to disregard their wishes and ignore matters of pronunciation in the language classroom.

Finally, it can be expected that pronunciation's role in the teaching of English will only become increasingly more significant in the near future as a result of the global spread of English. While this topic will be taken up in greater detail in a later section addressing the issue of the model in pronunciation teaching, it will suffice at this juncture to very briefly outline a few of the main reasons for this development. First of all, in a globalized world in which most interaction taking place in English will be between speakers with different first languages, it is the spoken form of the language, and pronunciation in particular, which can be anticipated to differ most widely between such interlocutors. This is a direct result of the transfer from phonetic and phonological features of the speakers' first languages to their spoken English (Jenkins 2000: 19). In the words of Jennifer Jenkins, "[t]his is the area, therefore, that most demands attention if international communication is to be successfully promoted through the English language as the trend continues into the new century" (Jenkins 2000: 1). Moreover, non-native speakers of English with different first languages rely on the acoustic signal more than native speakers do, since they are often not as skilled at making use of contextual clues to aid them in deciphering meanings (Jenkins 2000: 20). It is for these reasons that Jenkins expects pronunciation, which she sees as having been long disregarded in the field of English language teaching, "is about to experience a revival as the world's English speakers begin to appreciate the major contribution to international communication made by the phonology of English as an International Language" (Jenkins 2000: 235).

### **3.4 Pronunciation in the Austrian secondary school curriculum**

The general significance of pronunciation for the teaching and learning of languages has been demonstrated in the previous section. It is important, however, to stress as well the importance of the context in which language learning and teaching are to take place. As Savignon (2004: 126) asserts, "diverse socio-political contexts mandate ... a diverse set of teaching strategies". Additionally, she adds that "[p]rogramme design and implementation depend on negotiation between policymakers, linguists, researchers and teachers" (Savignon 2004: 126). What this means for the present study is that it will be essential to examine briefly the institutionalized role of pronunciation as determined by the particular curricula of the Austrian school system. In this case, the curricula of the lower- and

upper-secondary schools will be taken into consideration as the majority of teachers surveyed in the present study taught at *Allgemein bildende höhere Schulen* (AHS).

The curriculum for the subject of English, which is the first foreign language taken by students at the upper-secondary stage of the AHS, makes its communicative approach to language learning very explicit, declaring its overarching goal to be linguistic communicative competence in the target language. It goes on to explain that, as a result of this outlook on language, “fremdsprachliche Teilkompetenzen sind in dem Maße zu vermitteln, wie sie für erfolgreiche mündliche und schriftliche Kommunikation nötig sind” (BMBF 2004: 2). Furthermore, these various language skills, including listening, reading, spoken interaction, monological speaking, and writing should be considered equally important and integrated as much as possible (BMBF 2004: 2). Already implied in this declaration of objectives is that students’ pronunciation should be attended to, since it has been shown that pronunciation is an integral part of the oral and aural skills of speaking and listening, respectively. However, goals specifically concerned with pronunciation skills are also formulated in the curriculum.

As part of the acquisition of linguistic competences, the curricular document declares that “Lautwahrnehmung, Aussprache und Intonation sind in dem Maße zu schulen, wie sie eine in der Zielsprache angemessene Verständigung gewährleisten. Eine Annäherung der Aussprache an die Standardaussprache ist zwar wünschenswert, darf jedoch nicht zur Überforderung der Schülerinnen und Schüler führen” (BMBF 2004: 3). Along with the importance of pronunciation for communicative expression, this passage also touches upon multiple aspects of pronunciation teaching will be explored in greater depth in subsequent sections of this paper, including the significance of receptive sound discrimination for pronunciation skill acquisition, the importance of suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation such as intonation, the issue of a standard pronunciation serving as a model for students, and the question of to what degree the approximation of such a model is necessary or desirable. Additionally, the curricular document also gives an indication of the stance teachers should take concerning the explicitness of pronunciation instruction by encouraging teachers to empower their students to gain receptive mastery of the IPA symbols relevant for the target language (BMBF 2004: 2). Such a task is most likely to be achieved through explicit student analysis of speech. Finally, the issue of students’ independent acquisition of pronunciation features of the target language is also indirectly addressed when it is stated that students should be equipped by their teachers with the tools and strategies necessary to continue language acquisition processes outside of the classroom. In this context, it is made clear that “Möglichkeiten zur Selbstevaluation sind dabei besonders zu berücksichtigen” (BMBF 2004: 1). This possibility of autonomous student self-monitoring of pronunciation performance will be taken up in section 5.2.2 of the present paper.

Not surprisingly, the curriculum for the lower-secondary stage of the Austrian AHS has the same communicative objectives for its younger students as the upper-secondary stage does for its students approaching the final school leaving examination. It is made abundantly clear, however, in the case of the younger students, that successful communication is not to be mistaken for communication which takes place free from intermittently erroneous or faulty linguistic production (BMBF 2000: 2). Though it is essential that teachers recognize the necessity of “errors” in the practice and acquisition of all language skills, it is particularly imperative that teachers respect this concerning the potentially face-threatening nature of the adoption of L2 pronunciation features by students. The matter of the model to be used for pronunciation instruction is once more raised when it is stated that students should be enabled to receptively understand standard pronunciation spoken at an average speed (BMBF 2000: 1). The receptive use of IPA for segmental and suprasegmental features of the target language is also recommended in the curriculum as a means of aiding students in the autonomous expansion of their vocabulary (BMBF 2000: 3).

The analysis of the curricula of the Austrian AHS in terms of their position concerning on the teaching of pronunciation have already introduced a number of important issues. Arguably chief among them is the matter of the model of standard pronunciation which will be used. In the words of Tricia Hedge (2000: 269), “[o]ne of the first decisions a teacher has to make in teaching pronunciation is which variety of English to take as a model for production”. Consequently, this matter will be addressed in the following section in detail.



## 4. The role of the model in pronunciation teaching

This chapter discusses issues concerning the use of a model in pronunciation teaching. First, the necessity of choosing a model is explained and the various options available are presented in turn. Finally, pronunciation teaching priorities are addressed in connection with the matter of how closely students should be expected to approximate any particular model.

### 4.1 What is a model? What models are there?

In any teaching enterprise, it is essential to define and delineate the subject matter which one intends to teach. To take an example from the teaching of history, it must be noted that it is impossible to teach events as they actually and objectively took place. As the events of human history are inevitably viewed through the subjective lens of the historian, it is therefore rather only a particular understanding of events, causes, and developments as advocated by a certain scholar, nationalist ideology, or theoretical framework which any teacher may hope to expound in the classroom. This understanding of history is then the subject matter which is to be taught. To apply this analogy to the context of pronunciation teaching, the subject matter in this case will be the model which is to be taught or, in other words, “the pronunciation characteristics of the language a teacher presents to learners in the classroom” (Kelly 2000: 14). According to Tricia Hedge, “[o]ne of the first decisions a teacher has to make in teaching pronunciation is which variety of English to take as a model for production” (Hedge 2000: 269).

But which pronunciation characteristics should a teacher present to students in the classroom? Which variety of English should be chosen to serve as the model? Traditionally, the response to these questions has been to take the native speaker as model, which should not be terribly surprising. Who, for example, when learning Japanese, would desire to learn to speak Japanese with the accent of an American learner? It is conceivable that most learners would instead prefer to speak in a manner as close as possible to that of authentic Japanese speakers of Japanese. What this analogy fails to recognize, however, is the unique situation of English in the world today; English is a language which, through the vicissitudes of history, has produced numerous national standards. It is possible, for example, for a foreign learner to attempt to speak English with an accent indigenous to any of the nations of the British Isles or the North American continent.

More recently, however, alternative models have also begun to be suggested by experts with increasing frequency. Non-native varieties of English have been recommended for use as pronunciation models in various countries (e.g. Indian English in India or Japanese English in Japan). Additionally, Cruttenden (2014: 327) describes an “Amalgam English” as a composite of different native speaker varieties and local L1 features, which can serve as a pronunciation model for students

under certain circumstances. In particular, a model of sorts (more accurately a set of essential features) based on the use of English as a *lingua franca* for international purposes has been put forward by Jennifer Jenkins (cf. Jenkins 2000). The existence of such a wide array of possible models has the potential to overwhelm the language teacher, who may simply wish to know which of them he or she should put forward in the classroom as the model for his or her students to strive toward. In order to answer this question adequately, various factors must be considered.

## 4.2 Which model should be taught?

The various models of pronunciation available to the learner of English each possess particular advantages and disadvantages. These will now be examined in turn at this stage.

As previously mentioned, it has always been the convention to select a native-speaker variety of English to serve as a model for students. Because of the assumed “common-sense” nature of this supposition, not much scholarly energy has been spent in its justification. Rather, most debate and controversy has centered around the question of which particular native-speaker pronunciation might be best suited to serve in this capacity. However, when faced with the suggestion of non-native varieties functioning as a pronunciation model, some writers have attempted to defend the supposed superiority of native-speaker models. Clifford Prator (1968 [1991]: 16), for example, has argued for the value of native-speaker accents, claiming that they “are still characterized by a high degree of intercomprehensibility, especially as spoken by the well educated”. Aside from being often mutually comprehensible, however, native-speaker accents are also frequently the most desired by students, as revealed for example by a study of university level students of English conducted by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck and Smit (1997) at the University of Vienna. Although stereotypes can be expected to play a significant role in the formation of such sentiments, the desires of learners should also not be disregarded concerning the selection of a pronunciation model, as a decrease in motivation could be a likely result.

### 4.2.1 Received Pronunciation

If a teacher decides to choose a native-speaker accent as a model for his or her students, he or she will usually want to specify which among the various available native-speaker accents he or she intends to teach. As with the choice of native-speaker models in general, convention has often dictated a rather reflexive choice in this matter as well. In the words of David Abercrombie (1949: 122), “[i]t is commonly taken for granted that foreigners should be taught to speak the style of English, usually called ‘Received Pronunciation’, which has been so fully (and dispassionately) described by Daniel

Jones”. Received Pronunciation (RP), although an accent of a variety of British English, is unique in that it “says more about social standing than geography” (Kelly 2000: 14).

The term used to denote the accent has itself seen controversy in recent years, however. The phonetician Peter Roach, for example, considers referring to the accent as “Received Pronunciation” to be “old-fashioned and misleading” and prefers instead referring to it as BBC pronunciation (Roach 2000: 3). The most recent edition of *Gimson’s Pronunciation of English* indeed no longer describes RP at all, but rather General British, or GB (Cruttenden 2014).

A great deal has been written in order to both defend and assail the position of RP as a model for pronunciation. Arguments put forward to bolster its favored position have generally been rather self-supporting in that they focus on the positive traits associated with the prestige accent, including “intelligence, professional competence, persuasive power, diligence, [and] social privilege” (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994: 6). In other words, learners should simply accept the fact that people who speak with an RP accent are generally assumed or considered to possess attributes associated with socio-economic access, and that these learners should therefore seek to emulate the accent themselves in order to have these assumptions applied to their own linguistic and social competences. According to Prator (1968 [1991]: 24), learners should be motivated by the fact that, “certain doors to social and professional advancement are still quite slow to open to one who does not show himself a master of it”.

In a more practical sense, it has also been argued that RP is especially suitable as a pronunciation model by virtue of it being “so well-documented that it is the best described phonetic variety of any language on earth” (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994: 6). It has been claimed that, in comparison, “it is in fact not at all easy to find adequate descriptions of other accents” (MacCarthy 1978: 63). Additionally, it has been suggested, or rather assumed, that RP, due to its use by BBC broadcasters, is the accent of English understood by the largest number of listeners (cf. Macaulay 1988: 118).

Arguments against the use of RP as a pronunciation model, on the other hand, seem to be both much more numerous as well as convincing. First of all, in reference to the association of RP with prestige and positive attributes, it has been noted that this prestige “has been lost and an RP accent may nowadays lead to stigmatisation and even vilification” (Brown 1992: 3). Furthermore, RP is not without additional associations which learners might find undesirable for identification purposes. According to Brown (1992: 2), “[m]any learners have no intention of mastering an RP accent (or at least have no intention of using one outside the classroom), since they have no reason to wish to identify themselves with the native RP-speaking community”. Even Daniel Jones, the renowned champion of RP, stated that, although he personally felt RP to be the most suitable, “foreigners learning English should be free to choose whatever pronunciation they prefer” (Jones 1937: 207).

In 1988, Macaulay wrote that “[f]ortunately, some information is now available on varieties other than RP ... and thus there is less justification for restricting learners to RP on the grounds that it is the only variety described” (Macaulay 1988: 123). In the two-and-a-half decades since then, a great deal of material has been published describing a wide variety of local accents of the English language. By now, it would seem that not only is there “less justification” for the perpetuation of RP as a pronunciation model for foreign learners on the grounds of its thorough description, but arguably rather none at all.

RP is an accent spoken by a very small portion of the world's English native-speakers. According to Brown (1992: 2), “[e]ven generous estimates put the figure at less than 5 million”. This represents not only a small minority of speakers in the UK, but also indicates that, in the world at large, it would seem that the numbers do not suggest much cause at all for learners to orient their speech on RP. On a related note, the influence of the BBC cannot be expected to make RP as widely understood an accent as the success of American-made films and other media have done for North American varieties of English.

#### **4.2.2 Alternative native-speaker models**

If a teacher is convinced of the necessity, or at least feels inclined, to adopt a native-speaker variety as a pronunciation model for his or her students, RP is by no means the only model available to him or her. It has already been mentioned that other varieties of English have been suitably described in recent years to allow for their use as a pronunciation model, and various reasons have also been offered to justify such a decision.

The most popular among alternative native-speaker models is, not surprisingly, the accent spoken by the majority of the citizens of the United States of America. This accent is known as “General American” (GA), and it has been described as “the variety that strikes the largest number of Americans as least strange” (Prator 1968 [1991]: 25). It is, similar to RP, an accent which is not immediately identified as stemming from a particular region. Unlike RP, however, GA is an accent spoken by “speakers of much more varied socio-economic background” (Newbrook 1986 [1991]: 77). This contrasts importantly with the narrow and exclusive nature of RP, making it a much more neutral accent. In the words of Adam Brown (1992: 2), “[w]e must also remember that there are over 250 million US citizens, many of whom travel widely on business and holiday”. In fact, according to David Crystal (2003: 60), “[t]he USA has nearly 70 per cent of all English mother-tongue speakers in the world”. This is significant in that, first of all, GA is an accent spoken by far more native speakers than RP, meaning that learners would be orienting themselves on the accent of the majority of native-speakers of English, and secondly because this makes it far more likely for learners to encounter

speakers of this variety than any other. Furthermore, with the aid of American cultural exports already mentioned, GA presents a formidable opponent to RP and a solid pronunciation model of choice.

A further feature of GA, and one which it shares with other native-speaker models, is that it is potentially much easier for learners to acquire than RP. Newbrook (1986 [1991]: 78) has claimed that the vowel system of GA could be less challenging for foreign learners than that of RP. This has also been noted by Peter Roach (2000: 5) to apply to Scottish and Irish accents, however. Similarly, GA also shares with Scottish and Irish accents that it is rhotic, and in this sense, more faithful to the spelling than RP. Cruttenden (2014: 326) has stated, however, that the particular realization of the /r/ phoneme as a voiced alveolar flap, and the relative frequency of this sound's occurrence in the world's languages could potentially serve to even further ease students' acquisition of a Scottish accent.

All in all, there are numerous potential native speaker varieties which a teacher could select to function as a pronunciation model for students. It could be said, however, that the choice of any native-speaker accent other than GA to be used as a pronunciation model in the classroom would require a good deal of justification, which in such a case would likely center around matters of personal identification or personal competence. The global spread and influence of GA relative to other native-speaker varieties are simply too great to warrant the casual selection of any other native-speaker model without rationale of a similar nature.

### 4.2.3 Non-native speaker models

It has been suggested on multiple occasions that it might be most advantageous for learners to model their pronunciation on non-native accents of English. The origin of such suggestions often lies in the distinction between settings or contexts of usage of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Situations of the former type (ESL) include those contexts where "English has official status, is used widely in government, the media and education, and is in widespread use in the everyday life of the people", whereas in those of the latter type (EFL), English "has low official recognition and is used mainly for communication with foreigners rather than with locals" (Brown 1992: 3). In ESL contexts, therefore, the main purpose of English is not to communicate with native speakers of the language, and indeed most communication in English will take place between speakers of other languages. Kachru (1976 [1991]: 48), for example, has shown that in the case of India, a typical ESL situation, "Indian English is used as a tool of linguistic interaction by Indians to communicate mainly with other Indians". Thus, he argues, it would make very little sense to "make almost seventeen million Indian English speakers sound like WASPs lost in the tropical terrain of India" (Kachru 1976 [1991]: 47).

A model of English based on local L2 varieties, it has been argued, would be much more suitable and appropriate for conditions like those described above. There are several reasons for this,

with perhaps the most rational or pragmatic among them being the ease of learning and teaching. According to Brown (1989: 196), the phonology of a “locally based pronunciation model ... may correspond in no small measure to that of the other indigenous languages of the learners' background”. Whereas this could be considered by conservatively-minded language teachers to constitute interference, or the learner's L1 getting in the way of or impeding successful acquisition of the target language, Brown argues that this need not be the case. He warns that “[t]his is not to say that English phonology may be forced into the straitjacket of the learners' native phonology” but rather that “certain features of the indigenous phonologies may be retained where they do not impede intelligibility” (Brown 1989: 197). By allowing the retention of such features, teachers will set more realistic goals for their students, making their own work and the work of their students a great deal easier.

In addition to being easier for L2 speakers of English to learn, non-native pronunciation models do not necessarily lead to a lesser degree of intelligibility. Intelligibility is an aspect of spoken language which cannot be considered without reference to the specific context of use (Kachru 1976 [1991]: 39). Thus, it follows that one must ask to whom any particular pronunciation ought to be intelligible. In an ESL environment, where communication is more likely to take place between non-native speakers than between non-native speakers and native-speakers, it cannot be assumed that, for example, RP will be the most easily understood pronunciation model. In fact, a study conducted by Smith & Rafiqzad (1979: 380) which measured the intelligibility of both native- and non-native speakers to L2 speakers of English demonstrated that native speakers were not more intelligible and that, consequently, “there seems to be no reason to insist that the performance target in the English classroom be a native speaker”. Indeed, very often native speakers are not necessarily intelligible to one another, as Swan (1993: 8) points out by suggesting that “an East Texan and a Glaswegian would probably both find a competent German speaker of English easier to understand than each other”.

