EXTRA-LINGUISTIC FACTORS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF PRONUNCIATION IN AN ESL CLASS

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This paper presents the results of a study that investigated the nature and efficacy of an English as a second language (ESL) pronunciation class from a qualitative perspective. This study, based on ethnographic methods, portrays the reality of a pronunciation class in an intensive English program at a large American university, and uncovers extra-curricular aspects that can hinder the learning and teaching of pronunciation. Some aspects emerged strongly in the analysis as possible hindrance factors: contradictory expectations from the teacher versus the students as to the benefits to be obtained from the class and how to obtain those benefits, as well as complex socio-psychological aspects (e.g., identity, Norton; 1995, 1997; motivation, Ushioda, 2009) that affect teaching and learning in a pronunciation class. Although most of the research carried out in pronunciation has been experimental in nature and has analyzed aspects like native language background and age of learning, this study demonstrates that other extra-linguistic factors should also be taken into consideration, given their role in pronunciation teaching and learning in a classroom setting.

INTRODUCTION

Research on pronunciation teaching and learning has pointed out the positive effects of explicit instruction in the development of intelligible speech in language learners (e.g., Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Hahn, 2004; Lord, 2005). Findings from research in phonetics and phonology have also indicated what specific aspects second language (L2) learners should pay attention to in pronunciation learning to enhance intelligible speech. For instance, some studies suggest more attention to suprasegmentals (or prosody) and not just segmentals (i.e., vowels and consonants) in instruction, as suprasegmentals seem to play a major role in what is perceived as clear and intelligible speech (see Derwing et al., 1998; Field, 2005; Herbert, 2002; Kang, Rubin, & Pickering, 2010; Munro & Derwing, 1995). The development of intelligible speech is, in fact, what is currently sought in pronunciation teaching, rather than a native-speaker accent model (see Levis, 2005). To achieve this, basic concepts such as the roles and goals of both teachers and learners in pronunciation instruction should be clearly defined (Morley, 1991).

Although L2 learners study pronunciation for different reasons and under different circumstances, most classroom-based research on pronunciation instruction has been limited to analyses of what techniques, instructional methods, or linguistic features work best for learners in class (e.g., Acton, 1984; Derwing et al., 1998; Lord, 2005). However, very few studies have investigated the experience of learning or teaching pronunciation on the part of the student or the teacher, and what it is like to be a teacher or a learner in a pronunciation class with students of different first language (L1) backgrounds, age, proficiency levels, or who come to class with different reasons to study pronunciation (see Golombeck & Jordan, 2005; Morgan, 1997). The vast majority of research in L2 phonology has focused solely on strictly-controlled laboratory

conditions and on purely phonological phenomena, for the most part, and the repercussions of such research on pronunciation instruction are minimal in most cases (Derwing & Munro, 2005). This lack of connection between theory and practice in pronunciation instruction is not just a one-way street. It is also the case that research in L2 phonology does not take into consideration all the extra-linguistic factors that may hinder or enhance the acquisition of pronunciation skills in learners, which are reflected in all the complexities that classroom instruction entails (e.g., reasons for learning pronunciation, teacher and student expectations, motivation, identity). It is for this reason that classroom-based research that investigates holistically what happens in pronunciation classes could show how individuals approach the teaching and learning of this skill. This is not a recent claim, and in fact is one that has been promoted throughout the years (Derwing, 2003; Moyer, 1999; Pennington & Richards, 1986). The fact that some learners go through instruction and do not reach the minimally expected goals of a pronunciation class is proof of the divorce between theoretical research and classroom practices in different contexts, influenced by all the social and psychological richness that L2 teachers and learners bring to the classroom.

In this study, I investigated the teaching and learning of pronunciation in a classroom context from a qualitative perspective to understand what extra-linguistic factors (i.e., other factors aside from merely linguistic phenomena) enhance or hinder the teaching and learning of this skill, and how teachers and students cope with such factors in classes like this. The study was carried out to examine the nature of an English as a second language (ESL) pronunciation class and the actual practices of both teacher and students in class.

