

Enhancing listening skills through guided pronunciation activities in English as a Foreign Language second-year high school students

Mejorar las habilidades auditivas a través de actividades guiadas de pronunciación en estudiantes de segundo año de secundaria de inglés como lengua extranjera

Guido Fabián Chiriboga Chiriboga, Javier Andrés Sánchez Rodríguez

Abstract

This study examined pronunciation difficulties among second-year high school students in Cuenca, Ecuador, and the effects of directed pronunciation instruction on oral performance. Given that Ecuadorian EFL classrooms often prioritize grammar and vocabulary over pronunciation, learners frequently experience reduced speaking confidence. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining pre- and post-test quantitative data with qualitative insights from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and recorded speaking tasks. Sixteen students participated in a four-week intervention featuring guided speaking, repetition, and audio-based exercises. Results showed notable improvements across all measured criteria: stress increased from 2.3 to 3.8, intonation from 2.1 to 3.5, clarity from 2.5 to 4.0, and accuracy from 2.4 to 3.7. Qualitatively, students reported heightened awareness of their pronunciation challenges and greater confidence in oral participation. Although intonation remained difficult for some, the findings indicate that systematic pronunciation practice enhances both speaking effectiveness and learner self-assurance, supporting its integration into EFL curricula to complement traditional grammar-focused instruction.

Keywords: Pronunciation; Secondary education; Communication skills; Teaching methods; Phonology

Guido Fabián Chiriboga Chiriboga

Universidad Católica de Cuenca | Cuenca | Ecuador | guidof.chiriboga@docentes.educacion.edu.ec
<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6437-2932>

Javier Andrés Sánchez Rodríguez

Universidad Católica de Cuenca | Cuenca | Ecuador | javier.sanchez@ucacue.edu.ec
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6698-1923>

Resumen

La pronunciación es clave en la comunicación oral, pues influye en la capacidad de expresar ideas y ser comprendido. En Ecuador, la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera suele priorizar la gramática y el vocabulario sobre la pronunciación, lo que puede afectar la fluidez y disminuir la confianza de los estudiantes. Este estudio identificó las principales dificultades de pronunciación en estudiantes de segundo año de secundaria en Cuenca y evaluó el impacto de una intervención pedagógica dirigida. Con un enfoque de métodos mixtos, se combinaron pruebas pre y post intervención con entrevistas, cuestionarios, observaciones y grabaciones. Dieciséis estudiantes participaron en cuatro semanas de ejercicios guiados, repetición y práctica auditiva. Los resultados mostraron mejoras notables: acento (2,3 a 3,8), entonación (2,1 a 3,5), claridad (2,5 a 4,0) y precisión (2,4 a 3,7). Cualitativamente, los alumnos desarrollaron mayor conciencia sobre sus errores y mostraron más confianza al hablar. Aunque la entonación siguió siendo un reto, la evidencia confirma que el trabajo sistemático en pronunciación beneficia tanto el desempeño oral como la seguridad en el aula.

Palabras clave: Pronunciación; Enseñanza secundaria; Aptitud de comunicación; Método de enseñanza; Fonología.

Introduction

Pronunciation is one of the most vital aspects in learning a second language due to the role it plays in intelligibility and oral fluency. Profoundly, those who produce spoken sentences with precision tend to be more capable of becoming engaged in discerning exchanges, and, hence, communicating their thoughts efficiently. However, pronunciation teaching is often less emphasized in the classroom compared to grammar and vocabulary in many EFL environments (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Thomson & Derwing, 2018).

In many EFL classrooms, instructional practices tend to prioritize grammar instruction, reading activities, and vocabulary development, while oral communication and pronunciation practice often receive less attention. Saito and Lyster (2018), found that limited pronunciation-focused instruction may contribute to persistent speaking difficulties, particularly in contexts where learners have reduced opportunities to interact with authentic spoken English. Similarly, Gordon and Darcy (2019), explain that learners frequently experience difficulties not only with individual sounds but also with suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation, which play an important role in speech comprehensibility.