The most emotionally compelling reason for endorsing the possibility of a non-native accent as a pronunciation model is that of identity. Brown (1989: 196) presented the argument thusly:

Language is probably the most powerful vehicle for personal, social and cultural expression. A person's speech is used to convey a great deal of information about his national, ethnic and cultural identity. Pronunciation models should therefore also allow speakers to achieve and convey a sense of identity in their speech, perhaps more so for ESL speakers than for EFL.

Any L1 variety, but in particular an accent as exclusive as RP, will encounter great difficulty in attempting to fulfil this need for identity conveyance as effectively as a local L2 model could. By making use of a local non-native pronunciation model, teachers can allow their learners to preserve their individual L1-identities. Such a model would not threaten the self-understanding of learners in the way that insisting on a native-speaker model might. Baxter (1980 [1991]: 60), writing about the

situation in Japan (a country which is normally considered EFL and *not* ESL), asserts that “the message continually conveyed to [learners] by the ideal of an L1 model is that English is not their language”. Instead, he insists on allowing learners to “speak English Japanese-ly”, which he defines as “a manner of speaking English that does not threaten the speaker nor come into conflict with this person's identity as a Japanese” (1980 [1991]: 65). Thus, allowing a non-native model will significantly facilitate the “development of an identity as an English-speaking self” (1980 [1991]: 60). This, in turn, will arguably lead to more successful acquisition of the target language.

#### **4.2.4 Amalgam English and English as a Lingua Franca as pronunciation models**

In the discussion of non-native pronunciation models above, the point was made that such models can potentially be used in circumstances where communication is most likely to occur not between native- and non-native speakers, but rather between speakers with a shared status as L2-users of English. Upon closer inspection, however, it could be said that, as indeed Brown (1992: 3) claims, “factors arguing for a local model for ESL situations generally apply equally to EFL situation”. Moreover, the distinction itself between ESL and EFL contexts of use is, in the words of Brown (1992: 3), “rather shaky”. For instance, many countries cannot easily be placed into one of the categories, others are currently in transition between them, and still others seem to move back and forth between the two. Ultimately, ESL countries share many features with both EFL countries and indeed the world as a whole. English is not only used as a second language to facilitate communication between speakers of different languages within particular countries, such as India; English is a global phenomenon and a world-wide *lingua franca*.

The English language currently occupies an unprecedented position among the world's languages. Though throughout the course of history various languages have served at different points in time and to different geographic extents as mediums of communication between speakers of different mother tongues, none could ever claim the truly global reach which English today possesses. In the words of the prominent theorist and researcher in the field of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Barbara Seidlhofer (2011: 2), “the spread of English, geographically but also in terms of social strata and domains of use, is on a scale that no other language has ever reached in the history of the planet”. In terms of proportions, David Crystal (2003: 69) has claimed that “approximately one in four of the world's population are now capable of communicating to a useful level in English”. Specifically, he estimated the number of native speakers of English to have reached 320-380 million and the number of L2-users of English to fall between 800-1,500 million (Crystal 2003: 61). The corollary of this, of course, and as Crystal himself expressed five years later, is “that the centre of gravity of the English language has moved from the native speaker to the non-native speaker. For every one native

speaker, there are now three or four non-native speakers” (Crystal 2008: 6). Among the natural languages of the world, this is an entirely novel phenomenon.

As a consequence of English's unique position and role in today's world, many scholars have asserted that it is time for language teachers to consider the implications that present circumstances may have on language teaching. The implications of ELF for language pedagogy are indeed potentially many and warrant careful consideration. For the purposes of the present paper, however, the two most important consequences can be summarized as a focus on preparing students to participate effectively in the new sort of communication for which they will need English (i.e. with fellow non-native speakers) and a revaluation of and increased appreciation for the non-native speaker. Because of non-native speakers' tendency to employ “bottom-up processing” in the interpretation of speech (see Jenkins 2000: 20), ELF-users are forced to rely on the acoustic signal of their interlocutors' often phonetically non-standard speech production. For this reason, Jenkins recommends the explicit teaching of accommodation skills which will allow students to “cope with major pronunciation differences in the speech of their different-L1 partners and to adjust their own pronunciation radically for the benefit of their different-L1 hearers” (Jenkins 2000: 194). Regarding the teaching of pronunciation specifically, this will also entail a greater tolerance of features which might otherwise be considered L1 interference. Intelligibility can be ensured by the insistence upon a set of core pronunciation features (the Lingua Franca Core, or LFC), which have been empirically shown to be most relevant to communicative success in ELF situations (Jenkins 2000).

Strictly speaking, English as a lingua franca (ELF) does not represent a real model which students can emulate, nor even does the lingua franca core (LFC). Instead, they represent a new perspective for approaching language teaching which suggests that, rather than wasting valuable time on teaching students (most likely unsuccessfully) to emulate native-speaker norms which have no bearing on international intelligibility, it would be more worthwhile to focus on the necessities for ensuring that students are understood by English-users with other L1s. And it is precisely this purpose which represents, as Jenkins (2000: 11) claims, “the primary reason for learning English today”.

### **4.3 How closely should students approximate the model?**

The selection of a model is a necessity for any pronunciation teaching, since whatever speech the teacher produces in the classroom is most likely to serve as the primary model for language learners. Once a model has been selected, however, specific goals and priorities must be determined. In other words, how closely will students be expected to approximate the model selected by the teacher? What features of pronunciation will be focused on primarily in the classroom?



It has been claimed that “[i]n a traditional approach to pronunciation the learner's goal is a native- or near-native speaker accent” (Walker 2010: 67, see also e.g. Lightbown & Spada 2013: 71, Morley 1991: 498). In fact, it could be said that this goal is not only implicitly imposed by teachers upon students, but is also widely-held among students themselves. For example, in a study conducted by Julie Scales and her colleagues investigating learners’ perceptions of various accents of English, it was found that “more than half (62%) of the learners stated that their goal was to sound like a native English speaker” (Scales et al. 2006: 715). According to Lightbown & Spada (2013: 71), “some second language learners, particularly those who have achieved a high level of knowledge and performance in other aspects of the target language, may be motivated to approximate a more ‘native-like’ accent for personal and professional reasons”. These lofty goals and desires, however, may in the course of students’ language-learning careers come into conflict with harsh realities.

### 4.3.1 Native-likeness as a pronunciation goal

Morley (1991: 498), writing about the prospects of ESL students achieving a near-native pronunciation, states rather pessimistically that, “[w]hile these aspirations sound attractive to many students (and their teachers), the path to these high levels of performance is a tortuous one, on both sides. The truth is that they are virtually unattainable for the vast majority of ESL learners”. Penny Ur dismisses the idea off-hand in her teacher training manual, writing that “[p]erfect’ accents are difficult if not impossible for most of us to achieve in a foreign language anyway” (Ur 1996: 52). And it does indeed seem as though such aims will be largely unnecessary for a great number of learners. Michael Swan (1993: 8) both points out the potential absurdity of insisting upon native-likeness as a goal in pronunciation teaching and reminds the teacher to keep the future purposes of learners in mind, when he writes that “[u]nless we are training future spies, then, our main job is simply to make sure that our students speak with an accent that is reasonably comprehensible to native speakers”. This concept is not as new as it might seem, however, and can actually be traced as far back as David Abercrombie (1949: 120), who wrote in 1949:

Is it really necessary for most language learners to acquire a perfect pronunciation? Intending secret agents and intending teachers have to, of course, but most other language learners need no more than a comfortably intelligible pronunciation (and by “comfortably” intelligible, I mean a pronunciation which can be understood with little or no conscious effort on the part of the listener). I believe that pronunciation teaching should have, not a goal which must of necessity be normally an unrealised ideal, but a *limited* purpose which will be completely fulfilled; the attainment of intelligibility. The learner, instead of being taken systematically through each English vowel and each consonant, and later, if there is time, through the complexities of intonation and rhythm, would have presented to him certain carefully chosen features on which to concentrate, the rest of his pronunciation being left to no more than a general supervision.

It can therefore be established that it should not be a native-like pronunciation which forms the primary objective of pronunciation teaching, but rather intelligibility. But what is intelligibility exactly? And which features of pronunciation can be considered to contribute most significantly to making speech intelligible? These questions will be investigated in the following section.

### 4.3.2 Intelligibility as a pronunciation goal

In attempting to ascertain the nature of intelligibility and its most significant contributing factors, scholars have approached the matter from various perspectives. These include looking at aspects inherent in the language itself which serve to facilitate intelligible communication, analysis of and comparison with learners' L1s, and finally consideration of the context in which learners can be expected to make use of the L2.

The most influential debate concerning linguistic aspects and their roles in enabling intelligibility has centered on the issues of (a) the relative importance of segmental and suprasegmental features of English and (b) the relative difficulty of teaching and learning particular aspects of pronunciation. Traditionally, pronunciation teaching has focused on the teaching of segmental aspects of language. Referring to popular pronunciation teaching materials, Brown (1992: 11) has written that, "[t]ypically, consonant and vowel pronunciation is introduced first, with stress, rhythm and intonation trailing in behind almost as afterthoughts".

Two useful concepts which have been employed in the determination of linguistically inherent segmental priorities for pronunciation teaching are those of frequency and functional load. In a manner similar to the prioritization of vocabulary items, it has been proposed that frequency counts of the occurrence of particular phonemes could be used for establishing pronunciation priorities as well. As Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994: 145) describe, "[i]n English, for instance, the most frequent consonant is /ð/, and the most frequent vowel is /ə/. Having established the relative frequency of phonemes in the target language, teachers may decide to give priority to frequent sounds while perhaps not treating infrequent ones". The concept of functional load, on the other hand, is slightly more complex and has been described as "a measure of the work which two phonemes (or a distinctive feature) do in keeping utterances apart - in other words, a gauge of the frequency with which two phonemes contrast in all possible environments" (King 1967). In other words, functional load refers to the number of minimal pairs which are contrasted by any single phoneme. For the language teacher, the implication is that "pronunciation work should be designed to give priority to those confluences of relatively greater importance, whereas those of lesser importance may be left for later practice, if indeed there is sufficient time to cover them at all" (Brown 1988).

The importance of particular phonemes as determined by either frequency or functional load

must additionally be weighed against the concept of teachability. For example, as Gillian Brown (1974: 54) writes:

When time is short it is probably not worthwhile spending time on teaching  $\theta$  and  $\delta$  if the students find them difficult, but be sure that the sounds substituted by the students are  $f$  and  $v$  sounds which are acoustically similar to  $e$  and  $o$  and bear a low functional load in English (i.e., don't distinguish many words), and not  $s$  and  $z$ , which are acoustically very different from  $e$  and  $o$  and bear a much higher functional load.

Thus any pronunciation teacher will be required to make decisions concerning segmental priorities not only on the basis of which sounds of the target language are most important in distinguishing between lexical items, but also on the potential time which would go to waste when teaching overly difficult phonemes. Additionally, teachers will also need to carefully consider the communicatively best possible alternatives for students who cannot accurately produce particular phonemes.

Despite the traditional focus on segmentals, it has been claimed on many occasions that such an approach does not do justice to the importance of suprasegmental features in communication. McNerney and Mendelsohn (1992: 186) for instance argue that “a short-term pronunciation course should focus first and foremost on suprasegmentals, as they have the greatest impact on the comprehensibility of learners’ English”. Empirical evidence to support such claims has been provided by research conducted by Laura Hahn, who determined that, for example, “primary stress contributes significantly to the intelligibility of nonnative discourse” (Hahn 2004: 218). The relatively greater importance of suprasegmentals can be attributed, according to McNerney and Mendelsohn (1992: 185), to the fact that “individual sounds can usually be inferred from the context”. They go on to make additional claims of the benefits of a primarily suprasegmental approach to pronunciation teaching, stating that “giving priority to the suprasegmental aspects of English not only improves learners’ comprehensibility, but is also less frustrating for students because greater change can be effected in a short time” (McNerney & Mendelsohn 1992: 186).

As the difficulty of teaching particular segments was considered in connection to their communicative importance, so too can suprasegmentals on a whole be compared to segmentals in terms of their relative teachability. Concerning the comparison of the two, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994: 73), have tentatively identified “an inverse relationship between communicative importance and teachability”. This is due to the fact that, as they claim, suprasegmental elements are comparatively important for facilitating meaningful discourse, yet are notoriously difficult to teach. Segmental elements, on the other hand, are easier to teach, yet less essential for communication. The phonologist Peter Roach has expressed similar reservations concerning the teaching of suprasegmental aspects of English, stating that “although it is of great importance, the complexity of the total set of sequential and prosodic component of intonation and of paralinguistic features makes

it a very difficult thing to teach or learn. ... The attitudinal use of intonation is something that is best acquired through talking with and listening to English speakers” (Roach 2000: 189-190). In order to compensate for such difficulties, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994: 73) offer the following suggestion: “It may be, then, that work on stress is the most convenient focal point for any course in pronunciation. It is necessarily connected to either end of the continuum: on the segmental side, word-stress is decisive for the quality of individual sounds, on the intonation side, it signifies prominence”.

In addition to aspects inherent in the target language, in this case English, priorities in pronunciation teaching are often established on the basis of the features of the learner’s L1. With large, heterogeneous and multilingual classes this could become difficult to the point of futility, but for teachers with mostly monolingual classes, it can indeed be a helpful approach. The impetus for such considerations originates from the linguistic enterprise of contrastive analysis. Languages were first systematically compared, although in a rudimentary fashion, for the creation of the first bilingual glossaries and grammars which described modern languages in categories borrowed from the grammar of Latin (Sajaavara 2004: 140-141). Such comparative practices then informed the discipline of historical linguistics before they were applied to language teaching, where for pronunciation teaching in particular they can be used for “predicting learners’ difficulties in mastering the L2 phonology” (Brown 1992: 9). The results of contrastive analysis have been compiled into lists of potential problem areas for students from various language backgrounds and can be found in many general language teaching and pronunciation teaching handbooks (see e.g. Avery & Ehrlich 1992: 111-157, Kenworthy 1987: 124-160, Swan & Smith 2001, Walker 2010: 99-135). Contrastive analysis has in its long history been the subject of much criticism, which Robin Walker (2010: 100) has summarized thusly:

CA has not proved to be as good at predicting problems as linguists originally thought it was going to be. In practice, some problems that it predicts do not actually arise. Others are found to exist that CA has not predicted.

Despite these criticisms, however, contrastive analysis can still usefully inform the establishment of pronunciation priorities. As Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 23) write, “[t]oday most researchers in the field, while minimizing the role that native-language interference plays in other areas of language acquisition, would agree that interference (now more commonly referred to as negative transfer) is valid in second-language pronunciation acquisition”.

After having considered intrinsic linguistic aspects and learner-related variables, the purpose and context of language learning must be taken into account. For most students, as has been argued above, the purpose of language learning will not be to become indistinguishable from a native speaker, but rather to be more or less readily understood when speaking the language. As a result, the question must then be addressed concerning to whom the learner should seek to be intelligible. This is

important because, as has been pointed out on various occasions (see e.g. Brown 1992: 4, Jenkins 2000: 69-70, Walker 2010: 18-19), intelligibility is almost as much a function of the listener's perceptive skills as it is of the speaker's pronunciation. Traditionally it has been assumed that the archetypal listener is the native speaker, and therefore considerations of the requirements for intelligibility have focused primarily on native-speaker listeners (Jenkins 2000: 95). As previously claimed, however, it is highly likely that, for most students, their future interlocutors will predominantly be other non-native speakers. In such contexts, not only will the acoustic signal receive additional significance because "ELF interlocutors...rely far more on the words and sounds that they think they have heard than native or bilingual speakers of English, and they are only able to gain limited help from the context of what is said" (Walker 2010: 19), but also the particular priorities for pronunciation will be different. This set of prerequisites for successful ELF communication has been termed the *Lingua Franca Core* (LFC). Robin Walker (2010: 8) has summarized the LFC as comprising the following:

- an approximation to most RP/GA consonants
- the appropriate treatment of consonant clusters
- length differences between vowels
- the placement of nuclear (sentence) stress.

Interestingly, the LFC conspicuously neglects certain items which feature prominently in other methods of prioritization, such as the exact realization of the phonemes /θ/, /ð/, and /ə/, which could, for example, be seen as salient features from a frequency perspective.

## 4.4 Summary

After having introduced the various models for pronunciation teaching currently available for English language teachers today, I would like to return to the question of which model should be taught in the classroom. As the previous discussion has illustrated, this is no simple matter. Each model possesses particular advantages and disadvantages, and thus one must always bear in mind the context in which language learning should take place and the purposes to which students will be likely to put the language in their future. It would not be very wise, for example, to implement an RP model when teaching migrant ESL learners in the USA, nor would it make a great deal of sense to insist on a non-native model or ELF approach when instructing a group of university students preparing to study abroad at a university in the US or the UK.

At any rate, it is worth noting that, for most teachers, this question will be "arguably academic" since "in many situations the non-native teacher has to be the model whether he or she likes it or not"

(Ur 1996: 56). As Kelly (2000: 14) puts it, “the model one uses in the classroom will usually be close to the language one uses outside the classroom. Many teachers modify their accent slightly for the benefit of their students, but few could consistently teach with an accent significantly different than their own”. Any foreign- or second-language teacher thus modifying his or her speech can be safely assumed to be acting out of the interest of making his or her speech more readily intelligible to, by definition, non-native speaker students. In this sense, he or she is, most probably unconsciously, already employing an ELF approach to pronunciation teaching!

From the previous example it becomes evident that even native speakers may need to tweak their accents in order to achieve intelligibility, which is commonly considered to be first requirement which any pronunciation model must fulfill in order to be acceptable for classroom use (e.g. Brown 1989: 199, Walker 2010: 20). Further requirements include the ability to “convey a sense of local, national or ethnic identity” and teachability (Brown 1989: 199). Thus, any model implemented should not present a threat to students’ self-understanding, nor should its characteristic features serve to make it too difficult or impractical to teach in the classroom setting. Robin Walker argues convincingly that an ELF approach is the only one capable of reconciling students’ needs to be intelligible and understood with their need for personal identity preservation, and that furthermore it is also the most teachable (Walker 2010: 22).