METHODOLOGY

Site Selection and Class

The pronunciation class selected for this study presented commonalities found in other classes of this nature across the United States. These ESL programs are a common context for many international students who come to the country every year to learn English. The class was part of a large intensive ESL program in an American university, and there were students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The students were in their early- to mid-twenties. The teacher was a native speaker of American English, and the class met in different places on campus every day. Because of the intensive nature of the program, classes meet for 7 weeks, and the last 2 weeks of classes are usually used for final exams and standardized tests, such as the Test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL), or for administrative work for teachers. Instruction has to be accommodated sometimes to deal with different issues. For instance, the teacher attended a conference out of town during the second week of the session, and the class had a substitute teacher for that entire week.

Although pronunciation is taught in the speaking classes of the program, I purposefully selected this class for this study because it presented ideal characteristics for analyzing the teaching and learning of pronunciation in a large language program, given its focus on pronunciation only. The class is an elective course, and it is usually offered for students in Levels Six and Seven (i.e., students with average TOELF scores of 450-500) out of seven institutional levels. It met 5 days per week during the regular 7-week session, and for 2 of these days the group met in a computerized language lab on campus to analyze audio files and watch videos. In the lab, the teacher showed instructional videos about phonetic features (e.g., points and manners of articulation of different consonants, or lip rounding in vowels) or the students presented *YouTube*

videos, which they would later re-enact to imitate the speech of the speakers in the videos. Classes took place in different parts of campus during the other three days. The teacher would come to the class early and interact with the students while getting materials ready and setting everything up for the lesson, and there was always a good atmosphere between the teacher and the students.

Participants

The class was composed of 9 students (4 female & 5 male) from different nationalities and with different L1 backgrounds. They were from Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, and Thailand. They were well acquainted with each other, because they were also taking (or had taken) other classes together. This was one of the last classes for some of these students, and many of them intended to enroll in American universities—either in undergraduate or graduate school—after completing the program. Out of the 9 students, 3 volunteered to participate in interviews: Xin, Tam, and Zahra.[1] They were in their early- to mid- 20s, and they were learning English in this program in order to enroll in American universities. For instance, Xin was a young girl from Taiwan who wanted to get a master's degree in physical education. Tam was a young male student from Thailand who intended to attend graduate school to study computer science. Finally, Zahra obtained a grant in her country (Turkey) to come to the United States and get a master's degree in psychology. These 3 students were very quiet and not necessarily the ones who actively participated in class on a regular basis. The instructor for this class was Annie, a native speaker of English who was also attending graduate school in the same department where this ESL program is based. This is a common characteristic in some of these programs, as graduate students get to teach ESL classes while they work towards the completion of their degrees in language teaching. Annie was originally from the West Coast of the United States, and she spoke a very neutral variety of English—which was beneficial for her students to understand her. She was a novice teacher with 2 years of experience (teaching ESL and EFL). She spoke two foreign languages and was learning another one at the moment of the study.

Data Collection

I used traditional ethnographic techniques to collect data for this study. I carried out classroom observations for 4 and- a- half weeks—4 days per week in 50-minute classes for a total of 15 hours. I sat in class as a nonparticipant observer and took notes on all the teaching and nonteaching events. I also audio-recorded the class for later transcription and analysis. As a nonparticipant observer, I took field notes and paid attention to the student-teacher and student-student interaction. For this, I used a thick-description approach to capture all the events and types of interaction (Geertz, 1973). I also kept a record of other important details that are particular to every language classroom, such as organization and development of class activities, special events, and behavior of both teacher and students.

Another source of data collection came from individual interviews with both the teacher and three students.[2] These interviews were semistructured and lasted about 1 hour each. All

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[1] Each participant was given a pseudonym for the purpose of the study, and is referred to by pseudonym only in this paper.