In the Ecuadorian context, where English instruction is largely guided by the national curriculum, students are often exposed to English mainly within the classroom environment, which limits their opportunities to interact with authentic spoken English outside school settings (Paredes, 2022). Thomson and Derwing (2018) as well as Saito and Lyster (2018), argue that limited exposure to meaningful oral input may affect learners' ability to internalize pronunciation patterns and develop greater confidence during spoken communication. In addition to linguistic difficulties, pronunciation challenges may also influence learners' affective responses. Several studies suggest that students who perceive their pronunciation as inaccurate often feel less confident during oral activities, which may reduce their willingness to participate in spoken interaction (Saito & Lyster, 2018). Consequently, pronunciation difficulties may affect not only learners' intelligibility but also their motivation and participation in classroom communication activities.

While research on pronunciation has gained significance over the last few years, previous research has mainly focused on adult learners and university students (Levis, 2018; Thomson & Derwing, 2018). There is comparatively little evidence about pronunciation development among secondary school pupils in Latin American EFL contexts. For that reason, this research addresses the pronunciation difficulties of second-year high school students in Cuenca, Ecuador, and investigates whether pronunciation-based instruction might facilitate gains in oral performance and speaking confidence. The study is specifically to find out the most frequent pronunciation difficulties encountered in speaking tasks and to assess the impact of students' structured pronunciation practice on their communicative competence.

Pronunciation has been closely related to communicative competence because it influences how effectively spoken language is understood during interaction. One of the central concepts in pronunciation research is intelligibility, particularly in EFL contexts where learners are not necessarily expected to achieve native-like pronunciation but rather to communicate clearly and effectively. According to Levis (2018), pronunciation instruction should prioritize comprehensibility over accent imitation, since successful communication depends more on being understood than on sounding like a native speaker. From this perspective, pronunciation instruction is increasingly viewed as a component that supports oral interaction and communicative effectiveness rather than as an attempt to eliminate foreign accents.

One of the most influential theories in pronunciation research is Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995), which proposes that learners' first language significantly influences how second language sounds are perceived and produced. According to this model, learners often associate unfamiliar sounds in the target language with phonological patterns that already exist in their native language. As a result, pronunciation difficulties may emerge when learners attempt to produce sounds, stress patterns, or intonation features that differ from those of their first language. Gordon and Darcy (2019), explain that this phenomenon is particularly noticeable among Spanish-speaking learners of English, who often struggle with certain vowel distinctions, consonant articulation, and prosodic features.

This theory is particularly important for the current study, as all the participants have a background in the Spanish language. According to Flege's model, learners often interpret unfamiliar sounds through the phonological system of their native language, which might explain some of the difficulties in stress, intonation, and pronunciation accuracy. Gordon and Darcy (2019), also discovered that Spanish-speaking learners often face challenges when producing English sounds and prosodic patterns that differ from those in Spanish.

Apart from isolated-sound pronunciation a few works point to the suprasegmental elements stress, rhythm or intonation. They are essential as part of speech naturalness and represent, to a large extent, the meaning, feeling, and focusing of oral speech. According to Thomson and Derwing (2018), poor intonation of a text may hinder comprehension when the individual sounds are made with an admirable accuracy. Practical examples on prosodic features in the classroom, as opposed to segmental accuracy, also emerge in current models of pronunciation instruction.

Pronunciation development goes beyond phonological production. Studies in second language acquisition have found that, preceding the acquisition of these phonological differences in speech, participants must appreciate them first before they can produce them on a fixed or regular basis in the context of spoken language exchange. Hence, both listening and pronunciation development are connected processes that are mutually supportive.

Gordon and Darcy (2019), argue that exposure to authentic spoken input can help learners internalize pronunciation patterns more effectively, particularly in relation to stress and intonation. This perspective supports the integration of listening-based activities and oral interaction into pronunciation instruction. In addition to linguistic factors, pronunciation research has also examined the role of affective variables in language learning. Saito and Lyster (2018), found that learners who feel insecure about their pronunciation are often less willing to participate in speaking activities, which may reduce opportunities for oral practice and reinforcement. In contrast, supportive classroom environments and constructive corrective feedback may contribute positively to learners' confidence and participation during oral communication tasks. From this perspective, pronunciation development is influenced not only by linguistic knowledge but also by motivational and affective factors that shape learners' willingness to communicate.