Concerning the degree to which students should be required to approximate any model and the specific teaching objectives involved in this decision, the importance of intelligibility as an overarching goal must once again be stressed. As research conducted by Munro and Derwing (1995: 74) has indicated, “although strength of foreign accent is correlated with perceived comprehensibility and intelligibility, a strong foreign accent does not necessarily reduce the comprehensibility or intelligibility of L2 speech”. With this in mind, then, it does not make sense for teachers to seek to eradicate any traces of students’ L1 accents, but instead to prioritize items which are of central importance to establishing successful communication. The traditional distinction between prioritizing either segmental or suprasegmental features of pronunciation may perhaps prove to be not particularly useful in this regard, since “for any given group of learners there are going to be features from both domains that are problematic for communication and thus should be taught. Teachers need to do diagnostic work and be selective in what they include in a pronunciation syllabus” (Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 33). Here one can see just how significant the role of the teacher becomes in making decisions of this nature, and the beliefs that teachers hold concerning such matters will play a key role in making these decisions.

To conclude the discussion of models, it could be said that there are many powerful arguments for adopting an ELF approach to pronunciation (see Walker 2010), and for me it seems as though an ELF perspective will indeed be the one most likely to meet the communicative needs of the majority

of English learners. Without a doubt, the LFC represents a truly communicative approach, focusing solely on the necessities for intelligibility and successful communication in the contexts of use which students are most likely to encounter.

## 5. Technical aspects: teaching techniques and student feedback

Up until this point, considerations regarding the teaching of pronunciation have been primarily theoretical in nature. In this chapter, the focus will be directed instead toward more practical matters, including the provision of both an overview of specific techniques which can be employed to teach pronunciation and a discussion of available methods for delivering feedback to students concerning their pronunciation in the target language.

### 5.1 Pronunciation teaching techniques

It must be stated that, although it has been thus far discussed as a given, it is not entirely uncontroversial that pronunciation can be explicitly taught at all. The teachability of certain features of pronunciation has already been addressed in this paper in the context of creating priorities for teaching, but it has also been argued by some that the difficulty of teaching pronunciation can at times be such that it becomes entirely infeasible to teach it in the first place. According to Jones (1997: 140), this view stems primarily from related beliefs often held by language teachers “that it is virtually impossible for adults to acquire native-like pronunciation in a foreign language ... [and] that pronunciation is an acquired skill and that focused instruction is at best useless and at worst detrimental”.

The first of these beliefs, namely that pronunciation is more difficult to learn for adults, stands in relation to the critical period hypothesis, which “in its strongest form posits that unless language acquisition gets under way within a particular maturational phase (usually thought of as ending around puberty) it will never take place” (Singleton 2004: 22). The critical period hypothesis, however, has seen a great deal of skepticism directed towards it in recent years, and it has been shown that even adults can make significant gains in the realm of pronunciation (see e.g. Acton 1984).

The second belief, which devalues the role of instruction in favor of natural acquisition, has been accused by Peter Stevens (1984: 25) of “mis-interpreting the ideas of Krashen and others”. Stevens has furthermore demonstrated that the language learning process consists of various different stages, and that “[a]t every single stage, the process can be made more rapid and effective through the intervention of a skilled teacher: good teaching recognizes the learner's needs at any moment and provides assistance of an appropriate kind” (1984: 11). The implication, then, is that language teachers need not necessarily subscribe to Henry Sweet’s refusal “that a good pronunciation could be achieved by imitation alone”, but can instead make use of their expertise to optimize the learning process for their students (Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 202).

The degree of explicitness with which teachers choose to address issues of pronunciation will depend on various factors, including but not limited to the age of learners, their individual learning



styles, and the particular pronunciation items in question. It is generally accepted that younger learners “possess a remarkable facility for acquiring strange sounds” and it can therefore be accepted that such learners will require less explicit instruction (Abercrombie 1949: 120). Adults, on the other hand, seem to possess more inflexible pronunciation habits, yet at the same time an “increased ability to understand difficult explanations, discipline themselves and apply instructions” (Ur 1996: 56). Older learners, then, will clearly benefit more from overt instruction.

Joan Morley (1991: 483) has identified in current pronunciation teaching theory “a movement from a focus on the group, to an increasing focus on individual learner differences and individual learning styles and strategies”. It would make sense then for the language teacher to tailor his or her level of explicitness to the specific learning styles of his or her students. Whereas some students may prefer mimicry and inductive learning, others may prefer to be presented with information more explicitly. Perhaps the most explicit of all techniques for teaching pronunciation is to train students to use phonetic transcription. While some might argue that such potentially arduous instruction would be unnecessary for most learners, Peter James (1986: 331) has instead argued that phonetic transcription is simply “[o]ne aid among many, but one which may suit some individuals’ learning styles, thus providing them with the means of solving some of the difficulties experienced with pronunciation independently”.

It has also been argued that particular aspects of pronunciation may require more explicit teaching than others. Certain suprasegmental features, for example, have been claimed to be best learned through imitation rather than complicated explicit teaching procedures (see e.g Roach 2000: 189-190). Additionally, it has also been asserted that “certain aspects of pronunciation need to be overtly taught to provide the conditions whereby other aspects are covertly learned” (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994: 70). This is, for example, the basic assumption of a top-down or suprasegmental approach toward pronunciation teaching, namely that “once the prosodic features of pronunciation are in place, the necessary segmental discriminations will follow of their own accord” (ibid.).

### **5.1.1 Approaches**

In the previous discussion of the relative explicitness of particular pronunciation teaching techniques, the idea was briefly touched upon that techniques can also be grouped into various general approaches. The first of these is the distinction made primarily for the purpose of selecting which aspects should be taught, more specifically whether to give priority mainly to segmental or suprasegmentals aspects. This distinction has been also referred to as the choice between a “bottom-up approach” where segments receive priority, and a “top-down approach, beginning with patterns of intonation and bringing in separate sounds into sharper focus as and when required” (Dalton & Seidlhofer 1994: 69-70). Scott Thornbury (1993: 126), who is a proponent of voice-setting phonology

in pronunciation teaching, has similarly described the two rivalling approaches as “atomistic” and “holistic”, respectively. At any rate, the approach toward which any language teacher leans will also influence his or her selection of specific teaching techniques, since different techniques can be employed to teach different pronunciation features.

Another general approach toward pronunciation teaching which is also related to the selection of teaching priorities is the focus on techniques which are communicative in nature. This approach clearly aligns with the adoption of intelligible speech and successful communication as primary language teaching objectives. Teresa Pica (1984 [1991]: 333) has described communicative pronunciation activities as those where “students’ attention is focused on conveying a message rather than on practising sounds in isolation. How clearly that message is understood depends, to a considerable extent, on the accuracy of their pronunciation of key words in the message”. Neil Naiman (1992) has outlined a variety of teaching techniques which can be used to communicatively teach aspects of pronunciation including segments, connected speech, and suprasegmentals. These include, for example, information-gap activities, matching exercises, dialogues, role-plays, and games which hinge on matters of pronunciation.

Yet another approach focuses on the importance of integrating pronunciation teaching into work on other skills necessary for the achievement of competence in the target language. Since in most cases this competence is communicative competence, this approach differs only marginally from a generally communicative approach to the selection of pronunciation teaching techniques, but pronunciation is even more closely linked to other aspects of language use. Concerning vocabulary, for example, “there are several aspects of pronunciation that can be easily integrated into vocabulary work: sounds, stress pattern, linkage and simplifications, sound/spelling correspondences, and clusters of sounds” (Kenworthy 1987: 114). Regarding reading, Gerald Kelly has described a multi-stage approach to reading in which students first read for gist, then for detail, and finally integrate pronunciation elements while reading aloud, which he claims “offers opportunities for the study of the links between spelling and pronunciation, of stress and intonation, and of the linking between of sounds between words in connected speech; all of these can be highlighted and investigated further in fun and interesting ways through reading aloud”. Perhaps most obvious, however, is the clear link between pronunciation instruction and listening. Ilsa Burns (1992: 198) has tabulated the various benefits of pronunciation-based listening activities, stating that they:

...not only improve students’ listening comprehension, but also heighten their awareness of certain aspects of English pronunciation. These activities involve the recognition of specific sounds, stress patterns, sound modifications, and intonation contours. They should be an integral part of the pronunciation class and can be viewed as complementing the students’ production activities. They can reinforce grammatical points or language functions that have been covered at another time. They allow the pressure to be taken off students who feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when speaking in front of a group. They encourage co-

operation among classmates, thus enhancing the enjoyable aspects of classroom learning for everyone. In addition, the students receive immediate feedback, so frustration, which is frequently present in the traditional pronunciation class, is minimized.

Whether or not a teacher chooses to adopt an ELF approach (see section 4.2.4) will also have direct consequences on the pronunciation teaching techniques he or she chooses to implement in the classroom. Robin Walker (2010) has described the implications that an ELF approach will have on the selection of techniques. These include an increased focus on individual sounds (as opposed to a more top-down or holistic focus), a separation of receptive and productive competence, listening exercises which include a wide variety of accents, the incorporation of accommodation skills for both speakers and listeners, and techniques which can be used effectively in multi-lingual groups of students.

One final approach which could also be included in this discussion is a general concentration on preparing students to work autonomously in the acquisition of pronunciation features. Although it has been established that teachers can help to make students' learning processes significantly more effective, it is also true that students will not always be accompanied by their teachers! For this reason it will be important for language teachers to provide their students with instruction "with the aim of fostering learner autonomy and enabling students to develop strategies for coping on their own and for continuing to learn. Ways of working towards these goals include awareness-raising questionnaires..., learner diaries, recording of learners' production, dealing with incomprehensibility and employing metalinguistic strategies such as soliciting repetition, paraphrasing and monitoring feedback" (Seidlhofer 2004: 489). Especially the increasing variety of technologies which can be utilized for independent pronunciation learning is likely to play a very important role in the future.

### **5.1.2 Techniques**

The most traditional technique for the explicit teaching of pronunciation is phonetic training, often associated with the accompanying initiation into the use of phonetic transcription or notation. Modern views on the use of phonetic transcription differ considerably from those of the proponents of the Reform Movement, such as Henry Sweet who "believed that transcription should be used almost indefinitely in the teaching of orthographically irregular languages like English and French, and transition to the standard (or 'nomic' as he called it) should be made only when the learner started to read original literature" (Howatt and Widdowson 2004: 197). Peter MacCarthy (1978: 30), for example, explains how "phonetic notation should not be taught for its own sake but as a means to an end. When the end can be achieved by other means as effectively and in a shorter time, there is no virtue in learning to handle phonetic symbols". More recently, Gerald Kelly (2000: 8) has also advised that teachers only introduce phonemic symbols when needed, writing that "[it] makes far more sense

to work on those sounds which cause difficulty first, and introduce other phonemic symbols as appropriate”.

A technique closely associated with phonetic training and transcription is the use of anatomical visualizations and diagrams, sometimes referred to as ‘Sammy diagrams’ (see e.g. Jull 1992). Adam Brown describes the various types of anatomical visualization available and states that they are all “clearly a sophisticated form of instructional aid. They are less likely to prove effective in the teaching of young learners, and many adults may also find them confusing rather than illuminating. Nevertheless, with more sophisticated learners they are another useful weapon in the ELT instructor’s arsenal” (Brown 1992: 126). He does concede, however, that they possess several limitations as a teaching technique, namely that “[i]n certain cases, they are simply incapable of showing particular features; in others, they should be used in conjunction with other sorts of diagram; and sometimes they are not the most appropriate method of teaching points of pronunciation” (Brown 1992: 129). As Douglas Jull points out, the strength of such diagrams is their usefulness in “demonstrating the place of articulation of sounds which cannot be seen by looking at the mouth, such as the final /ŋ/ in ‘sing’” (Jull 1992: 210).

After specific sounds have been described phonetically, paired with their respective notational symbols, and demonstrated visually through the use of anatomical diagrams, they are often drilled. Drilling is a technique which rose to popularity during the heyday of behaviorist psychology and audiolingual methods and can also be used without prior explicit phonetic training in the form of “listen and repeat” activities. Though there are various types of drilling activities, “[i]n its most basic form, drilling simply involves the teacher saying a word or structure, and getting the class to repeat it” (Kelly 2000: 16). Minimal pairs, for example, are often practiced through repetitive drilling procedures. Drills are “particularly popular as a language laboratory exercise...[and]... often practise sound patterns without apparent communicative reason and without offering learners an opportunity for making motivated choices of sounds, stress patterns, etc., such as manipulation of stress for prominence” (Seidlhofer 2004: 490). As a result of this lack of communicative focus, drills have often been discarded in favor of other techniques. Jennifer Jenkins anticipates a shift in this situation, however, as taking an ELF approach to teaching pronunciation becomes more widely accepted. She writes that, “where changes to L1 phonological habits are required, the methodology used will have to be directed towards enabling learners to replace one automatic response with another. This means that the practice of drilling, which has in recent years been much maligned, will assume an important role in the ELT classroom once again” (Jenkins 2000: 113).

The phonetic training techniques described above are not usually known for instilling excitement in students, but fortunately there are also other techniques which aim to make the learning of pronunciation more amusing. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 346), for example, describe a variety of

games which can be used to teach aspects of pronunciation, including “Bingo or Hangman, [...] index card games, competitive team games, and various kinds of board games. Even a simple minimal-pair exercise can be an opportunity for a competitive game”. They claim that “[t]hese and other types of games provide an entertaining and productive form of practice in the pronunciation classroom” (Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 349).

Humor can also be a very useful tool for any pronunciation teacher. Cartoons and comic strips very often employ colloquial reductions and can therefore often be “an effective way to show learners how the pronunciation features they are learning about are part of everyday language” (Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 346). Jokes and riddles are similarly useful sources of both humorous diversion and pronunciation learning opportunities. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 349) describe, for example, how “knock-knock” jokes often capitalize on aspects of connected speech in the creation of humorous situations. By presenting pronunciation aspects in a humorous manner, teachers will presumably be able to raise student awareness of the features in question more effectively than otherwise.

Just as learning processes can be supported by the use of humor, so too can they be improved by the inclusion of multi-sensory experiences (see e.g. Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 344-345). A kinesthetic element can be added to pronunciation teaching, for example, through the use of rubber bands which can be stretched by students to indicate and internalize stressed syllables. Kazoos can be used to isolate pitch in phrases and help students to practice intonational patterns. Small mirrors can be held by students under their noses to illustrate the condensation produced by nasal sounds. Creative and curious teachers can find a multitude of other ways to incorporate kinesthetic and tactile learning into their pronunciation instruction.

Perhaps the most promising tool for the present and future of pronunciation teaching is the use of new technologies. The best example of this is possibly the personal computer, which has seen mind-boggling development in recent decades. Despite this fact, however, John Levis (2007: 184) has described that in terms of implementation by teachers, computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) is still “in its infancy in many ways”. This is likely a result of teachers’ awareness of the possibilities offered by new technology not progressing as rapidly as the developments themselves.

Computers offer a wide variety of tools for demonstrating and visualizing the production of certain sounds. John Levis (2007: 191), for example, describes numerous programs which can be used to represent intonation patterns visually, and most of which even “allow learners to compare their own production to a model utterance by overlaying their utterance’s pitch tracing on that of the model”. Additional advantages of computer-based pronunciation learning programs, as Gunther Kaltenböck (2001: 183-185) has demonstrated, include their potential to provide students with a significant degree of personal choice concerning areas of pronunciation to be worked on, accommodate various learning styles by offering both deductive and inductive approaches, and

facilitate the development of learner autonomy.

When connected to the internet, computers can also be used to access a multitude of websites which can be used for educational purposes. One example of a website which can be used for phonetic training is that offered by the University of Iowa's phonetics program, which provides animated diagrams of the production of various phonemes of English as well as video of the sounds being produced by speakers (<http://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/english/english.html>, 19 April 2016). Watkins and Wilkins (2011) have shown that the popular website YouTube can be effectively utilized for enhancing language learning, including pronunciation skills. Twitter, another popular website, was demonstrated to be effective for pronunciation teaching in a study conducted by Mompean and Fouz-González (2016), where students read short texts describing the pronunciation of commonly mispronounced words. Although there are social media websites which have been created specifically for language learning purposes, Mompean and Fouz-González (2016: 180) argue that Twitter has the potential to be particularly effective because it “does not require students to log into an overt learning environment. Instead, it allows for an integration of learning into students' e-routine”. In other words, teaching methods which can be integrated with students' everyday habitual use of technology are more likely to reach the students and motivate them to participate.

Additionally, most personal computers are equipped with audio recording technology, which made language laboratories possible in the first place and has more recently facilitated the exposure of students to pronunciation models other than that of their teacher. Students can also record themselves speaking for various purposes. Ducate and Lomicka (2009: 66) have demonstrated, for example, that students can record podcasts as an enjoyable way to practice their pronunciation. The opportunities provided for new methods of feedback will be discussed in the next section. Yet with the current availability of mobile phones with high-quality, built-in recording technology, the possibilities have certainly expanded beyond the standard desktop computer.

## **5.2 Feedback and error correction**

After having presented elements of pronunciation to students for learning, teachers will also be interested in tracking and assessing students' acquisition of these elements. Most often this process takes the form of teachers correcting student errors as they appear or assembling a collection of problematic features to report to the student at a later date.

### **5.2.1 Teacher feedback**

The first matter of importance concerning feedback is the determination of what exactly constitutes

an “error”. This issue ties in directly with the discussion of models in Chapter 4, since in many cases an error will represent any departure from the model chosen by the teacher. This does not necessarily mean, however, that errors should be seen as deviant forms to be eradicated from the speech of learners as rapidly as possible. Rather, as Lightbown and Spada (2013: 208) write:

Errors are a natural part of language learning. This is true of the development of a child's first language as well as of second language learning by children and adults. Errors reflect the patterns of learners' developing interlanguage systems - showing gaps in their knowledge, overgeneralization of a second language rule, or an inappropriate transfer of a first language pattern to the second language.

Despite a lack of empirical evidence to support the practice of orally correcting students' pronunciation errors (see e.g. Lane 2010: 14), it would seem that most teachers regardless believe it to be an effective and useful technique to help students improve their pronunciation skills. According to Clement Laroy (1995: 109), however, “systematic correction of learners' pronunciation can be a major cause of loss of learner confidence”. In light of this, if teachers do decide to explicitly correct their learners' errors, it would be advisable that they do so in as principled and prioritized a manner as possible in order to be selective and avoid too much correction.

In determining which pronunciation errors require explicit correction, the goals and priorities discussed in section 4.3 can be seen as guiding principles. For example, if achieving communicative intelligibility has been determined to be the primary objective for pronunciation teaching, then those pronunciation errors which most impede intelligibility can be considered most important to correct (see e.g. Cruttenden 2014: 325, Kelly 2000: 12, Ur 1996: 58). If students are to be prepared to communicate effectively in ELF settings, then correction of deviations from the items included in the Lingua Franca Core described in section 4.3.2 will be crucial. Additionally, Lightbown and Spada (2013: 208) express the importance of correcting errors which occur overly frequently or are shared by the majority of students, but not necessarily those which represent a developmental stage in the learner's interlanguage and therefore might be immune to explicit correction by the teacher.