[2] Because of time constraints, it was only possible to carry out two interviews with the teacher and one interview with each one of the students. The interviews with the teacher took place during the third and sixth weeks of the

interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis (see appendix for sample semistructured interviews). During the teacher interviews, I asked about the selection of content, activities, and problems faced by students in learning pronunciation. As for the students, they discussed with me their experiences learning English pronunciation in class and in previous courses. They also pointed out their difficulties in learning and what issues and activities they perceived were beneficial for them or not. I also inquired about specific previous activities I had observed in class and their reaction toward them.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the classroom recordings and interviews using a combination of broad and narrow transcription. I codified common themes and categories that emerged in transcriptions of classroom interaction, interviews, and in the observation field notes. The codifying of themes and categories was done following Glaser and Strauss' (1967) comparative method. For instance, fieldwork notes from classroom observations were compared to the actual classroom transcripts to find common themes. Transcripts from interviews from both the teacher and the students were also compared to the other notes to find commonalities, and different categories and themes emerged. In addition to more information about the experience of teaching and learning pronunciation from the participants, three main categories emerged in the analysis, and these are described in detail in the Results section.

RESULTS

In this section I outline the main findings of this investigation, which came up in the analysis of field notes, class audio recordings, and interviews with both the teacher and the students. Three categories emerged strongly in the analysis: (a) a conflict of intelligibility versus native accent among the students, (b) preference for a specific type of instruction and activities in class, and (c) students' expectations of the teacher. These categories are presented in more detail as follows.

Intelligibility versus Native Accent

The first category that emerged in the data was a conflict between the goal of the students of attaining native accent in class versus a focus on intelligibility, as advocated by professionals in the field. As research in L2 phonology has demonstrated, it is unrealistic to expect learners to acquire a native accent, and very few learners actually achieve such proficiency levels (see Højen & Flege, 2006; Moyer, 1999; Munro, 1993). Thus, there has been a paradigm shift in instruction, from upholding native accent as the goal to helping learners achieve intelligible speech that will enhance communication (see Levis, 2005). Because this is a common topic in pronunciation teaching, I asked Annie about her position on it. In class, she always emphasized the importance of intelligibility. She constantly reminded her students that they should use her pronunciation for comparison purposes only, but that they did not necessarily have to sound like her. This is what Annie told me in the first interview:

> "I think that I emphasize intelligibility over… or, you know? I think I do a fairly good job emphasizing that they [students] don't need to talk exactly like me or my accent or any other American accent, or whatever you know? I want them to be able to talk to someone and have that person understand them better than before they had taken the class I guess.

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course, whereas the interviews with the students took place in the fourth week (with Tam) and during the fifth and sixth weeks (with Xin and Zahra).

> And you know, whatever that means for that student I guess it's going to mean different things for everyone. But you know if for some students it means changing their intonation so that people know if they are asking a question or making a statement, whatever, or with the individual sounds, you know that's ok I guess" (Annie, interview 4/02/10).

In spite of Annie's position on intelligibility, her students presented different ideas. The 3 students I interviewed expressed that they came to this class because they wanted "to sound like a native speaker." Although there were contradictions at times in what they said, native proficiency was their common goal. For example, this is what Tam stated in his interview:

> "My goal is I, I… I want to speak as clearly as possible. It is like, when I talk to people, native speaker, with native speaker, they do not think, I mean you don't have to think about what I'm talking about. They got, they understand me. Uh… I cannot say I want to speak like native speaker [laughs] I think it's… it's my age I think right now it's kind of impossible, so I just want to… speak, uh… as clearly as possible […] If it's possible, I want to sound like native speaker. I mean, I want to sound like that, I think it's cool. But I think it's hard, it's difficult. But I'm ok with not sounding like that and having an accent. I think it's impossible [sounding native]. I just observe like people who have live here for 20 or 25 years but they all sound like Thai speakers" (Tam, interview, 4/07/10).