Certain scholars claim that pronunciation activities have frequently been sporadic or distant from communicative practice when in the context of classroom instruction with a grammar-focused goal (Derwing & Munro, 2005). The above scenario brings us some of the problems that requires pedagogical approaches that have pronunciation embedded in oral communicative activities in a more uniform manner. Based on this perspective, the research in this article frames pronunciation not only in context as sounding correct, a way of speaking, but also an ability to communicate and for speech that is related to intelligibility, confidence, and classroom cooperation. Thus, pronunciation development is seen here as a multilayered phenomenon affecting linguistic, perceptual, affective, and situational aspects, which could positively influence learners' oral performance in EFL contexts.

Generally, this work indicates that pronunciation development is affected by a number of different influences: the effects of the first language; exposure to meaningful oral input; the perception of phonological differences; and opportunities for communicative practice. Most studies of pronunciation have focused on intelligibility, comprehensibility, and the extent to which learners could participate in spoken communication, instead of native-like production itself.

Methodology

Research Design

This research used a mixed-methods design in which the pronunciation development of second-year high school students was observed in an EFL classroom. A mixed-methods research design was chosen as it was necessary to have both quantitative and qualitative data to cover the

study objectives. Quantitative data allowed an assessment of changes in pronunciation performance for students through pre-test and post-test, whereas qualitative data provided information about students' confidence, participation, and perceptions in the instructional context. This allows a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of pronunciation-focused instruction while combining both forms of data. This is in agreement with prior research advocating mixed methods in language learning as it allows researchers to explore both measurable results as well as learner experiences in the context of classrooms (Creswell, 2009; Indriani & Sari, 2023).

The recorded speaking tasks provided additional support for interpreting students' pronunciation development beyond the numerical rubric scores. Rather than conducting formal speech analysis, the recordings were reviewed to observe general aspects of students' oral performance, including comprehensibility, fluency, stress patterns, and continuity during spoken interaction. Listening to the recordings at different stages of the intervention also helped the researcher compare students' oral production before and after the pronunciation-focused activities.

Participants

The participants in this study were 16 second-year high school students enrolled in a public educational institution in Cuenca, Ecuador. The sample consisted of 10 male and 6 female students between approximately 15 and 17 years old. All participants belonged to the same English class, which followed the regular secondary education curriculum established by the institution.

Because the participants were selected through convenience sampling from a single institution, the findings should be interpreted with caution. While the sample was fitting for studying pronunciation development in this specific context, the observations cannot possibly be extrapolated to all EFL learners in Ecuador or to all other educational contexts.

Instruments

To collect the necessary information for this study, quantitative and qualitative instruments were also employed to derive a comprehensive understanding of students' pronunciation development and classroom experiences during the process of the intervention. In the quantitative phase of the study, all 16 participants completed both the pre-test and post-test to evaluate changes in their pronunciation performance throughout the intervention period.

These evaluations considered several pronunciation criteria, including stress, intonation, clarity, and overall pronunciation accuracy. A pronunciation rubric based on these criteria was used to evaluate students' oral performance in a more organized and consistent manner throughout both stages of the study. The use of the same rubric during the pre-test and post-test allowed the comparison of students' pronunciation performance before and after the instructional intervention using identical evaluation standards.

The use of a five-point pronunciation rubric ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 being very limited and 5 being excellent. There were four areas students were assessed for: stress, intonation, clarity, and pronunciation accuracy. Stress evaluated the proper focus given to syllables and words while speaking, while intonation evaluated the variety of pitches used and patterns of speech. Clarity indicated how well learners' speech could be comprehended by listeners, while pronunciation accuracy assessed the correct production of English sounds and words. In order to standardize the evaluation, the same rubric was used at pre-test and post-test to compare performance and outcomes before and after the intervention.