The teacher's decision to correct pronunciation will also be dependent on the situation or context in which the error occurs. Penny Ur (1996: 246), for example, explains that “[t]here are some situations where we might prefer not to correct a learner's mistake: in fluency work, for example, when the learner is in mid-speech, and to correct would disturb and discourage more than help.” She also concedes, however, that there can also be situations “where to refrain from providing an acceptable form where the speaker is obviously uneasy or ‘floundering’ can actually be demoralizing, and gentle, supportive intervention can help” (ibid.: 247). Correction of pronunciation is then a matter necessitating delicate and careful consideration on the part of the teacher if it is to be effective. This will require teachers to determine and respect the needs of their specific students. As Lightbown and

Spada (2013: 208) explain, “[i]mmediate reaction to errors in an oral communication setting may embarrass some students and discourage them from speaking while others welcome such correction as exactly what is needed to help them notice a persistent error at just the moment when it occurs” (Lightbown & Spada 2013: 208).

If a teacher decides to provide feedback on a student’s pronunciation, he or she will also need to be sure to do so in as effective and supportive a manner as possible. The most common form of feedback is given in the form of a “recast”, which involves the teacher restating the correct form more or less immediately after the student has produced the error. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013: 210), this “has the advantage of not interrupting the flow of interaction. It is seen as indirect and polite, a way of giving students the information they need without embarrassing them”. Alternatively, teachers can also simply indicate to students that an error has been made, which Firth (1992: 217) refers to as “reminding” and which she claims has the potential to “shift the responsibility for actually correcting the problem from the teacher to the student”. This technique clearly encourages the development of learner autonomy and can also be made less intrusive through the use of alternative techniques for bringing students’ attention to their nonstandard productions. Bartram and Walton (1991: 44), for example, list several possibilities for doing so including the use of gestures, facial expressions, non-verbal sounds, and simple phrases.

One final point concerning teacher correction of students’ pronunciation errors is that teachers must never lose sight of the particularly face-threatening nature of pronunciation correction. As Tricia Hedge (2000: 287) writes, “[m]any teachers would say that pronunciation work is one of the most difficult areas for students because awkwardness, inhibition, embarrassment, and fear of losing face tend to come strongly to the fore. Correction of pronunciation errors, therefore, needs to be done in as positive a way as possible.” The creation of a low-anxiety pronunciation classroom is imperative because, as Ehsan Rassaei’s study (2015: 87) determined, “learners with lower anxiety were more successfully able to notice the gap between their erroneous utterances and target-like forms or recognize as corrective both the recasts and metalinguistic feedback”.

### **5.2.2 Alternative sources of feedback**

Finally, it must be noted that the teacher is not the only source of feedback available for students. It has been claimed, for example, that students can serve as effective sources of feedback for each other. If they have received phonetic training, students can listen to their peers and comment on the production of segments as well as suprasegmental features of their speech. By doing so, students communicate about pronunciation (a communicative activity in itself) and begin to “develop a metalanguage which allows them not only to talk about pronunciation but also to become more aware of their own pronunciation” (Naiman 1992: 170). Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 323) assert that such



peer feedback provides additional benefits, namely that “[m]ore students are involved in speaking at one time (the teacher is free to move around monitoring different groups), and students practice both pronunciation and listening discrimination skills”.

Along with providing feedback to their peers, students can also be trained to monitor and correct their own pronunciation. Because of the explicit training in phonetics this requires (see e.g. Naiman 1992: 170), it is safe to assume that such self-monitoring will be better suited to older and more advanced students. According to Joanne Kenworthy (1987: 118), “[e]valuating someone else’s pronunciation is a skill which needs conscious effort and practice, as all teachers know; it is even more difficult to monitor one’s own speech”. In order to foster this ability in students, then, she recommends teachers “make acts of monitoring and self-evaluation an integral part of work both inside and outside the classroom” (ibid.). Such procedures can have positive and far-reaching consequences for students’ future learning. As Suzanne Firth (1992: 219) argues, “[s]elf-correcting and self-monitoring minimize dependence and maximize self-reliance, allowing students to continue pronunciation improvement outside the classroom”. Similarly, Dłaska and Krekeler (2008: 515) maintain that “self-assessment procedures can enhance the awareness of one’s performance, they can increase learner motivation, and shift the decision making process in the direction of the learner”.

Technology offers another potential source of pronunciation feedback for students. In addition to providing students with helpful visualizations of phonetic phenomena for teaching and presentation, as discussed in the previous section, computers and mobile phone technology can also be a useful addition to teachers’ feedback technique inventories. For example, teachers can use built-in recording technology to make audio recordings of student performances, which they can then later evaluate and provide feedback on, or students can create their own recordings for self-assessment purposes. Additionally, software specially designed for computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and, more specifically, computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) purposes, has shown great potential. John Levis (2007: 197), for example, has enumerated the various benefits of CAPT as follows:

First, CAPT is tireless. Teachers simply cannot provide the level of practice and feedback needed for many students to improve. Second, CAPT is consistent. It is always the same in its presentation of stimulus material and in the kind of feedback given. Teachers often are not. Third, CAPT provides variety, both in the numbers of voices used as models and in opportunities for visual feedback, especially in areas like pitch movement. Finally, CAPT offers the chance to meet varied individual needs more easily than any teacher can. It promotes learner autonomy in working on pronunciation, a critical factor in success.

The most important recent development, however, has been in the improvement of automatic speech recognition (ASR) applications, which Rebecca Hincks (2003: 5) describes as having “held the tantalizing promise of enabling a truly communicative, feedback-providing framework for CALL, by

letting learners ‘converse’ with a computer”. There is still much room for improvement in the field of ASR, but future developments are likely to present teachers with even more effective ways to meet the pronunciation needs of their students.

### 5.2.3 Testing and assessment

For most teachers, providing students with communicative competence will constitute the primary goal of their instruction. Indeed, as Arthur Hughes (2003: 113) writes, “the objective of teaching spoken language is the development of the ability to interact successfully in that language”. Since it has already been demonstrated that pronunciation is, as expressed by Shira Koren (1995: 388), “part and parcel of successful communication”, it only makes sense for teachers to track progress made by students in this area of language ability in addition to others. Since pronunciation is most closely related to speaking, such assessment most commonly takes the form of spoken language achievement tests which feature pronunciation as one of many relevant factors. Due to the difficulties involved in directly testing oral production (see e.g. Thornbury 2005: 124-125), most achievement tests are administered in a written format and, if they feature spoken language items at all, favor the inclusion of listening tasks.

Despite the relative lack of utilization, various possibilities exist to test students’ pronunciation. Ranked by ease of implementation, these include tests of phonetic knowledge (often in a written format), tests of perception, and finally tests of production. While it might at first seem counter-intuitive to test students’ pronunciation by means of a written test of phonetic knowledge, this method does have particular uses and advantages. First among them is of course the relative ease with which written tests can be administered and scored. An additional benefit of written tests of phonetic knowledge, as Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 329) describe, is that “learners can demonstrate their understanding of how a particular feature operates, even though their ability to perceive and/or produce this feature may still be developing”. Since understanding rules and patterns of this sort is essential for gaining autonomy in learning, there is potential justification for tests of phonetic knowledge in many English language courses.

Tests of perception can be used to raise learners’ awareness of certain aspects of pronunciation. As with tests of phonetic knowledge, these also possess the advantage that they can be administered in a written format with the assistance of audio material. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 325-327) demonstrate how they can be used to assess students’ awareness and understanding of features of pronunciation such as consonant and vowel discrimination, word stress, sentence stress and prominence, intonation, and reduced speech.

The form of assessment which is most beneficial for students, yet at the same time the most difficult and time-consuming to administer, is of course oral production. Testing oral production can

take place in the form of monologues and oral presentations, but also in more interactive formats such as interviews and role plays. The interactive nature of the latter, as Celce-Murcia et al. (2010: 329) claim, “adds authenticity to the task and helps to relax the students”. Speech produced for assessment can be recorded in either audio or video format, which has the advantage of giving students the opportunity to rehearse and monitor their production in stages (see Celce-Murcia et al. 2010: 327), but also allows teachers to view any given performance multiple times, thus enabling more thorough assessment.

In addition to more traditional forms of assessment, new technologies can also be mobilized to aid in pronunciation testing. Chief among these is automatic speech recognition (ASR), which may currently be more useful for assessing pronunciation than for providing feedback (as was discussed in the previous section). Rebecca Hincks (2003: 5) describes the application of ASR for pronunciation assessment as follows:

Because of ASR’s mathematical nature, numerical scores can be derived representing the deviation between a signal and an acoustic model of the phoneme it is hypothesized to represent. These scores can then be given to the learner as a type of feedback measuring a quantifiable distance from a target phoneme. However, it is not possible with current technology to say in what way the signal has deviated from the model, and this means that feedback is not corrective or constructive, but merely a sort of evaluation of the signal.

Thus ASR technology currently seems to at least have the potential to relieve teachers of some of the work involved in pronunciation assessment, and these technologies can only be expected to improve as time passes. Furthermore, ASR can also be used to measure the speed of students’ speech, which has been shown to be a relevant factor in determining fluency (Hincks 2003: 6).

### **5.3 Summary**

To sum up, it can be said that the specific technical approach taken by teachers to the teaching of pronunciation will be dependent on various factors related both to beliefs held by teachers concerning the nature and goals of pronunciation teaching, but also the particular learners being taught. There are likely as many specific techniques for teaching pronunciation as there are teachers, which is to say that the particular beliefs of the teacher in question will be very influential in the selection of teaching techniques. Whichever techniques are ultimately chosen, however, “should be used in accordance with your students’ learning styles and strategies. Having a wide variety of techniques at your disposal allows you to appeal to the varying needs of different students” (Jull 1992: 214). Catering to specific students’ needs, of course, requires the delicate and intimate knowledge of a dedicated teacher, and no one-size-fits-all inventory of techniques exists for the teaching of pronunciation. Individual judgement and decisions made in the specific context of learning are called upon.

As concerns feedback and error correction, it has been stressed that teachers should be careful to act in as supportive a manner as possible. Not all mistakes threaten intelligibility, and “[t]eachers, therefore, need to prioritise, and not correct everything” (Kelly 2000: 12). The context of correction is also relevant, and teachers should carefully consider during which sort of activities feedback on pronunciation is likely to prove most effective.

Two recurrent themes in the discussion of feedback and error correction have been the development of learner autonomy and the potential of technology to aid in feedback and assessment processes. As Firth (1992: 219) writes, “[w]hile the individual instructor plays a critical role in the initial stages of pronunciation improvement, it is the individual student who must ultimately take responsibility for ongoing improvement”. Students will not always have the benefit of having a language teacher to monitor their production, and they will need to learn to monitor their own production in order to ensure communicative effectiveness in the varying contexts of their future use of the language. Technology has already shown great promise in helping teachers to both teach and assess pronunciation. As technologies which are currently available can only be expected to improve further in coming years, it will be important that language teachers keep abreast of the opportunities that new technologies can provide.

## 6. The study

In this chapter, basic background information will be presented concerning the methodological particularities of the present study. First of all, the research question which formed the foundation of the study will be discussed. Then, the construction of the quantitative research instrument used in this study, a questionnaire, will be briefly outlined. Subsequently, the specific tools used for the administration of the questionnaire and the analysis of participants' responses will be introduced. Finally, potential limitations of the study will also be briefly mentioned.

### 6.1 Research question

The research question at the heart of the present study can be expressed thusly: How is pronunciation viewed in the context of English Language Teaching by English teachers in Vienna? In other words, what beliefs do English teachers in Vienna have regarding pronunciation and its role in the English learning and teaching process? This research question is admittedly rather broad, and thus immediately raises additional related questions such as:

- Where do these views come from? What has shaped them?
- What beliefs and opinions do English teachers have concerning pronunciation models?
- How do teachers' professed views concerning technical aspects of pronunciation compare to their everyday practice?

Before proceeding to the description of the study's construction, it may be worthwhile to consider briefly why these questions should be asked in the first place. Why is it important to study beliefs? What value can the beliefs of teachers yield to researchers? These questions have hopefully been addressed to the reader's satisfaction in the second chapter of this thesis, yet the importance of teachers' practical interpretation and implementation of teaching principles and materials cannot be overstated. Teachers' beliefs then, are significant because they so strongly influence the way in which teachers transform (often rather abstractly formulated) curricula into actual lessons for actual students. If the beliefs of practicing teachers can be understood, insight can be gained concerning not only how curricula are being interpreted and converted into everyday teaching practice, but also how teaching practice compares to issues addressed in pronunciation teaching literature and academic discourse.

Next, then, is the matter of why one should investigate teachers' views concerning pronunciation, of all things. Why should pronunciation deserve the researcher's attention when there are other important aspects of language learning, e.g. grammar and vocabulary, which could be alternatively attended to? This issue has also been addressed in previous chapters, and the significance

of pronunciation has been demonstrated to derive from its pivotal role in facilitating understanding in the oral and aural media of communication. Despite pronunciation's importance, however, it has received relatively little attention from researchers (see Section 3.1 of this thesis). According to Lightbown & Spada (2013: 68), "grammar has been the focus for second language teachers and researchers for a long time. Vocabulary and pragmatics have also received more attention in recent years. However, we know less about pronunciation and how it is learned and taught". With this in mind, then, the present study attempts to contribute to a better understanding of how pronunciation is conceived of and taught by English teachers in Vienna.

## 6.2 Questionnaire development

With the investigation of teachers' beliefs concerning pronunciation sufficiently justified, the methodological tool used for doing so in the present study may now be introduced. As the research questions discussed above indicate, this study aims to discover first and foremost the personal attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of practicing teachers. Qualitative research methods and quantitative methods could both potentially be used to fulfill this purpose. The first of these, qualitative methods, could, for example, include conducting interviews with selected teachers. Results thus obtained, however, would most likely be very difficult to generalize to the larger population of English teachers in Vienna. For this reason, as well as for considerations of cost-effectiveness, quantitative research methods were instead chosen for the present study. More specifically, a questionnaire was developed in order to ascertain the previously discussed attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of practicing teachers.

As a research tool, questionnaires possess an array of advantages. First and foremost, they allow the researcher to reach a large number of teachers with relatively minimal effort. Therefore, they seem to be much more capable of determining the sort of overarching general patterns which this study aims to discover. In this case, common or shared beliefs can more easily be discerned following the analysis of a larger number of questionnaires. Indeed, as Dörnyei (2003: 9) writes, "[b]y administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour, and the personal investment required will be a fraction of what would have been needed for, say, interviewing the same number of people". Additionally, since pronunciation is, as indicated above, a relatively fresh area of inquiry, a questionnaire study makes a nice starting point from which further research could fruitfully investigate in a more qualitative, detailed, and case-by-case manner.

The questionnaire used in the present study was constructed largely based on the guidelines laid out in Dörnyei 2007: 101-113. Furthermore, the questionnaire was created in an online version using Google Forms, by means of which it could also be digitally administered and filled out by participants

online. Additionally, Google Forms allowed for the possibility of requiring certain questions to be answered in order for the questionnaire to be accepted, thus largely preventing data from being lost during the administration process.

The questionnaire itself consisted of three main sections. First, respondents were asked to provide basic data such as their age, gender, and years of teaching experience. In the next section, they were asked to express their beliefs concerning a variety of pronunciation-related issues. Finally, they were also asked to report their actual teaching practices concerning many of the same pronunciation issues. The questionnaire used in the present study can be found in a simplified (offline) version in the appendix of this thesis.

### **6.3 Questionnaire administration and analysis**

As described in the previous section, the questionnaire used in the present study was created and administered using Google Forms, a tool offered by Google which allows researchers to draft questionnaires with an impressive variety of item types and even performs basic descriptive analysis. Additionally, Microsoft Excel 2016 was used for basic descriptive analysis. For more detailed descriptive as well as inferential statistical analysis, SPSS Version 20 was used.

The questionnaire was provided to teachers of English at schools throughout the city of Vienna by means of an email containing a link to the questionnaire hosted on Google Forms. Anonymity was guaranteed due to the fact that questionnaire respondents were not asked to provide their names. As initial sampling did not reveal any serious errors in the questionnaire's construction, the results thus acquired were retained for inclusion with results subsequently obtained.

## **7. Results**

This chapter reports questionnaire participants' responses to the various items included in the questionnaire. First, the sample of respondents is examined. After light has been shed on the participants themselves, some of their general pronunciation-related beliefs are investigated. Then, their responses to items eliciting various specific types of beliefs will be analyzed in detail. These beliefs have been grouped into thematic clusters which have already been surveyed in previous chapters of this thesis, including the significance of pronunciation in the ELT curriculum, the role of the model, pronunciation teaching goals and priorities, pronunciation teaching techniques, and error correction, feedback, and assessment. Additionally, the self-reported teaching practice is also discussed. Finally, participants' responses to the two open-ended questions included in the questionnaire are presented.

### **7.1 Basic sample information**

In this section, questionnaire participants' responses to items intended to obtain basic information are examined. These items included the participants' gender, age, number of years of teaching experience, school type at which they teach, their L1, their study abroad experiences, and their personal pronunciation model. The results are summarized in Table 1 below and explained in further detail in the following sub-sections (also below).



Table 1. Summary of basic information

<b>Gender</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	18	32.7	21-30	11	20.0
Female	37	67.3	31-40	9	16.4
Total	55	100	41-50	18	32.7
			>50	17	30.9
			Total	55	100
<b>Years of teaching</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>School types</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<5	9	16.4	AHS	48	87.3
5-10	9	16.4	NMS	3	5.5
10-15	6	10.9	HTL	1	1.8
15-20	12	21.8	HUM	2	3.6
20-30	14	25.5	University	1	1.8
>30	5	9.1	Total	55	100
Total	55	100			
<b>L1</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Study abroad</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
German	47	85.5	Yes	27	49.1
English	2	3.6	No	28	50.9
Czech	1	1.8	Total	55	100
Slovak	1	1.8			
Bi-/multilingual	4	7.3			
Total	55	100			
<b>Study abroad location</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
UK	13	41.9	RP	37	67.3
USA	5	16.1	GA	14	25.5
ESE	2	6.5	ELF	3	5.5
NESE	8	25.8	SAE	1	1.8
ESNE	2	6.5	Austrian E	0	0.0
NESNE	1	3.2	Total	55	100
Total	31	100			

### 7.1.1 Gender and age

In total, 57 responses were collected. As two of them were duplicates, however, they were discarded and removed from the dataset, leaving a total of 55 unique responses. Of these 55 participants, 18 (32.7%) were male and 37 (67.3%) female. Nearly a third of those who participated in the questionnaire survey were aged 41-50 years (32.7%). A total of 11 teachers (20.0%) were aged 21-30

years, and 9 teachers (16.4%) were between 31 and 40 years of age. Combining the two oldest age groups, it can be concluded that the majority of participants (63.6%) were aged 41 years or older.