As evidenced here, Tam presented different contradictions. He is aware of the low probability he could ever sound "native" given his age—and aware of other Thai speakers in the community who never achieved native accent. However, he also considers it "cool" to sound like a native speaker. Ultimately, what Tam wants to achieve might be intelligibility, to sound clear to other interlocutors and avoid communication problems, especially given that at the beginning of the class he had a strong accent and needed to rephrase constantly to get his message across. However, wanting to sound clear and being understood also represents his need to integrate socially into the target language community composed mostly of native speakers of English in school. He seemed to be aware that improving pronunciation was necessary to achieve this integration. As demonstrated by research, speakers use their pronunciation to identify with a specific group (see Zuengler, 1988), and for Tam, sounding clear is a means to integrate and function in the target language community. Additionally, sounding "as clear as possible," as he said, would probably help him reduce his foreign accent, which often can be a source of discrimination, prejudice, or negative evaluation of a speaker (see Flege, 1988; Munro, 2008).

Another important and related factor to consider in this case is identity. Although Tam was very aware of his accent, he also expressed that it was fine with him to have one when he said "I'm ok with not sounding like that [native speaker] and have an accent," which resonates with his need as an individual to identify and associate with a specific group—in this case other Thai speakers in the community (see Gatbonton, Trofimovich, & Magid, 2005; Golombek & Rehn Jordan, 2005; Hansen Edwards, 2008).

Another student, Zahra, gave me a more concrete reason why she wanted to sound like a native speaker. She explained to me that in graduate school she would have to interact with native speakers constantly, so it would be very important not only to understand them but also to be understood by her American professors and classmates. Just like Tam, it is evident that Zahra wants to integrate into the target language community, and she knows that it will be important to speak clearly, given the amount of time she will spend in an American university.

In spite of the trend towards intelligibility over native accent in pronunciation classes, learners often want to sound native. This phenomenon is nothing new, and in many cases this depends on the students' needs and goals in learning (see Derwing, 2003; Timmis, 2002). For Zahra, clear pronunciation is essential, because her major and career in psychology will require frequent and complex verbal interaction. One important aspect in this case is the concept of investment (Norton, 1995; 1997; 2000), since Zahra appeared to be a motivated student who is willing to invest in learning to improve her speech. Based on Bourdieu's (1977) notion of investment and capital resources, Norton states that when learners invest in their L2, they do it with an understanding that they will have more access to the capital resources from the target language community. This is basically the case for Zahra, who confessed to me that part of the reason she wanted to participate in the interview was to have extra practice speaking English. She said that she will eventually have this type of interaction with other interlocutors and that pronunciation is important in it, and that extra practice is essential to get used to it. This is the type of investment Norton makes reference to: a highly motivated student who invests in her own learning in order to have access to material and capital resources in the target language community—in this case, investing in improving pronunciation and clear speech could help Zahra take full advantage of graduate school and a future career.

In addition to this conflict of intelligibility versus native accent, another important category that emerged in the data was related to instruction in class, which included some traditional techniques as well as some other more innovative activities. Student reactions to different activities affected their motivation. The details of this category are explained in the section below.

Type of Instruction in Class

The activities used in class focused on both segmentals and suprasegmentals. There were both controlled activities to develop accuracy, and other activities to develop fluency. These latter activities, including pair and group discussions, had a more communicative orientation. When I inquired about the selection of activities and tasks, Annie gave me two rules of thumb she used to bring activities to class. The first one was related to students' awareness of different aspects of pronunciation:

> "Well, one thing just on the basic level is I want them to understand, even if they can't produce it but at least understand, it is to understand the difference between individual sounds. That's one thing, I want them to be aware, you know, that there's difference between /i/ and /ɪ/ for example. And I think there are a number of students who didn't know those differences, who didn't know how many vowel sounds there were for instance, you know, things like that[…] I want them to feel they have these new tools to use that they can kind of go out and be more successful in communicating with people" (Annie, interview, 4/16/10).