In addition, recorded speaking tasks were used to support the evaluation process and observe changes related to fluency, comprehensibility, and pronunciation patterns during oral interaction. Rather than conducting formal speech analysis, the recordings were reviewed as part of a perceptual evaluation process focused on students' oral production during speaking activities.

For the qualitative component of the study, classroom observations were conducted throughout the intervention period in order to examine students' participation, interaction, and responses during pronunciation-focused activities. The use of both instruments enhanced the comprehensiveness of the results interpretation in that it was possible to include not only the quantitative gains in pronunciation performance but also students' experiences and perceptions in the classroom during the instructional process.

Procedure

This study was conducted over a four-week period and organized into three main stages in order to observe students' pronunciation development throughout the instructional process. During the first stage, all participants completed a diagnostic pre-test designed to assess their pronunciation performance before the intervention began. In addition, students participated in a recorded speaking activity that made it possible to observe aspects such as stress, intonation, clarity, and overall comprehensibility during oral production.

This initial stage provided baseline information that was later used to compare students' pronunciation performance after the instructional intervention.

After the diagnostic step, participants underwent a four-week intervention for pronunciation development. The interventions comprised guided speaking tasks, repetition activities, controlled pronunciation practice, and audio tasks focused on increasing spoken English exposure. In each of the treatment sessions students were provided opportunities to apply pronunciation features in discourse rather than as isolated exercises and thus, to practise stress, intonation, and clarity in a context that is significant to learning.

At the end of the study, all participants completed a post-test based on the same criteria of evaluation applied in the pre-test. The systematic comparison of students' pronunciation performance before and after the instructional intervention was facilitated through this procedure. Fur-

thermore, the students also did a second recorded speaking task, which provided further evidence of their oral production.

The recorded activities were reviewed as part of a rubric-based perceptual evaluation process. Instead of formal phonetic or acoustic analysis, general features of learners' oral performance such as comprehensibility, fluency, stress patterns, and overall pronunciation development were observed through recordings. These stages helped the investigator capture data of a quantitative and qualitative nature on students' advancement during the intervention.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed comparing the students' pronunciation performance prior to and after the instructional intervention carried out in the study. In order to achieve this, the pre-test and post-test scores were classified based on the criteria from the pronunciation rubric, namely stress, intonation, clarity, and pronunciation accuracy.

To achieve consistency across the appraisal of each criterion, both stages were assessed with the same rubric scale. From the scores collected, by comparing students' overall performance in the pre-test and post-test for each of the pronunciation criteria, the average results were calculated. Average scores for each pronunciation criterion were computed by taking the scores of all students and dividing the total score by the number of students ($n = 16$). This procedure was implemented separately for the pre-test and post-test to report on variation in student performance in pronunciation, after the instruction. Comparison of these averages enabled the experimenter to see overall trends in the four criteria tested: stress, intonation, clarity, and pronunciation accuracy.

Through this process, the researcher was able to examine the general trends resulting from the use of pronunciation-focused initiatives as positive changes in students' oral production. These verbal exercises did not require systematic phonetic or acoustic speech analysis, but rather were employed as a resource in a rubric-type perceptual evaluation process, the spoken practice tasks.

The analysis of the recordings allowed to identify changes in students' oral performance, particularly in terms of comprehensibility, fluency, stress patterns, and overall clarity. Repeated listening provided a clearer perspective on how students' pronunciation developed across both stages of the study. Rather than relying on formal phonetic or acoustic analysis, the speaking tasks were reviewed through a perceptual evaluation approach. This process made it possible to trace gradual improvements in fluency, clarity, and speech continuity. These qualitative observations were consistent with the quantitative findings and offered additional evidence of students' pronunciation development throughout the intervention period.

The qualitative data were analyzed using a thematic approach, with attention to recurring patterns related to students' confidence, participation, and perceptions of pronunciation difficulties within the classroom. Additionally, information gathered from classroom observations, ques-

tionnaires, interviews, and teacher field notes was carefully compared in order to identify shared trends and consistent responses throughout the intervention period.