### **7.1.2 Teaching experience**

The next information obtained from participants was the number of years they had taught English at the time of responding. It is worth noting that the majority of participants (56.4%) had 15 or more years of experience teaching English. Therefore, it can be rather safely assumed that their beliefs will have had sufficient time to have become more or less stable following the transformative processes of teacher education and practice as a beginner teacher.

### **7.1.3 School types**

Next, questionnaire participants were asked to share at what type of school they teach English. The overwhelming majority of participants (87.3%) taught at an Austrian secondary school form known as AHS, an initialism of the German *Allgemein bildende höhere Schule*. The curriculum used at this school form for the subject of English as a first foreign language has already been discussed in section 3.4 of this thesis.

### **7.1.4 First languages**

The first language-related item of the questionnaire asked participants to share their L1, or mother tongue. Here again there was an overwhelming majority, with most participants (85.5%) having German as their L1. The largest minority group (7.3%) consisted of teachers who grew up either bi- or multilingually. Interestingly, two of the teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey (3.6%) reported English to be their L1.

### **7.1.5 Study abroad experiences**

Next, questionnaire participants were asked about any experiences they may have had studying abroad. Here it must be noted that the question itself may have been potentially misleading or at least less than optimally formulated, since respondents may have (and indeed did) spend considerable lengths of time abroad for reasons other than study and at times either before or after school or university. Because of the phrasing of the question, however, these instances could not be considered in the data. As lengths of time spent abroad were described in a variety of ways by respondents (including months, years, and semesters), all lengths of time were converted into months, with a semester being interpreted as four months, two semesters as a year (12 months) and answers given in months left as is.

Of the 55 respondents, 27 (49.1%) reported having spent some length of time studying abroad either during school or university. Of these 27 respondents, 3 failed to report the length of their stay. Therefore, the mean length of stay was calculated for only the 24 respondents who provided this

information, coming to 10.3 months. Taking all respondents into account who reported the length of their time spent studying abroad, the average time spent studying abroad was 5.3 months, or nearly half a year.

For the purpose of analysis, study abroad locations were divided into categories including (1) the UK, (2) the USA, (3) English-speaking Europe, (4) Non-English-speaking Europe, (5) English-speaking non-Europe, and (6) non-English-speaking non-Europe. As can be seen from Table 1, the largest number of respondents (13, or 41.9% of those who reported the location of their time abroad) studied abroad in the UK. One of these 13 also studied abroad in English-speaking Europe (Ireland), but there was another respondent who studied abroad in English-speaking Europe (Ireland) exclusively. Thus, if we include this individual and exclude the respondent who failed to provide the location of their study abroad, we can conclude that more than half of those teachers who studied abroad (53.8%) did so in the British Isles.

### **7.1.6 Personal pronunciation models**

For the next item, participants were asked to report on what accent they had modelled their own pronunciation of English. As shown in Table 1, the overwhelming majority of participating teachers (37, 67.3%) reported having chosen RP (discussed in section 4.2.1) as their personal pronunciation model. The next largest group, which consisted of 14 teachers (25.5%) reported GA to be their personal model. Only three teachers (5.5%) chose ELF, one teacher (1.8%) reported South African English, and not a single teacher declared Austrian English to be their personal model.

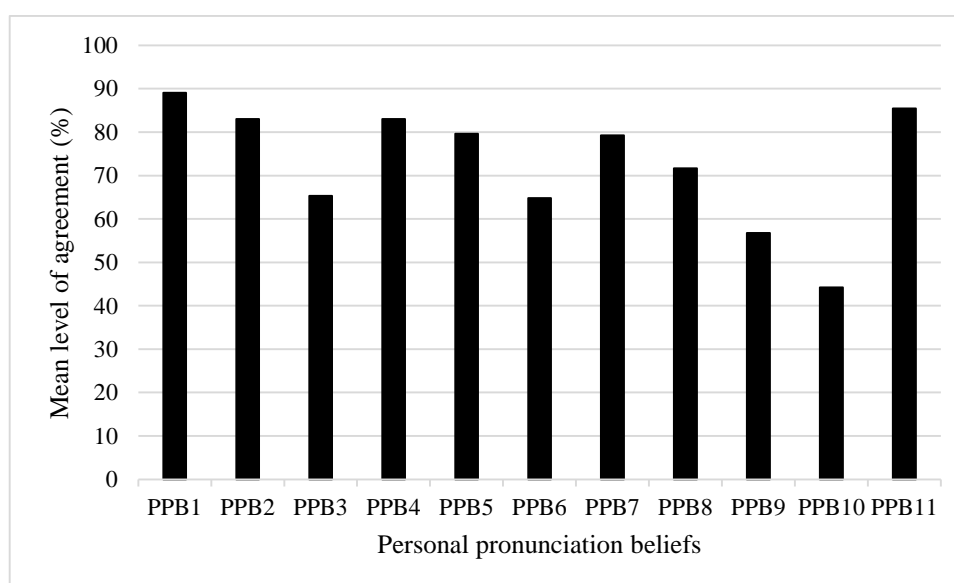
## **7.2 Personal pronunciation beliefs**

After providing basic information about their personal history, questionnaire participants were then asked to express their personal beliefs concerning various pronunciation-related issues. The results of these items are summarized in Table 2 and will be investigated in more detail in the following subsections. For each item, a mean level of agreement has been calculated by assigning each response of “strongly agree” with 3 points, each response of “agree” with 2 points, each response of “disagree” with 1 point, and each response of “strongly disagree” with 0 points. Responses of “I don’t know.” were excluded from the calculations. The totals were then collected for each item, divided by the number of teachers included in the calculation, and displayed as percentages in Table 2. According to this scheme, a 100% mean level of agreement would result from all teachers (excluding those who gave a response other than “I don’t know”) strongly agreeing with the item and a 0% mean level of agreement from all teachers strongly disagreeing with the item. Figure 7 displays these mean levels of agreement visually.

Table 2. Personal pronunciation beliefs (PPB)

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know.		Mean level of agreement
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
PPB1. It is important for me to have a good pronunciation when speaking English.	40	72.7	13	23.6	1	1.8	1	1.8	0	0.0	89.1
PPB2. I would like to sound like a native speaker when speaking English.	32	58.2	16	29.1	4	7.3	1	1.8	2	3.6	83.0
PPB3. I would like to improve my English pronunciation.	16	29.1	18	32.7	12	21.8	3	5.5	6	10.9	65.3
PPB4. I feel confident about my pronunciation when teaching English.	30	54.5	22	40.0	3	5.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	83.0
PPB5. I feel confident about my pronunciation when conversing in English with native speakers.	24	43.6	27	49.1	3	5.5	0	0.0	1	1.8	79.6
PPB6. I am interested in phonetics and phonology.	18	32.7	18	32.7	15	27.3	3	5.5	1	1.8	64.8
PPB7. I am interested in different accents and varieties of English.	26	47.3	21	38.2	6	10.9	0	0.0	2	3.6	79.2
PPB8. It was easy for me to decide which model to base my English pronunciation on.	26	47.3	15	27.3	6	10.9	6	10.9	2	3.6	71.7
PPB9. My experience at university prepared me adequately for pronouncing English well.	13	23.6	18	32.7	17	30.9	6	10.9	1	1.8	56.8
PPB10. My experience at university adequately prepared me to teach pronunciation.	7	12.7	15	27.3	18	32.7	12	21.8	3	5.5	44.2
PPB11. Speaking English is an important part of who I am.	38	69.1	12	21.8	3	5.5	2	3.6	0	0.0	85.5

Figure 1. Mean levels of agreement with PPB items



### **7.2.1 Personal importance of pronunciation (PPB1)**

The first personal belief investigated in the questionnaire concerned how important it was for the questionnaire participants to pronounce English well, or to “have a good pronunciation”. Although the item was rather subjectively formulated, it is noteworthy that, whatever the respondents considered to constitute a “good pronunciation”, a total of 53 of them (96.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to them. Even more tellingly, 40 (72.7%) strongly agreed that having a good pronunciation was important for them.

### **7.2.2 Desire to sound like a native speaker (PPB2)**

Questionnaire participants were asked whether or not they would like to sound like native speakers when speaking English. Here, agreement was slightly less universal, with a total of 48 teachers (87.3%) reporting a desire to sound like a native speaker when speaking English. In fact, the majority (32 teachers, 58.2%) even strongly agreed that they would like to sound like native speakers. This shows that, for teachers at least, ultimate pronunciation attainment is considered a personal ideal, even if it might be an unrealistic goal.

### **7.2.3 Desire to improve pronunciation (PPB3)**

After discovering the nature of teachers’ personal pronunciation ideals, the next aim was to discern their willingness to improve their own pronunciation. Interestingly, general agreement here was less than in the case of desire to sound like a native speaker. Specifically, 34 teachers (61.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to improve their pronunciation, with only 16 of them (29.1%) strongly agreeing. The reduced level of agreement with this item compared to the desire to sound like a native speaker could either be the result of teachers feeling that they have already attained native-likeness in their pronunciation or that they do not wish to exert the effort necessary to attain that level of pronunciation proficiency. Due to the considerable difficulty of attaining native-like pronunciation, it is likely that the latter explanation is more suitable. Unfortunately, however, as this was not inquired directly in the questionnaire, it will have to remain a matter of conjecture.

### **7.2.4 Pronunciation confidence when teaching (PPB4)**

When asked about their confidence in their pronunciation when teaching English, a total of 52 teachers (94.6%) reported indeed being confident about their pronunciation while teaching. A total of 30 teachers (54.5%) even strongly agreed with this. None strongly disagreed.

### **7.2.5 Pronunciation confidence when conversing with native speakers (PPB5)**

Similar to the previous item, teachers were also asked about their confidence in their pronunciation when conversing with native speakers of English. In such circumstances, they seemed to be slightly less confident, with a total of 51 teachers (92.7%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were

also confident in such situations. Only 24 of them (43.6%), however, strongly agreed. As before, no teachers strongly disagreed with this item.

### **7.2.6 Interest in phonetics and phonology (PPB6)**

For this item, teachers were asked to report their interest in the subjects of phonetics and phonology. A total of 36 teachers (65.5%) expressed some level of agreement with the item, with 18 of them (32.7%) strongly agreeing. The mean level of agreement with this item was 64.8%, which is considerably less than the 89.1% level of agreement with PPB1, which would imply that despite generally considering it important to have a good pronunciation, teachers are not particularly interested in the academic study of pronunciation itself.

### **7.2.7 Interest in accents and varieties of English (PPB7)**

As with reporting their interest in phonetics and phonology, teachers were also asked to report their interest in different accents and varieties of English. A total of 47 teachers (85.5%) reported either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the item, and 27 of them (47.3%) strongly agreed. Not a single teacher disagreed with the item.

### **7.2.8 Ease of personal pronunciation model selection (PPB8)**

Next, teachers were asked how easy it had been for them to choose which model they would seek to emulate with their pronunciation of English. A total of 41 teachers (74.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the decision was an easy one for them, with 26 of them (47.3%) strongly agreeing. Interestingly, 6 teachers (10.9%) reported strongly disagreeing, suggesting that the decision was extremely difficult for them to make.

### **7.2.9 Adequacy of university education for personal pronunciation (PPB9)**

For this and the following items, teachers were asked about the adequacy of their university education concerning pronunciation. First, they were asked how well their experience at university had prepared them for pronouncing English well. The majority of teachers (31, 56.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their experience at university had left them feeling adequately prepared to pronounce English well. Of those who disagreed to some extent, 6 teachers (10.9%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that, together with the 17 who simply disagreed, more than a third of the teachers (23, 41.8%) were left feeling inadequately prepared regarding their personal pronunciation of English.

### **7.2.10 Adequacy of university education for teaching pronunciation (PPB10)**

After being asked about the perceived adequacy of their university education for preparing them to pronounce English well, teachers were then asked how well their university education prepared them to teach pronunciation. The general agreement here was even less, with only a combined number of

22 teachers (40.0%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 7 (12.7%) strongly agreeing. A total of 30 teachers (54.5%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, with more teachers strongly disagreeing in this instance than with any other personal pronunciation beliefs item (12, 21.8%). Altogether, the mean level of agreement was 44.2%, which was the lowest of all personal pronunciation belief items. It can therefore be concluded that the majority of teachers feel inadequately prepared to teach pronunciation after having completed their teacher education program at university-level.

### 7.2.11 English-speaking identity (PPB11)

Finally, teachers were asked to what degree they agreed that speaking English was an important part of their personal identity. In this case, as with the importance of pronunciation, there was much general agreement among the participant teachers. A total of 50 teachers (90.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed, with 38 of them (69.1%) even strongly agreeing. With a mean level of agreement of 85.5%, it can be said that, for the English teachers who completed the questionnaire, English is indeed a very important part of their personal identity.

## 7.3 Significance and role of pronunciation in the English classroom

Moving from the more personal orientation of previous items, the questionnaire then asked teachers to report how important they viewed pronunciation to be for the language learning process of students in the English classroom. Summarized in Table 3 and Table 4, the results are also discussed in more detail below.

Table 3. Significance of pronunciation for the English classroom

Relative importance	#	%	Ideal class time	#	%
Most important	0	0.0	<5%	6	10.9
More important	7	12.7	5%-10%	26	47.3
Equally important	33	60.0	20%-30%	9	16.4
Less important	14	25.5	30%-50%	6	10.9
Least important	0	0.0	>50%	0	0.0
I don't know.	1	1.8	I don't know.	8	14.5

Table 4. Necessity of teacher knowledge of phonetics

Response	#	%
Strongly agree	25	45.5
Agree	28	50.9
Disagree	1	1.8
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
I don't know.	1	1.8

### 7.3.1 Relative importance of pronunciation

When asked how important they believed pronunciation to be in comparison to other aspects of language learning, most teachers (33, 60.0%) responded by declaring pronunciation to be equal in importance to other aspects of language learning. Only a single teacher replied with the response “I don’t know.” By assigning each definitive response (all responses other than “I don’t know.”) with a numerical value from 0-4, with 0 representing “least important” and 4 “most important”, a mean level of importance was calculated at 1.85. Generally, then, we can conclude that teachers have rather firm beliefs concerning the issue, and they tend to view pronunciation as one among many priorities to be addressed in the language classroom, but of slightly less general importance than those others.

### 7.3.2 Ideal amount of time in class allocated to pronunciation

Concerning the ideal amount of time which should be spent in the language classroom addressing matters of pronunciation, the majority of teachers (32, 58.2%) felt that pronunciation issues should not take up more than 10% of total time in class. The fact that a total of 8 teachers (14.5%) responded that they did not know how much time should be allotted to pronunciation teaching could be seen as an indication that many teachers do not have clearly formulated beliefs regarding the role of pronunciation in relation to other aspects of language teaching.

### 7.3.3 Necessity of teacher knowledge of phonetics

Also related to the significance and role of pronunciation in the English classroom is the opinion of teachers concerning the necessity of English teachers possessing a respectable understanding of phonetics. When asked to express their beliefs, the teachers almost unanimously agreed that this was necessary (53, 96.4%). Only a single teacher disagreed, and one was not able to express an opinion on the matter.

## 7.4 Beliefs concerning pronunciation models

Following the elicitation of beliefs concerning the general importance of pronunciation for language



teaching, teachers were asked to respond to a number of items related to the matter of pronunciation models (see Chapter 4 of this thesis). The items formed a series of statements to which participants were asked to express their level of agreement. Mean levels of agreement were calculated using the procedure described in section 7.2. Results are summarized in Table 5 and addressed in more detail below.

Table 5. Beliefs concerning pronunciation models (BCPM)

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know.		Mean level of agreement
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
BCPM1. It is important that a native-speaker variety of English be used as a model for pronunciation teaching.	20	36.4	26	47.3	4	7.3	2	3.6	3	5.5	74.4
BCPM2. Received Pronunciation/BBC English is the best-suited pronunciation model for English instruction.	3	5.5	7	12.7	27	49.1	11	20.0	7	12.7	34.7
BCPM3. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is a suitable pronunciation model for English language teaching.	1	1.8	18	32.7	15	27.3	6	10.9	15	27.3	45.0
BCPM4. Students should be exposed to various native and non-native speaker accents in English class.	40	72.7	12	21.8	1	1.8	0	0	2	3.6	91.2
BCPM5. With enough practice, it is possible to sound like a native speaker when speaking a foreign language.	10	18.2	26	47.3	10	18.2	4	7.3	5	9.1	61.3
BCPM6. It is essential that students are able to identify with the accent or variety chosen as a model.	7	12.7	18	32.7	21	38.2	4	7.3	5	9.1	52.0

#### 7.4.1 The importance of a native-speaker model (BCPM1)

When asked about the importance of a native-speaker variety of English being used as a model for pronunciation teaching, an overwhelming majority of the teachers (46, 83.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important for a native-speaker variety to be chosen. The mean level of agreement with this item was fairly high (74.4%), and is in accordance with the general convention described in section 4.2 of this thesis.

#### 7.4.2 RP as a pronunciation model (BCPM2)

Although the teachers overwhelmingly agreed that it was important for a native-speaker variety to be chosen as a model, they were much less comfortable with the idea of RP being the chosen variety. In total, 38 teachers (69.1%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that RP was the best-suited pronunciation model for English instruction, resulting in the lowest mean level of agreement (34.7%) for any of the pronunciation model items. A total of 7 teachers (12.7%), however, were not able to

express their beliefs on this issue.

### **7.4.3 ELF as a pronunciation model (BCPM3)**

A total of 19 teachers (34.5%) believed ELF to be a suitable model for pronunciation teaching, although only one of them (1.8%) strongly agreed. Only slightly more teachers (21, 38.2%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that ELF could be a suitable model, and a total of 15 teachers (27.3%) were not able to express an opinion on the matter. These results suggest that a considerable number of teachers were unfamiliar with the concept of ELF and its implications for pronunciation teaching, and those who were familiar enough with it to have formed beliefs were divided into two fairly evenly split camps concerning its suitability as a pronunciation model.