To achieve this, Annie always tried to make sure that her students noticed the differences in suprasegmentals (e.g., differences in intonation patterns) or in specific sounds like vowels. For instance, she compared minimal pairs to demonstrate to the students—sometimes even by bringing other native speaker guests to class—the differences in individual vowels or consonants. The second rule of thumb, Annie said, was to bring activities that students would enjoy or would have fun carrying out in class, as she described in one interview:

> "I feel like if they're not having fun then they're not going to be learning much anyway, you know it's like they're not really into it. Um… so that's one thing, I guess I'm trying to pick things that have like real communicative value to them where it's not just, you know, repeat after me and move on, where it's like they have to interact and negotiate the sounds that they're making to make sure that they're making them right or hearing them right and things like that" (Annie, interview, 4/2/10).

In spite of Annie's criteria, the students were not very pleased with some of the activities. For instance, Xin was very emphatic during the interview in pointing out her frustration with activities that required the use of phonetic symbols. This is what she had to say about a pair activity (a Bingo game) in which the students had to pronounce vowel sounds and cross out the phonetic symbols on a sheet of paper:

> "For me I just think that is a game. Yeah, it's game, and I play a game like I play a game, and, uh… so, even though now you ask, you ask me what is this? how to pronounce this [drawing phonetic symbols of vowels on a piece of paper], you know that? I don't know!! I'm sorry! Yeah, or pronounce this? You know this? What's that? [pointing symbols to interviewer]. Yeah, you know, I just follow, you know. I just, every class I just like a new student, I just follow what the teacher, or follow what, what our classmates do.[…] I cannot hear it, and I don't know how to use that [phonetic symbols], and why I need to use that, for my pronunciation??? (2 sec) Yeah, I don't… you know, because… everybody say this is tool… to use… uh to have help your pronunciation, but now my situation is, I don't know how to use the tool, and I don't know, you know, I cannot tell the tool! How can I use these tools to help my pronunciation? That is now my situation, yeah that's my problem now" (Xin, interview, 4/1/10).

A similar view was expressed by Zahra, who said that she did not like to memorize phonetic symbols, which were confusing for her. What is interesting here is that Annie brought these activities to class based on her pedagogical knowledge and her background in language teaching. As a graduate student in a strong second language acquisition (SLA)-oriented program, Annie knew the importance of concepts discussed in the SLA literature, such as awareness and attention, which are important for acquisition (e.g., Schmidt, 1990, 2001). Based on her background, she knew the importance of making learners notice and be aware of differences in the input for acquisition (like the difference between individual sounds such as /i/ and /ɪ/). But of equal importance to the learning outcomes in this case is the difference between novice and experienced teachers. As a novice teacher, Annie was concerned with evoking empathy from her students, who she claimed needed to "have fun" and "enjoy" the activities to learn. This is a common priority for novice teachers, who are usually concerned about their students' perceptions—as opposed to more experienced teachers who are concerned about actual learning taking place in class (see Gatbonton, 1999).

These differences in what activities the teacher and the students consider useful are problematic because they create conflicts in class that could hinder learning. Annie considered that students needed to know about differences in sounds because these are "tools" that they would need to improve their pronunciation. However, the fact that students like Xin—who does not understand why phonetic symbols are considered "tools" to help her—do not see the pedagogical purpose and the ultimate goal of activities in class might have negative repercussions, such as demotivation to learn and make progress in the L2 (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

Student Expectations of the Teacher

Another category that emerged in the data was related to the students' expectations of the teacher. As in most language classes, the students expected the teacher to play a specific role, which did not always seem to be fulfilled. For example, this was Annie's response after two students gave a presentation in class:

> Annie: Very good!! Nice job [teacher and students clap after the second student finishes his presentation]. Is anyone else ready to go today? Or will you go tomorrow?? Ok. Good job! Do you have any comments for them? (2.sec) for S2 or S1? (4.sec)
>
> S2: What's your comment?
>
> Annie: My comment? [laughter] I was impressed! I thought… I especially liked your…um intonation, I thought that you had your voice go up and down, um very well, and your stress! Also… like that, you know [laughter] and I stressed the word stress, um I thought you guys did a very good job with that, so…
>
> S2: What was the bad work?
>
> Annie: The bad work? [laughter] Hhhhmmmmm!! (4.sec) I don't know, I, I actually thought it was very good. Um… I don't know, we're actually… today in class we're going to focus on our weaknesses a little bit. So maybe you'll be able to discover your own today, um… and then I'll help you with that during this week. So that was a good lead in the next activity [laughter]. What I'd like you guys to do is to get in groups, please… (Class. 3/29/10).

This passage demonstrates how the students expected a specific role from Annie in class (i.e., feedback provider), but she decided to provide only positive feedback and not point out their pronunciation problems. Instead, she asked the rest of the class to give feedback to these two students, even when one of them explicitly wanted Annie to correct his speech (i.e., "what was the bad work?"). These expectations of the teacher were also evident in the interviews. Zahra stated that she wanted to hear from Annie not only about her strengths but also about her weaknesses, and this is a common reflection of the role students expect from the teacher in a language class (see Richards & Lockhart, 1996), perhaps especially in a pronunciation class like this, where students see the teacher as an expert in the subject and expect him or her to help them with their pronunciation problems. Tam explained to me that he joined a conversation club on campus to "have extra practice in speaking." This, he said, would help him because his native-speaking partner corrected him from time to time, unlike other speakers he found on campus, who would not correct him because, as he said, "they are not English teacher that they don't need to correct me" (Tam, interview 4/07/10). This demonstrated to me not only how interested Tam was in improving his pronunciation, but also that he was aware of the role of a teacher in class. For him, and for other learners, teachers are the ones who correct and provide feedback, unlike other speakers, who are not required to do so, because they are not "English teachers" as Tam said—that is, they are regular interlocutors who do not correct learners because they are not teachers. Tam's words reflect his awareness that the teacher is the authority in class (i.e., the one who corrects) and that other interlocutors he finds on campus are not necessarily required to play that same role.

This example shows how conflicts arise and can interfere with teaching and learning in class, if student expectations do not match the actions of the teacher. Annie wanted to empathize with her

students and decided not to provide negative feedback. In the interviews, she told me that she wanted to empower her learners and make them feel more comfortable in her class in order to help them learn. In this light, deciding not to point out students' weaknesses explicitly in class is probably a teaching strategy to avoid making them uncomfortable. However, for these students, Annie was the pronunciation expert or authority in the class, and as such, they did want her to use her expertise and point out their problems in order to help them improve their language. Ultimately, this is one of the reasons students come to a class like this—that is, to improve their pronunciation skills. When they see that their performance in class—which the teacher claims is fine—does not necessarily match with their performance and progress in the language outside of class, they can become demotivated. Thus, a mismatch between the students' and the teacher's expectations about the teacher's role in class affects learning.