Results

This section presents the changes observed in students' pronunciation performance following the instructional intervention. Quantitative findings derived from the pronunciation rubric are presented first, followed by qualitative results related to students' confidence, participation, and classroom experiences.

Quantitative Results

The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores indicates a consistent improvement in students' pronunciation performance across all evaluated criteria. The results were calculated using a five-point rubric ranging from 1 (very limited) to 5 (excellent), based on the performance of all 16 participants. Table 1 summarizes the average scores obtained in both stages.

Table 1. Pronunciation Rubric Scores in the Pre-test and Post-test

Criterion	Pre-test	Post-test
Stress	2.3	3.8
Intonation	2.1	3.5
Clarity	2.5	4.0
Accuracy	2.4	3.7

Source: Own elaboration.

As shown in Table 1, all pronunciation criteria improved after the intervention. Stress increased from 2.3 to 3.8; intonation increased from 2.1 to 3.5 suggesting that certain aspects of pronunciation may require longer periods of practice and continued reinforcement; clarity increased from 2.5 to 4.0 suggesting that students were able to produce speech that was easier to understand, even if some pronunciation difficulties were still present, and pronunciation accuracy from 2.4 to 3.7. Among the evaluated criteria, clarity showed the highest post-test score, indicating that students' speech became more comprehensible during oral communication tasks. Although intonation improved, it remained the lowest-scoring feature. This suggests that suprasegmental features may require longer periods of practice and sustained instruction compared to other aspects of pronunciation. Overall, the quantitative results indicate that the pronunciation-focused intervention had a positive and measurable effect, as well as a clear and consistent improvement in students' oral performance across all evaluated criteria.

These findings are consistent with previous research that reports improvements in pronunciation performance after targeted instructional interventions. In addition, the persistent difficulty in mastering intonation has been widely documented in EFL contexts, where learners often struggle with suprasegmental features despite showing progress in other areas (Wang and Mao, 2022).

Analysis of Recorded Speaking Tasks

The recorded speaking tasks provided additional support for understanding students' oral performance beyond the numerical rubric scores, since they were not used for formal phonetic or speech analysis, but rather as a complementary resource to review students' participation and spoken production during classroom activities. These recordings also aided the analysis regarding rubric scores by giving a wider view on the spoken language produced by students as they participated in classroom activities. Listening to the recordings at different stages of the intervention helped identify general changes in students' comprehensibility, confidence, continuity of speech, and participation during oral tasks.

In like manner, the analysis revealed that 12 out of 16 students (75%) demonstrated increased fluency during post-intervention tasks, producing longer and more continuous utterances with fewer pauses. In addition, 10 out of 16 students (62.5%) showed improved control of stress patterns, which contributed to more natural speech production. Furthermore, 9 out of 16 students (56.25%) who initially showed hesitation in speaking activities were able to produce longer and more organized responses after the intervention. These changes suggest that pronunciation-focused instruction contributed not only to sound production but also to broader aspects of oral communication, including fluency and confidence.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative data, gathered through classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and teacher field notes, showed clear changes in students' confidence, participation, and awareness of pronunciation throughout the intervention. These sources provided valuable insight into how students' behaviors and perceptions evolved at different stages of the instructional process.

At the initial stage, 11 out of 16 students (68.75%) were hesitant to participate in oral activities, often producing brief or incomplete responses. As the intervention progressed, this pattern shifted noticeably. By the end of the study, 14 out of 16 students (87.5%) were more actively engaged in speaking tasks and showed a greater willingness to communicate in English during classroom activities.

A similar trend was observed in relation to confidence. Specifically, 12 out of 16 students (75%) reported feeling more confident when speaking English after completing the pronunciation-focused activities. In addition, students demonstrated increased awareness of their pronunciation difficulties, particularly in relation to stress and intonation. Many participants noted that listening to their recorded speaking tasks helped them recognize specific areas for improvement.