### **7.4.4 Ideal exposure of students to various models (BCPM4)**

Among the teachers who responded to the questionnaire, there was nearly unanimous agreement (52, 94.5%) that students should be exposed to various native and non-native accents during the course of English instruction. Indeed, even 40 teachers (72.7%) strongly agreed with this item, leading to the highest mean level of agreement among all model-related beliefs (91.2%). It seems then that, whether or not teachers had strongly established beliefs concerning which particular pronunciation model should be chosen, they almost invariably believed exposure to a broad range of accents to be beneficial for students.

### **7.4.5 Possibility of ultimate pronunciation attainment (BCPM5)**

When asked about the possibility of achieving a native-like accent while speaking a foreign language, a total of 36 teachers (65.5%) either agreed or strongly agreed that this was indeed possible. This constitutes a majority, but the mean level of agreement remained relatively low at only 61.3%. Five teachers were not able to say whether or not ultimate pronunciation attainment was a possibility.

### **7.4.6 Necessity of student identification with pronunciation models (BCPM6)**

Finally, the teachers were asked whether or not they agreed that it was necessary for students to be able to identify with an accent that had been chosen as a pronunciation model. Responses to this item were rather divided, with the same number of teachers (25, 45.5%) either demonstrating some form of agreement or some form of disagreement. In both cases, teachers were more likely to avoid expressing strong opinions, with only 7 teachers (12.7%) strongly agreeing and 4 teachers (7.3%) strongly disagreeing. As with the previous item, 5 teachers were not confident enough in their beliefs to express an opinion.

## **7.5 Beliefs concerning pronunciation teaching goals and priorities**

Three of the items in the questionnaire aimed to elicit teachers' beliefs concerning the goals and

priorities of pronunciation teaching. The results obtained in connection with these items are described below.

### 7.5.1 Pronunciation teaching goals

In order to determine what the teachers considered to be reasonable goals for the teaching of pronunciation, they were asked to express the degree to which they agreed with two statements. The first of these concerned the improbability of students achieving a native-like pronunciation when speaking English. A total of 36 teachers (63.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that it was unlikely their students would achieve native-like pronunciation. However, more than a quarter of the teachers (14, 25.5%) disagreed to some extent, implying that they viewed ultimate pronunciation attainment to be a real possibility for their students. The mean level of agreement was 61.3%, and 5 teachers did not feel able to express an opinion.

For the next item, teachers were asked to what extent they agreed that it was an acceptable outcome for their students to have a non-native accent. Here the agreement was much more universal, with 50 teachers (90.9%) expressing some form of agreement. As only 21 of them strongly agreed, however, the mean level of agreement was 78.0%. From the results of this and the previous item we can conclude that, while many teachers felt that it was a real possibility that their students could attain a native-like pronunciation, they were by all means also willing to accept less-than-perfect accents from their students.

Table 6. Pronunciation priorities

<b>Improbability of ultimate attainment</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Acceptability of non-native pronunciation</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly agree	10	18.2	Strongly agree	21	38.2
Agree	26	47.3	Agree	29	52.7
Disagree	10	18.2	Disagree	3	5.5
Strongly disagree	4	7.3	Strongly disagree	0	0.0
I don't know.	5	9.1	I don't know.	2	3.6
Mean level of agreement	61.3		Mean level of agreement	78.0	

### 7.5.2 Pronunciation teaching priorities

When asked about the relative prioritization of segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation, the majority of the teachers (39, 70.9%) responded that the two aspects were of equal importance. Of those who believed in prioritizing one over the other, slightly more teachers suggested favoring segmental aspects (9, 16.4%). Two teachers made use of the “other” option provided in the questionnaire, but one of their responses could be justifiably included in the suprasegmental category,

and the other declared words to be the most important unit for pronunciation teaching prioritization. The results are summarized Table 7 below.

Table 7. Relative importance of segmental and suprasegmental features

Features	#	%
Segmental more important	9	16.4
Suprasegmental more important	4	7.3
Equal importance	39	70.9
Words	1	1.8
I don't know.	2	3.6
Total	55	100

## 7.6 Beliefs concerning pronunciation teaching techniques

The next group of items dealt with technical matters of pronunciation teaching. First, teachers were asked what degree of explicitness they found to be ideal for the teaching of pronunciation. Then they were asked to rate how effective they perceived a variety of pronunciation techniques to be.

### 7.6.1 Ideal degree of explicitness in pronunciation teaching

For this item, teachers were asked to select from a list of statements characterizing potential beliefs concerning the ideal level of explicitness in pronunciation teaching the statement which best matched their personal convictions. Of the 55 total teachers, the overwhelming majority (44, 80%) selected the statement which described a flexible approach which left the teacher the option of differentiating the level of explicitness for students with varying abilities. Of the other two options, one more teacher (6, 10.9%) chose a more explicit, overt approach over the implicit approach favoring more natural acquisition (5, 9.1%). While an “other” category was offered for respondents, the two teachers who selected this option provided responses which could be justifiably included in the “individualized/differentiated” and “implicit/natural acquisition” categories, respectively, where they included as displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Ideal degree of explicitness

Level of explicitness	#	%
Explicit	6	10.9
Individualized/differentiated	44	80.0
Implicit/natural acquisition	5	9.1
Total	55	100

### 7.6.2 Effectiveness of specific techniques

For this set of items, teachers rated a number of common pronunciation teaching techniques based on how effective they deemed the techniques to be. For each technique, mean levels of effectiveness were calculated using a procedure similar to that explained in section 7.2 of this thesis. The results are summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Perceived effectiveness of specific pronunciation teaching techniques

Technique	Very effective		Effective		Ineffective		Very ineffective		I don't know.		Mean level of effectiveness
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
Phonetic transcription	1	1.8	17	30.9	25	45.5	9	16.4	3	5.5	39.0
Visuals	1	1.8	18	32.7	16	29.1	7	12.7	13	23.6	42.6
Gadgets	1	1.8	14	25.5	14	25.5	7	12.7	19	34.5	40.5
Software	10	18.2	30	54.5	5	9.1	1	1.8	9	16.4	67.4
Humor	19	34.5	19	34.5	8	14.5	1	1.8	8	16.4	71.5
Audio material	33	60.0	17	30.9	3	5.5	0	0.0	2	3.6	84.0
Contrastive analysis	20	36.4	24	43.6	8	14.5	0	0.0	3	5.5	73.0
Games	17	30.9	22	40.0	7	12.7	0	0.0	9	16.4	72.3
Teacher as explicit model	20	36.4	29	52.7	4	7.3	0	0.0	2	3.6	75.3
Ear training	23	41.8	24	43.6	3	5.5	1	1.8	4	7.3	76.9
Communicative tasks	15	27.3	17	30.9	11	20.0	4	7.3	8	14.5	62.5

Altogether, teachers perceived the use of audio material to be most effective (84.0% mean level of effectiveness). Phonetic transcription was considered to be least effective of all (39.0% mean level of effectiveness), with gadgets and visuals being considered only slightly more effective (mean levels of effectiveness of 40.5% and 42.6%, respectively). In general, however, teachers seemed to have incompletely formed beliefs concerning the various teaching techniques. This was especially true concerning the use of gadgets, to which a total of 19 teachers (34.5%) did not feel able to respond, and visuals, to which a total of 13 teachers (23.6%) were not able to respond.

## 7.7 Beliefs concerning feedback and error correction

In addition to eliciting teachers' beliefs concerning the effectiveness of various pronunciation teaching techniques, the questionnaire also aimed to discover teachers' beliefs concerning pronunciation feedback and the correction of students' pronunciation errors. First, teachers were asked to report their general attitudes toward the correction of student errors and the contextual

circumstances under which they considered correction of student errors to be beneficial. Next they were asked to report how harmfully disruptive they considered correction to be, what role they found pronunciation to play in the development of anxiety in students, student motivation to improve pronunciation, and the possibility of students improving their pronunciation autonomously.

### 7.7.1 General attitude toward correction of students' pronunciation errors

In order to determine teachers' general attitudes toward the correction of students' pronunciation errors, they were asked to select from a list of three possible statements which expressed potential orientations toward correction. The first orientation represented a teacher-centered approach toward correction (i.e. that it is the job of teachers to make students aware of their own mistakes in order to correct them), the second an approach emphasizing developmental stages (i.e. that correction is more or less unnecessary since students will only learn when they are ready to do so), and an approach which stressed the importance of the situational context for error correction (i.e. correction makes more sense at particular times than at others). Overwhelmingly (52, 94.5%), the teachers selected the situational approach. Not a single teacher opted for the developmental approach and only 2 teachers (3.6%) opted for the teacher-centered approach. One teacher made use of the "other" option but provided a response which did not have anything to do with error correction and is therefore displayed as "missing/invalid" in Table 10 below.

Table 10. General attitude toward error correction

Attitude towards correction	#	%
Teacher-centered	2	3.6
Situational/contextual	52	94.5
Developmental	0	0.0
Missing/invalid	1	1.8
Total	55	100

### 7.7.2 Ideal context for correction of students' pronunciation errors

As most teachers expressed favoring a situational approach to the correction of students' pronunciation errors, this next item is of particular interest to examine. Here teachers were asked to select from a list of various lesson phases the situations during which they found error correction to be appropriate. As shown in Table 11 below, the greatest number of teachers found error correction to be appropriate after student presentations (47, 85.5%). The second most popular time for error correction was following communicative tasks (40, 72.7%). The least popular time of all for error correction was during students' presentations, which only 3 teachers (5.5%) found to be appropriate. A total of 6 teachers made use of the "other" option to provide additional alternatively appropriate

situations for error correction. These responses stressed the importance of the frequency with which errors occur, their potential threat to intelligibility, the aim(s) of the exercises being used, and the length of texts being read aloud.

Table 11. Ideal context for error correction

Context	#	%
While students are reading out loud	35	63.6
After students have finished reading out loud	25	45.5
During question and answer sessions	17	30.9
After question and answer sessions	23	41.8
During student presentations	3	5.5
After student presentations	47	85.5
During communicative tasks	5	9.1
After communicative tasks	40	72.7
Other	6	10.9

### 7.7.3 Disruptiveness of correction, anxiety, motivation, and autonomous learning

For this group of items, the focus was placed on the learner. First of all, teachers were asked to what degree they agreed that immediate error correction was harmfully disruptive. They were also asked to what degree they agreed that students experienced anxiety when issues of pronunciation were addressed in class. They were finally also asked to express their level of agreement with statements concerning students' motivation to improve their pronunciation and the possibility of students improving their pronunciation autonomously. The results are presented in Table 12 and described below.

Barely half of the teachers who participated in the questionnaire (28, 50.9%) agreed to some extent that immediate error correction was harmfully disruptive. However, a total of 6 teachers (10.9%) did not feel knowledgeable enough to venture an opinion on the matter.

Regarding the connection between pronunciation and student anxiety, close to two thirds of the teachers (34, 61.8%) disagreed to some extent that addressing issues of pronunciation in the classroom caused anxiety in students. For this reason, the mean level of agreement was quite low (39.7%). In the case of this item, only three (5.5%) did not have an opinion.

More than three quarters of the teachers (42, 76.4%) agreed to some extent that students were motivated to improve their pronunciation. Only five teachers disagreed and not a single teacher strongly disagreed. However, a rather high number of teachers (8, 14.5%) were not able to provide

an answer.

Finally, there was also a rather high degree of agreement that it was possible for students to improve their pronunciation autonomously. In fact, this item had the highest mean level of agreement of all four statements (74.5%). Four teachers were not able to provide an answer, however.

Table 12. Disruptiveness of correction, anxiety, motivation, and autonomous learning

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		I don't know.		Mean level of agreement
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
Harmful disruptiveness of correction	8	14.5	20	36.4	16	29.1	5	9.1	6	10.9	54.4
Anxiety concerning pronunciation	3	5.5	15	27.3	23	41.8	11	20.0	3	5.5	39.7
Motivation to improve pronunciation	8	14.5	34	61.8	5	9.1	0	0.0	8	14.5	68.8
Possibility of autonomous learning	17	30.9	30	54.5	3	5.5	1	1.8	4	7.3	74.5

## 7.8 Reported teaching practice

In this section, the results of questionnaire items eliciting not the beliefs of teachers (as was the case in the previous sections of this chapter), but rather the teaching practice of participant teachers concerning pronunciation will be discussed. Teachers were asked to report the time spent on matters of pronunciation in their classrooms, the way in which pronunciation models were dealt with, their level of explicitness during pronunciation teaching, their use of various teaching techniques, and finally their classroom practice concerning matters of feedback and error correction.

### 7.8.1 Class time allocated to pronunciation

The amount of class time the teachers reported actually allocating to pronunciation varied widely. As shown in Table 13 below, the largest group consisted of 23 teachers (41.8%) who reported spending between 20% and 30% of the total class time addressing issues related to pronunciation. A total of 8 teachers (14.5%) were not able to estimate the amount of time they spent in class addressing matters of pronunciation.

Table 13. Class time allocated to pronunciation

Context	#	%
<5%	2	3.6
5%-10%	7	12.7
20%-30%	23	41.8
30%-50%	15	27.3
I don't know.	8	14.5



### 7.8.2 Pronunciation models

Regarding pronunciation models and teaching practice, teachers were asked two questions: first, how often they expose their students to various accents of spoken English, and second whether or not they allow their students to independently select a pronunciation model for themselves. As shown in Table 14 below, a total of 22 teachers (40.0%) reported exposing their students to diverse native-speaker and non-native speaker accents as often as possible. Even more teachers (27, 49.1%), however, reported often exposing their students to diverse accents. As for the possibility of students independently selecting their own pronunciation model, all but one of the teachers participating in the study responded that students were free to do so. However, three teachers made use of the “other” option to specify the circumstances under which this was possible. One teacher stated that students could only freely select a native-speaker model, another that the LFC (see section 4.2.4 of this thesis) was mandatory and anything else an additional bonus, and one other teacher stipulated that, although students were allowed to freely select their own model, they were also expected to strictly adhere to that model.

Table 14 Pronunciation models

<b>Frequency of diverse NS and NNS accent exposure</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Possibility of independent model selection</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
As often as possible	22	40.0	Yes	54	98.2
Often	27	49.1	No	1	1.8
Rarely	6	10.9			
Never	0	0.0			

### 7.8.3 Techniques

Before reporting how often they made use of various pronunciation teaching techniques, teachers were asked to select a statement which best described the level of explicitness with which they addressed issues of pronunciation in class. As illustrated by Table 15 below, the largest group of teachers (22, 40.0%) selected the statement which described a more covert approach to the teaching of pronunciation. Only 12 teachers (21.8%) opted for a more overt approach, and 10 teachers (18.2%) reported an opportunistic approach, addressing matters of pronunciation as they appeared in the coursebook they used. The selection of statements offered in the questionnaire for these items seems not to have satisfied the teachers a great deal, however, as 11 of them (20.0%) made use of the “other” option in order to express more nuanced approaches. Four teachers (7.3%), for example, stated that more than one of the statements could be used to describe their own personal approach. The others described a more flexible, ad hoc approach catering to the idiosyncrasies of various students and age

groups.

Table 15. Level of explicitness in teaching practice

Level of explicitness	#	%
Overt	12	21.8
Covert	22	40.0
Opportunist	10	18.2
Other	11	20.0
Total	55	100

Similar to how the teachers were asked to rate how effective they considered various pronunciation teaching techniques to be (described in section 7.6.2 of this thesis), they were also asked to report how frequently they made use of the same techniques by selecting from options including “often”, “sometimes”, “rarely”, and “never”. For each technique, mean frequencies of use were calculated using a procedure similar to that explained in section 7.2 of this thesis. As can be seen in Table 16 below, the use of the teacher as an explicit model was reported to occur most frequently (70.8% mean frequency of use). The second most frequently used technique was the utilization of audio material (62.5% mean frequency of use). The two most infrequently used techniques were software and visuals, with mean frequencies of use of 20.8% and 21.4%, respectively. Gadgets, software, and visuals were the three techniques which the most teachers reported never using.

Table 16. Frequency of technique use

Technique	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Mean frequency of use
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
Phonetic transcription	2	3.6	7	12.7	24	43.6	22	40.0	26.2
Visuals	1	1.8	6	10.9	21	38.2	27	49.1	21.4
Gadgets	1	1.8	4	7.3	11	20.0	39	70.9	13.1
Software	1	1.8	7	12.7	18	32.7	29	52.7	20.8
Humor	5	9.1	18	32.7	18	32.7	14	25.5	41.1
Audio material	22	40.0	17	30.9	5	9.1	11	20.0	62.5
Contrastive analysis	8	14.5	28	50.9	15	27.3	4	7.3	56.5
Games	4	7.3	22	40.0	17	30.9	12	21.8	43.5
Teacher as explicit model	18	32.7	28	50.9	9	16.4	0	0.0	70.8
Ear training	11	20.0	27	49.1	11	20.0	6	10.9	58.3
Communicative tasks	18	32.7	17	30.9	11	20.0	9	16.4	58.9

### 7.8.4 Feedback and assessment

In addition to reporting their use of pronunciation teaching techniques, teachers were also asked to report their teaching practice regarding pronunciation feedback and assessment. They were asked how often they delivered feedback to their students in class, what criteria this feedback was based upon, how the feedback was delivered, how often students were encouraged to improve their pronunciation independently (with the implication being that they would be making use of self-monitoring strategies - see section 5.2.2 of this thesis), and finally whether or not pronunciation was explicitly included as a part of students' final grades. Illustrated in Table 17 and Table 18, the results are also discussed in further detail below.

Table 17. Feedback and assessment

<b>Frequency of in-class pronunciation feedback</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Pronunciation feedback criteria</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
As often as possible	4	7.3	Native-likeness	13	23.6
Often	22	40.0	Intelligibility	37	67.3
Sometimes	23	41.8	N/A	5	9.1
Rarely	6	10.9	Total	55	100
Total	55	100			
<b>Feedback techniques used</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Frequency of autonomy training</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Oral corrective feedback	50	90.9	Often	0	0.0
Peer monitoring	19	34.5	Sometimes	12	21.8
Delayed feedback with recordings	4	7.3	Rarely	20	36.4
Self-monitoring	9	16.4	Never	23	41.8
Other	2	3.6			

Table 18. Inclusion of pronunciation as explicit part of final grades

<b>Response</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	6	10.9
No	47	85.5
Sometimes	2	3.6
Total	55	100

The largest number of teachers (23, 41.8%) reported giving students feedback in class only

“sometimes”. Only one teacher fewer (22, 40.0%) reported doing the same “often”. Only four teachers (7.3%) reported giving students pronunciation feedback as often as possible.