Another important factor closely related to this issue is that lack of feedback can be problematic for acquisitional purposes. Researchers in SLA have expressed that a lack of focus on form might help learners develop fluency in the language but not necessarily accuracy, and it is here where corrective feedback is necessary to help learners develop accuracy (see Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster & Saito, 2010). Therefore, giving students positive feedback at the expense of not providing negative feedback (or "the bad work" as one of the students said) could be problematic for students in a pronunciation class like this where they expect the teacher to point out their deviant forms of the language. Receiving feedback from the teacher could enable learners to make corrections in their production and make important progress in their own learning.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This pronunciation class presented different conflicts that had negative repercussions on the learning process of the students. First, as in many language classes, the students in this class expressed that they wanted to achieve native proficiency in pronunciation, a fact that the teacher seemed to be aware of. However, previous research has demonstrated that these goals are difficult to achieve for many learners, as Annie knew explicitly and as some students, like Tam, also seemed aware (e.g., Højen & Flege, 2006; Moyer, 1999; Munro, 1993). This is an example of how learners in a pronunciation class can present inherent contradictions in what they want to get from the class and what they see as potentially attainable. Second, this class also provided evidence that methods of instruction can be problematic when teachers' actions—even when based on their pedagogical knowledge and training—collide with the students' perception of usefulness in learning. When students do not see the pedagogical purpose of specific activities implemented in class, there is a demotivating effect. For instance, students like Xin did not understand why the use of phonetic symbols to help learners "visualize" sounds —though common in pronunciation teaching—is supposed to help them in pronunciation if they cannot recognize the symbols or hear differences in sounds in the first place. Another problem stemmed from conflict between student and teacher expectations about the teacher's role. The teacher wanted to empower the students by making them feel more confident about their own speech. However, the students wanted another type of empowerment, and expected the teacher to help them overcome their pronunciation problems by showing them not only their strengths but also their weaknesses. They were frustrated in some cases when the teacher chose not to point out problems in their English, and they lost confidence in the value of the class.

In a class like this, these different extra-linguistic factors interfere with pronunciation teaching and learning. The issues found in this class belong exclusively to this specific context, and

although it is impossible to make generalizations to all teaching and learning scenarios, it is helpful to reflect on how similar issues may affect the dynamics of other pronunciation classes, and how these factors can prevent students from making progress in learning. The class portrayed in this study demonstrated that in addition to comparatively well-understood linguistic complexities that learners bring to the class (e.g., different L1 backgrounds, age, and different levels of exposure to L2), there are additional factors that play a central role in the learning process and that can either enhance or prevent learning for some students. Some students come to a pronunciation class with high levels of motivation that make them seek extra opportunities to invest in more learning. However, others come to class and the type of instruction they find demotivates them and prevents them from learning, especially when they do not see the usefulness of instructional techniques used in class, or when they do not receive the type of feedback they expect the teacher to give. It is my hope that the issues presented here can help us reflect about the need to investigate and analyze more what happens in the pronunciation classroom beyond the analysis of strictly phonological phenomena.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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APPENDIX

Sample Questions (Student Semi-Structured Interview)

Tell me a little about yourself (where you are from, what you would like to study, how long you have been in this program, etc.).

Why are you studying pronunciation in this course?

What would you like to learn (or achieve) in this course? Please explain.

How do you feel about the activities you do in class (dialogues, reading out loud, presentations, etc.)?

Do you study pronunciation outside of class? Explain.

When you interact with others outside of class, do you make an effort to put into practice what you learn in class? Explain.

How do you feel about your own English pronunciation right now?

What aspects are more important for you to improve in this course (e.g., vowels, consonants, stress, intonation, etc.)? Explain.

What aspects do you feel are more difficult for you in pronunciation? Explain.

What kind of things do you feel are easier for you in pronunciation? Explain.

How do you feel about some of the techniques used in class, and how useful do you think they are for your own learning? Explain.

How do you feel about the assignments in class? Are they helpful for you? Explain.

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about you and the class that I didn't ask you?

Sample Questions (Teacher Semi-Structured Interview)

How do you perceive your students learning of pronunciation in class?

What is your ideal vision about teaching pronunciation?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your students learning pronunciation?

How do you select the activities that you bring to class? How do you select assignments?

How do you help your students with intelligibility in class? Do you feel it is important to teach them to be intelligible? Explain.

How do you think your students feel about intelligibility in pronunciation?

A lot of students seem to have a contradiction between sounding nativelike and their accent. How do you approach this in class?

In your opinion, what types of expectations do you think your students come to class with? Explain.

How useful has it been to learn about English pronunciation teaching/learning in your graduate program?

How do you deal with a student (for instance, when monitoring in individualized attention) that you see it's having difficulty with a specific sound or another feature? Explain.

How do you feel about the issue of identity and their pronunciation?