Taken together, these qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative results by showing that the intervention affected not only pronunciation accuracy but also students' engagement and confidence in oral communication. While some challenges remained—especially regarding intona-

tion—the overall pattern of results suggests that consistent pronunciation-focused instruction can lead to meaningful improvements in both performance and learner confidence.

Interpretation of Quantitative and Qualitative Trends

When the quantitative and qualitative findings are examined together, a broader picture of the intervention's impact becomes evident. The consistent improvement in pronunciation scores across all criteria reflects clear progress in students' linguistic development. Simultaneously, qualitative evidence reveals that these gains were accompanied by noticeable increases in confidence, participation, and awareness during speaking activities.

Data from the final questionnaire further support this pattern. Specifically, 12 out of 16 students (75%) reported feeling more confident when participating in oral tasks, while 10 out of 16 students (62.5%) indicated that pronunciation practice helped them recognize and correct their own errors. In addition, 14 out of 16 students (87.5%) agreed that regular pronunciation-focused activities contributed to improving their ability to communicate orally.

Taken together, these results highlight the broader impact of pronunciation-focused instruction. Beyond improvements in individual linguistic features, such as stress, clarity, and accuracy, the intervention also strengthened students' willingness to engage in communicative tasks, and although some difficulties remained —particularly those in relation to intonation— the overall evidence points to meaningful progress in both performance and learner confidence.

Discussion

The results of this study show that structured pronunciation-focused instruction can positively influence students' oral performance in EFL contexts. Improvements were observed across all evaluated criteria (stress, intonation, clarity, and pronunciation accuracy), suggesting that consistent engagement with guided pronunciation activities supports more effective and comprehensible speech.

One of the most noticeable outcomes of the intervention was the improvement in clarity, which obtained the highest post-test scores, indicating that students were able to communicate more clearly, even when some pronunciation hindrances remained. From a communicative standpoint, this reinforces the idea that intelligibility plays a more critical role than achieving native-like pronunciation in EFL contexts (Levis, 2018). In this sense, the findings highlight how pronunciation instruction is directly proportional to contributing to communicative competence by helping learners express meaning more effectively in spoken interaction.

Despite the overall progress, intonation continued to present difficulties for many students. This result is consistent with previous research emphasizing the complexity of suprasegmental fea-

tures, which typically require longer periods of exposure and more sustained practice (Thomson & Derwing, 2018). Unlike segmental aspects of pronunciation that can be improved through repetition and controlled exercises, intonation involves broader patterns such as rhythm, pitch, and meaning at the discourse level. As a result, its development tends to be more gradual and less responsive to short-term interventions.

Another aspect worth considering is the continued influence of students' L1 on their pronunciation. Although improvements were evident, certain patterns remained consistent with features commonly associated with Spanish phonology. This observation supports Flege's Speech Learning Model (1995), which suggests that learners tend to perceive and produce L2 sounds through the framework of their L1. Given that all participants shared a Spanish-speaking background, it is reasonable to assume that cross-linguistic influence played a role in both their initial challenges and their subsequent progress.

Conclusion

Beyond the linguistic dimension, the study also highlights the importance of affective factors in language learning. The increase in students' confidence and willingness to participate suggests that pronunciation instruction can have a positive impact on learners' attitudes toward speaking. These findings align with previous research indicating that greater confidence is often associated with increased engagement in oral communication (Saito & Lyster, 2018). In this case, structured practice and repeated exposure seem to have contributed to a more supportive learning environment, encouraging students to participate more actively in speaking activities.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings emphasize the value of integrating pronunciation into everyday classroom practice. Consequently, rather than treating it as an isolated component, pronunciation appears to be more effective when incorporated into communicative activities that allow students to apply what they have learned in meaningful contexts. Guided speaking tasks, repetition exercises, and audio-based activities were particularly useful in helping students develop greater awareness and control of their pronunciation.