The majority of teachers participating in the study (37, 67.3%) reported intelligibility to be the main criterion for pronunciation feedback. However, nearly a quarter of the teachers (13, 23.6%) stated that native-likeness was the criterion they used for offering students pronunciation feedback.

When asked to select which feedback techniques they used from a list of potential techniques, teachers almost unanimously reported using oral corrective feedback (50, 90.9%). The second most popular feedback technique was peer-monitoring, which 19 teachers (34.5%) reported using. Two teachers (3.6%) made use of the “other” option to offer alternative correction techniques which were interestingly rather similar, namely one-on-one feedback and scheduled pronunciation check-ups.

Regarding autonomy training, close to half of all the teachers participating in the study (23, 41.8%) responded that it was something which they never made use of. Nearly as many (20, 36.4%) conceded that they made use of it only rarely.

Finally, the majority of teachers who responded to the questionnaire (47, 85.5%) stated that pronunciation was not something which was explicitly factored into their students’ final grades. Two teachers (3.6%) made use of the “other” option to deliver a more nuanced response, with one of them stating that pronunciation sometimes played a role when students showed “marked improvement”, and the other implying that pronunciation was simply a part of oral production skills. It is possible that this approach also reflects the practice of many of the teachers who selected “no” as their response to this item.

## **7.9 Responses to open-ended questions**

In addition to the closed-ended items discussed above, the questionnaire used in this study also had two items of a more open-ended nature. For these items, teachers responding to the questionnaire were asked what they found to be most challenging about teaching pronunciation and what advice they would give to novice teachers concerning the teaching of pronunciation. The responses to these items have been grouped together into various categories and are discussed in the next two sub-sections below.

### **7.9.1 Challenges concerning pronunciation teaching**

The challenges which were described by questionnaire participants can be broadly grouped into five different categories: contextual difficulties, linguistic aspects, affective aspects, student ability, and teacher knowledge and ability. As shown in Table 19 below, the most often cited (17, 32.1%) category was difficulties concerning the context or framework of teaching. Teachers who described challenges deriving from the contextual framework within which pronunciation should be taught mostly named

time as the most restrictive factor. Related to time, they explained that the various skills involved in language teaching made it difficult to find opportunities to address pronunciation. In other words, balancing pronunciation among other priorities was seen as a challenge. Also related to time is another issue that several teachers mentioned, namely that teachers have too many students in their classrooms. With so many students, they wrote, there was simply not enough time to work individually with students on specific pronunciation aspects. An additional contextual restraint on pronunciation teaching was a lack of appropriate materials, which two teachers noted.

A total of 12 teachers (21.8%) described language-related challenges. Most commonly referenced in this regard was the interference between students' L1s and the target language. Several teachers also cited aspects inherent in the language system which create a challenge for pronunciation teachers, but it is unclear whether or not the implication in these cases was that students had German as their L1. One teacher also mentioned intonation presenting a difficulty for pronunciation learners.

Challenges related to affective issues were also brought up by 12 teachers (21.8%). These included the difficulty of motivating students to work on and improve their pronunciation, but also the difficulty of reducing students' anxiety, shyness, and embarrassment sufficiently to make pronunciation improvement possible.

Additionally, several teachers (8, 14.5%) also mentioned challenges related to students' (in)abilities. For example, multiple teachers brought up the difficulty presented by students who "have a bad ear" or could not seem to detect audible differences between sounds. This, of course, would also make it difficult for these students to produce new sounds. Related to this is the issue of student self-awareness, which one teacher raised.

Finally, a total of 7 teachers (12.7%) cited difficulties stemming from teachers' own knowledge and (in)abilities. These included a lacking familiarity with and inability to model accents other than their own chosen pronunciation model, a lacking familiarity with students' L1s, a lacking knowledge of phonetics and phonology as well as pronunciation teaching techniques, and insufficient skills to create their own pronunciation practice materials for their students.

Table 19. Challenges of teaching pronunciation

Challenge type	#	%
Context/framework for teaching	17	32.1
Linguistic aspects	12	21.8
Affective aspects	12	21.8
Student ability	8	14.5
Teacher knowledge and ability	7	12.7

### 7.9.2 Advice for novice teachers

As with the challenges discussed in the previous section, the advice questionnaire participants would offer to novice language teachers concerning pronunciation can also be divided into several broad groupings. As shown in Table 20 below, these include advice concerning pronunciation teaching techniques, language teaching priorities, creating or maintaining a positive atmosphere in the classroom, the importance of teacher competence, correction and feedback, pronunciation models, and finally priorities for the teaching of pronunciation.

The largest number of teachers (14, 25.5%) offered advice related to pronunciation teaching techniques. Of these 14, nearly half (6, 42.9%) stressed the importance of providing as much exposure to the language and opportunity for practice as possible. A number of teachers also emphasized the importance of utilizing a variety of techniques in order to cater to different learner abilities and also motivate students. Another sub-group of teachers emphasized the importance of fun or humorous activities. One teacher suggested using a CD player to make up for personal pronunciation faults, another recommended using phonetic transcription, and yet another recommended contrastive analysis as a means of counteracting the influence of interference.

The language teaching priorities category includes responses which gave advice about fitting pronunciation into a broader scheme of language teaching. A total of 12 teachers (21.8%) offered advice which could be included in this category. Of these 12 teachers, two-thirds (8, 66.7) advised novice pronunciation teachers to “take it easy” or exercise moderation when dealing with matters of pronunciation. On a similar note, three of these 12 teachers (25%) expressed the belief that pronunciation is of minor importance in comparison with other language teaching priorities. Three more teachers (25%) mentioned the importance of integrating pronunciation teaching into work on other skills.

Eleven teachers (20.0%) gave advice regarding the creation and maintenance of a positive classroom atmosphere. The majority of these 11 teachers (6, 54.5%) advised cultivating motivation

in students. Four of these 11 (36.4%) teachers stressed the importance of the role of careful corrective behavior in achieving a positive atmosphere, and another teacher advised suppressing criticism and ridicule between students.

The importance of teacher competence was mentioned by 7 teachers (12.7%). This competence was expressed by two teachers as the need for teachers to possess admirable pronunciation skills in order to be able to serve as adequate role models, but another two teachers gave contrary advice, stating that teachers should not be too concerned about their own pronunciation since students will be able to pick up adequate pronunciation regardless and CD-players could always be used to provide students with alternative models. Finally, three teachers also mentioned the need for teachers to possess knowledge of phonetics, teaching techniques, and students' pronunciation priorities.

A total of 7 teachers (12.7%) offered some form of advice dealing with issues of error correction and feedback. Of these 7 teachers, 3 (42.9%) advised novice teachers to not worry about correcting students' pronunciation errors too often. Another teacher, however, advised against over-correction. Two teachers stressed the importance of formulating feedback in a gentle manner, and another teacher made it clear that intelligibility should be the main criterion for error correction.

The six teachers (10.9%) who offered advice regarding pronunciation models cannot be said to have been in general agreement with one another. Three of them, for example, stressed the importance of exposing students to native-speaker models as often as possible, whereas two others emphasized the equal validity of non-native accents. Yet another teacher advised focusing on a single accent exclusively in order to prevent confusing learners.

Pronunciation priorities were mentioned in responses to this item by 6 teachers (10.9%). Most of these teachers (4, 66.7%) cited the importance of focusing on intelligibility as the highest priority when teaching pronunciation. Another teacher recommended focusing on segments first and foremost, whereas yet another advised novice teachers to work with their students on intonation.

Table 21. Advice for novice pronunciation teachers

Advice	#	%
Pronunciation teaching techniques	14	25.5
Language teaching priorities	12	21.8
Positive atmosphere	11	20.0
Importance of teacher competence	7	12.7
Correction and feedback	7	12.7
Models	6	10.9
Pronunciation priorities	6	10.9

## 8. Discussion

In this chapter, the results of various questionnaire items will be further investigated with the aim of determining possible associations between variables and offering tentative explanations for these associations. Because of the constraints of this thesis in terms of size and scope and the relatively broad range of information collected from the questionnaire, not all possible associations and interactions between variables can be investigated. Therefore, the potential associations analyzed here are intended to serve as an introductory offering of the potential insight contained within the collected data, or as a starting point for future further investigation. This chapter is divided into sections in a manner similar to previous chapters of this thesis, so that matters concerning the general significance of pronunciation, pronunciation models, and technical aspects of pronunciation teaching are each discussed in turn. The general objective will be to determine, whenever possible, potential sources for the beliefs in question, their influence on or relation to reported teaching practice, and the correspondence between professed beliefs and reported practice.

### 8.1 Significance and role of pronunciation

As discussed in section 7.3 of this thesis, the majority of the teachers who participated in the present study (60.0%) reported believing pronunciation to be equal in importance to other aspects of language learning. However, 14 teachers (25.5%) found pronunciation to be less important than other aspects whereas only half that number (7, 12.7%) considered pronunciation to be of greater importance. In order to determine possible relations between how important teachers considered pronunciation to be and other recorded data, independent-samples t-tests were conducted.

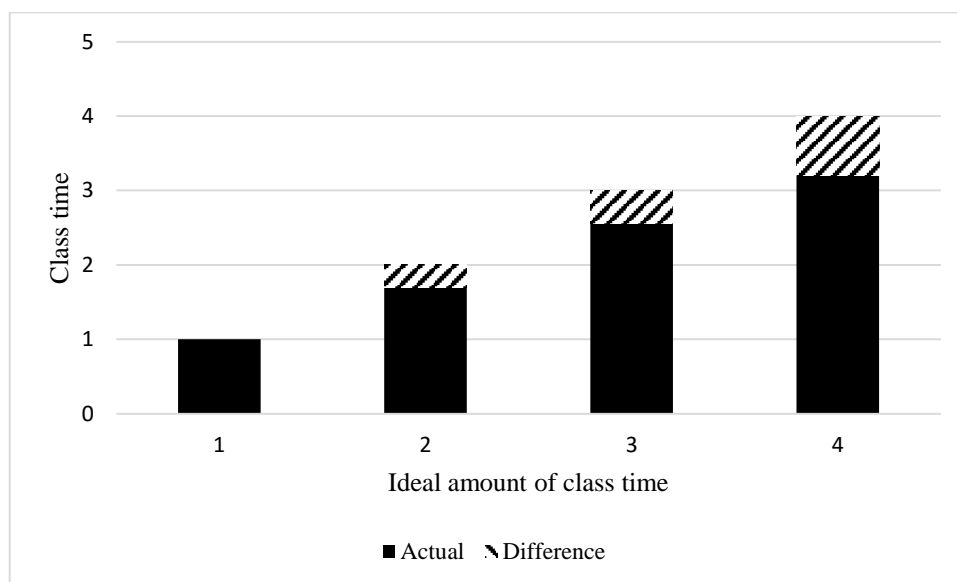
The first hypothesized relation was between perceived significance of pronunciation and the age of respondents. It was conjectured that older teachers might consider pronunciation to be more important than younger teachers. However, independent-samples t-tests conducted between the various age groups included in the study did not reveal any statistically significant results at a level of  $p < 0.05$ . Next, it was speculated that the experience of studying abroad might relate in some meaningful way to the perceived importance of pronunciation. Once again, however, the differences between those teachers who had studied abroad and those who hadn't were not statistically significant. Finally, it was investigated whether or not the accent chosen by teachers to serve as their personal pronunciation model might be related to how important teachers considered pronunciation to be. An independent-samples t-test conducted comparing those teachers who had chosen RP as their model and those who had chosen GA did not produce statistically significant results. From the results of these tests it can be concluded that further research would need to be conducted in order to



determine what might influence or play a role in shaping teachers' beliefs concerning the importance of pronunciation in the language learning process.

For the purpose of comparing teachers' beliefs and reported practices regarding the significance of pronunciation, the data recorded concerning the ideal amount of class time which teachers thought should be allocated to pronunciation and the actual time teachers reported spending on issues of pronunciation in class have been visualized in Figure 2 below. In Figure 2, the class time categories 0%-5%, 5%-10%, 20%-30%, 30%-50%, and 50%+ have each been assigned the values 1-5, respectively. We can discern from Figure 2 that, while every teacher who reported 0%-5% of class time being spent on issues of pronunciation as the ideal also reported actually spending that amount of time in class, this was not the case for teachers with different ideal values. In fact, the difference between ideal and actual values increased as the ideal values increased. This indicates that, the more time teachers thought should be spent on matters of pronunciation, the less likely they were to achieve that goal and therefore the less likely their beliefs were to correspond with their actual teaching practice. There was not a single instance in which a teacher reported spending more time than what they considered to be ideal. For all actual time values whose means were less than the ideal value (bars 2, 3, and 4 in Figure 2 below), one-sample t-tests revealed these differences to be statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.05$  ( $p = 0.0013$ ,  $0.0176$ , and  $0.0497$  for bars 2, 3, and 4 respectively).

Figure 2. Ideal and actual time in class allocated to pronunciation teaching



## 8.2 The model

In this section, potential connections between teachers' ages and their responses to model-related items of the questionnaire are investigated. It was shown in section 7.4.1 of this thesis that a total of 46 teachers (83.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important for a native-speaker variety

to be used as a pronunciation model for students. But were there any revealing differences between the various age groups included in the study in terms of their agreement with this item? To determine this, independent-samples t-tests were conducted. The results, however, showed that the differences were not statistically significant at a level of  $p < 0.05$ .

Regarding the superiority of RP as a pronunciation model, it was shown in section 7.4.2 of this thesis that 38 teachers (69.1%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that RP was the best-suited pronunciation model for English instruction. In order to see whether and how perceived superiority of RP differed between the age groups included in the study, independent-samples t-tests were conducted. At a level of  $p < 0.05$ , there proved to be statistically significant differences between each of the two youngest age groups and the oldest age group ( $p = 0.0339$  for the youngest group and the oldest and  $p = 0.0276$  for the second-youngest group and the oldest group). In other words, teachers between 21 and 40 years of age were shown to be significantly less likely to be convinced of the superiority of RP as a pronunciation model than teachers who were older than 50 years of age.

The relationship between teachers' ages and their acceptance of ELF as a suitable pronunciation model for English language teaching was also investigated. In this case, independent-samples t-tests revealed significant differences only between the age groups of 21-30 and 41-50 years ( $p = 0.043$ ), with the younger teachers being less inclined to view ELF as a suitable model. As ELF might still be considered an emerging and novel concept, it would warrant further investigation to determine why these younger teachers are less supportive of it as a pronunciation model and thus hold more conservative views toward it.

## 8.3 Technical aspects

In this section, technical aspects will be investigated with the primary aim of determining how well teachers' beliefs and reported teaching practices can be said to correspond with one another.

### 8.3.1 Pronunciation teaching techniques

In section 7.6.2 of this thesis, the perceived effectiveness of various pronunciation teaching techniques was discussed, and in section 7.8.3 it was described how often teachers participating in the questionnaire study made use of the same techniques in class. At this stage, it will be compared how these two variables relate to one another. In Table 22 below, the mean perceived levels of effectiveness and mean frequencies of use are represented as percentages and displayed for each technique. Also displayed is the computed difference between these two percentages. From this table it can be concluded that the greatest difference appeared in relation to software as a pronunciation technique (46.6%). With a mean perceived level of effectiveness of 67.4%, it was deemed fairly

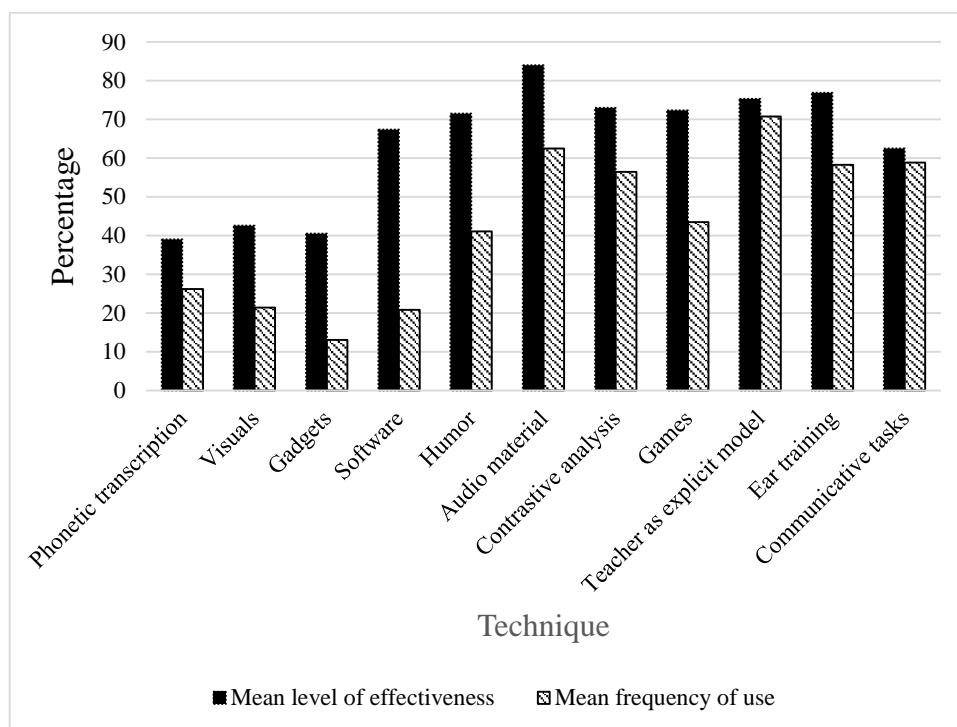
effective by the teachers in question, yet was only very rarely used. The next largest difference was in the case of humor, which differed between the two measurements by 30.4%. The techniques of games and gadgets also exhibited considerable differences (28.8% and 27.4%, respectively). Communicative tasks and the use of the teacher as an explicit model were the two techniques which exhibited the least difference (3.6% and 4.5%, respectively).

Table 22. Discrepancies between perceived effectiveness and frequency of use

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Mean perceived effectiveness (%)</b>	<b>Mean frequency of use (%)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Phonetic transcription	39.0	26.2	12.8
Visuals	42.6	21.4	21.2
Gadgets	40.5	13.1	27.4
Software	67.4	20.8	46.6
Humor	71.5	41.1	30.4
Audio material	84.0	62.5	21.5
Contrastive analysis	73.0	56.5	16.5
Games	72.3	43.5	28.8
Teacher as explicit model	75.3	70.8	4.5
Ear training	76.9	58.3	18.6
Communicative tasks	62.5	58.9	3.6

The mean perceived levels of effectiveness and mean frequencies of use have been visually depicted in Figure 3 below. From this visualization it can be seen that, although the various techniques generally exhibited lower mean frequencies of use than mean perceived levels of effectiveness, they nevertheless tended to follow the same pattern in relation to one another. In fact, the correlation coefficient of the data reached 0.79 and thus indicates a fairly strong positive correlation.

Figure 3. Perceived effectiveness and frequency of use of various pronunciation teaching techniques



### 8.3.2 Feedback and error correction

Finally, the correspondence between teachers' beliefs and reported practices concerning feedback and error correction will also be briefly discussed. It was reported in section 7.7.3 of this thesis, for example, that more than three quarters of the teachers participating in the questionnaire study (42, 76.4%) agreed to some extent that students were motivated to improve their pronunciation. Furthermore, a total of 47 teachers (85.5%) agreed that it was possible for students to improve their pronunciation on their own. Despite this acknowledgement of existing motivation and the possibility of autonomous pronunciation improvement, however, a total of 43 teachers (78.2 %) reported never or only rarely making use of use autonomy-training feedback techniques which would enable students to monitor their own performance and improve their pronunciation without the aid of a teacher. This discrepancy reveals a missed opportunity for the majority of the teachers involved in the present questionnaire study. Investing class time in the training of students to improve their pronunciation autonomously would likely prove to be beneficial for all involved. Students would be able to make use of their time outside of English lessons to independently further improve their pronunciation, and teachers, following the initial time investment, would likely witness greater improvements in students' pronunciations in comparatively shorter periods of time.

## 9. Conclusion

The importance of teachers and their beliefs as essential components in the conversion of curricula into actual teaching practice has been demonstrated in this thesis. In light of this, it has also been shown that research into the beliefs of language teachers can yield valuable insights into the actual language teaching and learning processes students participate in. Observation and analysis of teachers' beliefs can thus aid in the optimization of these processes.

Furthermore, it has also been established that pronunciation is an integral component of the communicative competence and intelligibility of language learners. In this context, it is clear that research into teachers' beliefs concerning the teaching and learning of pronunciation is more than justified. These beliefs encompass many different aspects of phonetics, phonology, and pedagogy, but the main focus in this thesis was placed on the issues of pronunciation models and their selection, pronunciation teaching techniques, and methods of providing feedback and correcting pronunciation errors.

In order to investigate teacher beliefs concerning the pronunciation-related issues mentioned above, a questionnaire was developed and administered among teachers of English in the city of Vienna who predominantly taught at secondary schools. By means of this questionnaire, it was possible to collect data covering a wide variety of teacher beliefs, which in turn allowed for the creation of a preliminary outline of teacher cognition in this area of language teaching. The most important of these findings will be summarized in the following paragraphs.

In general, it can be stated that the majority of teachers participating in the present study considered it personally important to be able to pronounce English well, and most of them would even like to sound like native-speakers when using the language. Despite being confident in their pronunciation both when teaching English and when communicating with native-speakers, however, teachers did not seem to feel overwhelming well prepared by their university education to pronounce the language well. Moreover, fewer than half of the teachers felt that their education prepared them adequately to teach pronunciation.

Teachers participating in the study largely considered pronunciation to be of equal or lesser importance than other aspects of language instruction. Regarding the amount of time to be spent on matters of pronunciation in class, most teachers believed the ideal to lie between 5%-10% of class time. Despite the relatively modest priority attributed to pronunciation by the questionnaire respondents, they nearly unanimously considered it to be important for teachers to possess knowledge of phonetics and phonology.

Regarding pronunciation models, it can be concluded that the teachers believed native-speaker accents to be superior for use as models by students. However, they did not believe RP to be the best-suited native-speaker model available. Many teachers were unfamiliar with ELF as a pronunciation model, but those who were able to respond concerning its suitability as a pronunciation model were fairly evenly divided into those who felt it could be suitable and those who did not. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed, however, that students should be exposed to a wide variety of both native- and non-native accents of English.

Concerning the goals and priorities of pronunciation teaching, it can be concluded that most teachers did not believe it to be likely that their students would acquire native-like accents. The overwhelming majority, however, saw this as an acceptable outcome.

Most teachers participating in the study expressed favoring a predominantly individualized approach concerning pronunciation teaching techniques, allowing themselves flexibility to differentiate based on the needs of particular students or groups of students. All in all, however, the teaching techniques of using audio material, ear training methods, and making use of the teacher as an explicit pronunciation model were regarded to be most effective.

Similar to the favored teaching approach, teachers participating in the present study also preferred to approach error correction and feedback situationally and contextually, adapting their practice for different times and different types of activities. Generally, they considered correction of errors to be optimal when following the completion of student activities such as presentations or communicative tasks. This was not the case with reading aloud activities, however, where teachers believed it to be beneficial for students to receive feedback during the activity as well. Teachers didn't generally consider error correction to induce anxiety in students and claimed on the contrary that students were generally motivated to improve their pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers believed autonomous learning of pronunciation to be a definite possibility for their students.

Regarding actual teaching practice, teachers reported spending more time in class dealing with matters of pronunciation than would be indicated by the significance they attributed to pronunciation in relation to other aspects of language teaching and the amount of class time they considered to be ideal. Teachers also reported exposing their students to a wide variety of accents and allowing their students to independently select their own pronunciation models. Their teaching approaches were fairly evenly distributed among the possible options, but the largest group of respondents reported utilizing a more covert or implicit approach. The techniques most frequently utilized were the highlighting of the teacher's pronunciation as an explicit model, the use of audio material, communicative tasks, and ear training methods. Teachers claimed to give their students feedback on their pronunciation relatively often, with intelligibility as the main criterion, and in an oral manner.

However, most of them reported only rarely or never providing students with opportunities for autonomy training and self-monitoring. The overwhelming majority of teachers also did not factor pronunciation into students' final grades.

From the quantitative data thus collected, it was also possible to use statistical methods to test a number of hypothetical relationships between various beliefs and teacher attributes as well as between teachers' beliefs and their reported teaching practice. The analysis of the data collected in the study revealed that there were no statistically significant relationships between the age of teachers and their perception of the importance of pronunciation, but that there was, however, a significant relationship between ideal allotments of class time for pronunciation and actual time spent in class on pronunciation matters. Concerning models, it was shown that there were statistically significant relationships between the age of questionnaire participants and their acceptance of various pronunciation models. Finally, it was also shown that teachers' use of pronunciation techniques corresponded fairly well with their perceptions of the effectiveness of those techniques, but that opportunities were being missed as a result of lacking awareness of teaching techniques and lacking implementation of self-monitoring techniques.

Despite these fruitful findings, it was also noted that the data obtained from the study could potentially be further mined in order to investigate a multitude of additional possible relations, but that this would no longer have been within the scope of the present thesis. Therefore, such additional investigation will necessarily be left to further research endeavors. Furthermore, supplementary studies could also be conducted with larger sample groups or with teachers from other school types.

The results obtained from the present study, however, can be used for several purposes. First and foremost, they serve to encourage reflection about and consideration of teachers' beliefs concerning matters of pronunciation teaching, which is an inherently valuable practice. In addition, items to which a large number of teachers were not able to respond (and thereby make their opinions explicit) can be taken as indications of potential areas for improvement of teacher education courses and programs. Even the very completion of the questionnaires by the participants themselves encouraged the teachers to reflect on their views and teaching practice, which is an essential component of further personal development in the teaching profession. In this way, the present study presented a mutual benefit for both the researcher and the subjects of the research study. It is the author's humble hope that this mutually supportive feedback loop can be further developed in the future.

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# 11. Appendix

## 11.1 Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
  - female
  - male
2. How old are you?
  - 21-30
  - 31-40
  - 41-50
  - 50+
3. For how many years have you been teaching English?
  - Less than 5
  - 5-10
  - 10-15
  - 15-20
  - 20-30
  - More than 30
4. At what type of school do you teach English?
  - AHS
  - NMS
  - HTL
  - HAK
  - Other
5. What is your first language or mother tongue?
  - German
  - English
  - Not one single language (raised bi- or multilingually)
  - Other
6. Have you ever spent a semester or more studying abroad during either school or university?
  - No
  - Yes
7. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please specify where you studied and for how long. If you answered "No", please leave this text field blank.
  - Individual answers
8. On which accent or variety have you modelled your English pronunciation?
  - Received Pronunciation/BBC English (RP)
  - General American (GA)
  - English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)
  - Austrian English
  - Other
9. Personal beliefs
  - It is important for me to have a good pronunciation when speaking English.
    - Strongly disagree
    - Disagree
    - Agree
    - strongly agree
    - I don't know.
  - I would like to sound like a native speaker when speaking English.
    - Strongly disagree
    - Disagree

- Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- I would like to improve my English pronunciation.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- I feel confident about my pronunciation when teaching English.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- I feel confident about my pronunciation when conversing in English with native speakers.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- I am interested in phonetics and phonology.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- I am interested in different accents and varieties of English.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- It was easy for me to decide which model to base my English pronunciation on.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- My experience at university prepared me adequately for pronouncing English well.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- My experience at university adequately prepared me to teach pronunciation.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- Speaking English is an important part of who I am.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.

10. How important is pronunciation for language learners in comparison to other aspects of language learning?
  - Least important
  - Generally less important than other aspects
  - Equally important
  - Generally more important than other aspects
  - Most important
  - I don't know.
11. How much class time should be taken up by issues of pronunciation in a normal school year?
  - 5% or less
  - 5-10%
  - 20-30%
  - 30-50%
  - More than 50%
  - I don't know.
12. Which of the following statements best matches your personal opinion?
  - Pronunciation is a very natural thing and students do not need to be explicitly made aware of how it works.
  - Some students require explicit pronunciation training and others simply pick up the sounds of English with relative ease and without being made explicitly aware of their articulatory features.
  - Students must be taught explicitly about how English sounds or else they will not be aware of important features or be able to produce them.
  - Other
13. Which of the following statements best matches your personal opinion?
  - Students' pronunciation mistakes must be corrected. How else are they supposed to learn? (teacher-centered)
  - Correcting students' pronunciation mistakes is pointless since they will only learn when they are ready and no sooner. (developmental stages)
  - Correcting students' pronunciation mistakes should be done differently in different situations, e.g. less often during communicative tasks and more often during accuracy-based exercises. (situational context)
  - Other
14. When should teachers correct their students' pronunciation errors? Please mark all of the following which you find appropriate.
  - While students are reading out loud
  - After students have finished reading out loud.
  - During question and answer sessions
  - After question and answer sessions
  - During student presentations
  - After student presentations
  - During communicative tasks
  - After communicative tasks
  - Other
15. To which of the following should pronunciation teachers give the highest priority?
  - Segments (e.g. specific sounds)
  - Suprasegmental features (e.g. word stress, intonation, etc.)
  - Neither - they are both equally important.
  - Other
16. Personal beliefs II
  - English teachers should have an understanding of phonetics.
    - Strongly disagree
    - Disagree
    - Agree
    - strongly agree
    - I don't know.
  - It is important that a native-speaker variety of English be used as a model for pronunciation teaching.

- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- Received Pronunciation/BBC English is the best-suited pronunciation model for English instruction.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is a suitable pronunciation model for English language teaching.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- Students should be exposed to various native and non-native speaker accents in English class.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- With enough practice, it is possible to sound like a native speaker when speaking a foreign language.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- It is essential that students are able to identify with the accent or variety chosen as a model.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- Students are motivated to improve their pronunciation when speaking English.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- It is possible for students to improve their pronunciation without the aid of a teacher.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- Students experience anxiety when issues of pronunciation are addressed in class.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- Most students will not manage to achieve a native-like pronunciation.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree

- strongly agree
- I don't know.
- It is an acceptable outcome for students' pronunciation to not sound native-like.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.
- I think it is harmfully disruptive to interrupt a student's performance to correct his or her pronunciation.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - strongly agree
  - I don't know.

17. How effective do you consider the following pronunciation teaching techniques?

- Phonetic transcription
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective
  - I don't know.
- Visuals and diagrams
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective
  - I don't know.
- Gadgets and props (e.g. mirrors, rubber bands, etc.)
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective
  - I don't know.
- Pronunciation software
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective
  - I don't know.
- Humor (e.g. cartoons, jokes, etc.)
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective
  - I don't know.
- Audio recording
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective
  - I don't know.
- Comparison of sounds between languages
  - Not at all effective
  - Relatively ineffective
  - Relatively effective
  - Very effective



- I don't know.
  - Games
    - Not at all effective
    - Relatively ineffective
    - Relatively effective
    - Very effective
    - I don't know.
  - Drawing attention to the teacher's pronunciation during class
    - Not at all effective
    - Relatively ineffective
    - Relatively effective
    - Very effective
    - I don't know.
  - Ear training/awareness raising activities
    - Not at all effective
    - Relatively ineffective
    - Relatively effective
    - Very effective
    - I don't know.
  - Communicative tasks (e.g. information gap activities)
    - Not at all effective
    - Relatively ineffective
    - Relatively effective
    - Very effective
    - I don't know.
18. How much class time do you dedicate to issues of pronunciation in a normal school year?
- 5% or less
  - 5-10%
  - 20-30%
  - 30-50%
  - More than 50%
  - I don't know.
19. How often do you expose your students to various native and non-native speaker accents in English class?
- Never - we use only a single model
  - Rarely
  - Often
  - As often as possible
20. Do you allow your students to choose their own model on which they would like to base their English pronunciation?
- Yes
  - No
21. Which of the following statements best describes your teaching practice?
- I make sure to provide my students with opportunities to practice pronunciation, but I do not explicitly draw their attention to these issues.
  - I explicitly point out and address pronunciation issues whenever possible.
  - I explicitly address issues of pronunciation whenever they come up in the coursebook my school uses.
  - Other
22. Which of the following do you consider when providing feedback on your students' pronunciation?
- How native-like they sound
  - How easy they are to understand
  - I don't assess my students' pronunciation.
  - Other
23. How often do you give feedback on students' pronunciation errors in class?
- Never
  - Rarely

- Sometimes
- Often
- As often as possible

24. How do students receive feedback on their pronunciation? Please check all that apply.

- They don't.
- I let them evaluate their own pronunciation.
- I correct their mistakes during class.
- I have students record themselves and I give them feedback on the recordings.
- Students give each other feedback.
- Other

25. How often do you make use of the following pronunciation teaching techniques?

- Training students to monitor and assess their own pronunciation
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Phonetic transcription
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Visuals and diagrams
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Gadgets and props (e.g. mirrors, rubber bands, etc.)
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Pronunciation software
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Humor (e.g. cartoons, jokes, etc.)
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Audio recording
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Comparison of sounds between languages
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Games
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Drawing attention to the teacher's pronunciation during class

- Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Ear training/awareness raising activities
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
- Communicative tasks (e.g. information gap activities)
  - Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often

26. Does pronunciation form an explicit part of your students' final grades?

- Yes
- No
- other

27. From your experience, what are the biggest challenges concerning pronunciation teaching?

28. What advice would you give a novice English teacher on the topic of pronunciation teaching?

## 11.2 Abstracts

### English

This thesis aims to establish the value of investigating teachers' beliefs concerning issues of pronunciation and pronunciation teaching as well as to determine the content of these beliefs. In this context, an empirical study was conducted in the form of a questionnaire which was distributed to and completed by English teachers at secondary schools throughout the city of Vienna. The questionnaire focused mainly on three aspects: pronunciation models and their selection by teachers and students, pronunciation teaching techniques, and methods of providing feedback and error correction. The quantitative data obtained by means of the questionnaire were statistically analyzed and discussed within the theoretical framework developed in this thesis. Preliminary tests were performed in order to determine relationships between teachers' personal attributes and their beliefs, as well as between their beliefs and their individual teaching practice. These tests did not show a relationship between the age of teachers and their perception of the importance of pronunciation, but did reveal significant relationships between the age of teachers and their acceptance of various pronunciation models. Additionally, it was shown that teachers' beliefs concerning the effectiveness of pronunciation teaching techniques matched their use of the same techniques, but that their encouragement of student self-monitoring did not correspond to their general belief in the potential effectiveness of self-monitoring. At any rate, further research is recommended in order to more fully exhaust the wealth of the collected data.

### Deutsch

Diese Arbeit versucht den Wert von Untersuchungen darzulegen, welche sich mit den Überzeugungen von Lehrenden in Bezug auf Aussprache und Ausspracheunterricht beschäftigen, sowie den Inhalt dieser Überzeugungen zu eruieren. In diesem Sinne wurde eine empirische Studie in Form einer Umfrage durchgeführt, welche an Englischlehrer der Sekundärstufe in Wien ausgeteilt wurde. Diese Umfrage zielte hauptsächlich auf folgende drei Aspekte ab: Aussprachemodelle und die Wahl derer durch Lehrernde und SchülerInnen, Methoden des Ausspracheunterrichts, sowie die angewandten Methoden, um Feedback zu geben und Fehler der Schüler zu korrigieren. Die erhobenen quantitativen Daten wurden statistisch analysiert und im Rahmen des theoretischen Gerüsts dieser Arbeit besprochen. Vorläufige Tests wurden unternommen, um mögliche Beziehungen zwischen persönlichen Eigenschaften der Lehrer und ihren Überzeugungen, sowie zwischen ihren Überzeugungen und der tatsächlichen Unterrichtspraxis festzustellen. Diese Tests zeigten keine Korrelation zwischen dem Alter der Lehrenden und ihrer Wahrnehmung bezüglich der Wichtigkeit

der Aussprache, konnten aber doch statistisch signifikante Beziehungen zwischen dem Alter der Lehrenden und ihrer Billigung unterschiedlicher Aussprachemodelle aufzeigen. Zusätzlich wurde demonstriert, dass sich die Überzeugungen Lehrender bezüglich der Wirksamkeit diverser Methoden des Ausspracheunterrichts mit dem Einsatz dieser Methoden decken. Allerdings wurde auch deutlich, dass die Methoden der selbständigen Ausspracheüberprüfung nicht in dem Maße gefördert bzw. instruiert werden, wie es aus den angegebenen Überzeugungen der Lehrenden anzunehmen wäre. Dennoch wird die Durchführung zusätzlicher Untersuchungen empfohlen, um den Reichtum der erhobenen Daten vollständiger zu erschöpfen.

## 11.3 Lebenslauf

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