Likewise, the use of recorded speaking tasks also proved to be especially beneficial, since listening to their own recordings gave students the opportunity to reflect on their performance and identify specific areas that required improvement. This process not only did it support skill development but also encouraged a greater degree of learner autonomy. In practical terms, this suggests that audio-based tools can be an accessible and effective resource in EFL classrooms, even in contexts with limited technological infrastructure.

Another important point that emerges from the study is the role of sustained practice. Although the intervention produced measurable improvements within a relatively short period, the results indicate that continued exposure and reinforcement are necessary to achieve more advan-

ced levels of pronunciation. This highlights the need to approach pronunciation as an ongoing component of language instruction, rather than as a set of isolated activities.

Despite these positive outcomes, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study was conducted with a relatively small sample of 16 students from a single institution, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the duration of the intervention was limited, and longer instructional periods may provide stronger evidence of long-term pronunciation development, particularly in relation to more complex features such as intonation. Lastly, it is also important to note that some aspects of the qualitative analysis relied on perceptual evaluation, which may introduce a degree of subjectivity despite the use of structured tools such as rubrics and observation protocols.

Future research could build on these results by: 1) including larger and more diverse participant groups, as well as extending the duration of instructional interventions, and 2) exploring the use of technology-enhanced tools for pronunciation practice and examine how individual learner differences influence pronunciation development.

Conclusively, the findings of this study demonstrate that pronunciation-focused instruction can play an important role in improving both the linguistic and affective aspects of oral communication in EFL learners to this particular sample. The observed improvements in performance, along with increased confidence and participation, highlight the importance of integrating pronunciation into communicative language teaching, and although certain challenges remain (intonation-wise) the overall evidence suggests that consistent and structured pronunciation practice can contribute to the development of more effective and confident speakers.

References

- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2005). Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 379–397. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588486>
- Flege, J. E. (1995). Second language learning: Theory, findings, and problems. In W. Strange, (ed.). *Speech perception and linguistic experience: Issues in cross-language research* (pp. 233–277). York Press.
- Gordon, J., & Darcy, I. (2016). The development of comprehensible speech in L2 learners: A classroom study on the effects of short-term pronunciation instruction. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, 2(1), 56–92. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.2.1.03gor>
- Hidayati, K. H. (2016). Using audio lingual method to improve students' pronunciation ability of Darul Mahdiah Private School. *ELLITE: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.32528/ellite.v1i1.161>
- Jahara, S. F., & Abdelrady, A. H. (2021). Pronunciation problems encountered by EFL learners: An empirical study. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(4), 194–212. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no4.14>
- Levis, J. (2018). Intelligibility and pronunciation teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 52(1), 1–19.

- Paredes, J. (2022). Strategies to improve English pronunciation. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*.
- Roach, P. (2010). *English phonetics and phonology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Saito, K., & Lyster, R. (2018). Effects of corrective feedback on pronunciation development. *Language Learning*, 68(2), 1–29.
- Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2018). The effectiveness of pronunciation instruction. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(1), 1–25.
- Wahyuni, P. (2022). The effect of teaching reading aloud technique in improving English pronunciation. *EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 2(1), 46–54. <https://doi.org/10.37304/ebony.v2i1.4041>
- Wang, Y., & Mao, Z. (2022). Prosody and communication in EFL learners. *Journal of Phonetics*.

Authors

Guido Fabián Chiriboga Chiriboga. Holds a Master's degree in Educational Technology and Innovation and a Bachelor's degree in Educational Sciences, specializing in English. I currently hold a permanent teaching position at the Francisco Febres Cordero Educational Unit in Cuenca, an institution where I have worked since 2020. I have eight years of experience in the field of education, carrying out academic activities focused on teaching, innovation, and the improvement of learning processes.

Javier Andrés Sánchez Rodríguez. Holds a Master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and a Bachelor's degree in the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, specializing in English. I currently work as an English teacher for adults at the Language Center of the Catholic University of Cuenca, teaching levels A1, A2, and B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Declaration

Conflict of interest

We have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Funding

No financial support from external parties.

Note

The article is original and has not been previously published.