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THE EFFECT OF OPPORTUNISTIC PRONUNCIATION TEACHING ON LEARNERS' SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY

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UNIVERSIDAD DE PIURA
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APPROVAL

The thesis titled “The Effect of Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching on Learners’ Speech Intelligibility” presented by Alcides Felipe Vela Izquierdo in accordance with the requirements for the Degree of “Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación en la Especialidad de Lengua Inglesa” was approved by the thesis advisor Professor Jaime Ancajima and defended on May 21, 2015 before a Jury composed of the following members:

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SUMMARY

THESIS TITLE: THE EFFECT OF OPPORTUNISTIC PRONUNCIATION TEACHING ON LEARNERS' SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY

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SPECIALIZATION: LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA

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The research work titled, "The Effect of Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching on Learners' Speech Intelligibility" aims to offer an alternative to speech development by studying the influence of opportunistic pronunciation teaching on English language learners' phonetic skills.

Opportunistic pronunciation teaching can be defined as an alternative to pronunciation teaching which consists of dealing with a pronunciation issue that has come up during an activity and dedicating a short amount of time to its treatment. This action requires that teachers divert from their original lesson plan when lesson realities make it inevitable (Harmer, 2001:187).

Since pronunciation is an important part of the language systems, one of its benefits is that it facilitates comprehension of what the learners wish to express in the target language; therefore, direct pronunciation teaching occupies an important place in the syllabi of modern English language textbook series.

This research seeks to find out if opportunistic pronunciation teaching helps to complement the formal and sequential study of phonetic features of the English language by taking advantage of language use opportunities and dealing with a pronunciation issue while this rises during the development of a language activity.

In opportunistic pronunciation teaching, the features that are dealt with have come up unexpectedly or noticed on the spot. It is a type of incidental teaching that does not require such a formal or planned approach as direct pronunciation teaching does.

The results show that opportunistic pronunciation teaching techniques have a positive effect on the improvement of speech intelligibility in the treatment group in contrast to the control group, whose progress in intelligibility was less. In conclusion, it was found that opportunistic pronunciation teaching contributes to English language learners' speech intelligibility.

INTRODUCTION

The popularity of pronunciation teaching has waxed and waned over the years. During the time of the Grammar Translation Method, pronunciation was seen as irrelevant. With the arrival of the Direct Method and Audiolingualism, it grew in estimation, but it was put on the sidelines with the influence of Communicative Language Teaching and its emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language. Today pronunciation has regained its rightful place as an important part of the language systems and more importance has been placed on the communicative aspects of pronunciation, mainly through the use of suprasegmental features in spoken English.

This research study seeks to find practical and valid ways to help learners develop their awareness of phonetic features through a teaching alternative called Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching (OPT) and find out if this alternative has a positive effect on learners' speech intelligibility when they communicate. Through a quasi-experimental study it could be observed how learners in a treatment group responded to opportunistic pronunciation teaching. These results were compared with the results obtained in a control group to determine the influence of OPT.

The present work is composed of four chapters that discuss the process followed in the development of the research study titled, "The

Effect of Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching on Learners' Speech Intelligibility.”

Chapter one introduces the main objectives of this research study by outlining the general features that make up the nature of OPT, and formulates the central hypothesis.

Chapter two describes pronunciation theory and pronunciation teaching in detail. It also states the rationale for the application of OPT and the techniques that accompany this type of teaching.

Chapter three discusses the research methodology applied in this study, the research design along with the population samples, variables, techniques and instruments for data collection.

Chapter four presents the findings obtained after the application of OPT techniques to the treatment group and compares these results with the results obtained from the control group. Finally, the conclusions containing the reflections on this research work close the study.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OUTLINE

The research work titled, “The Effect of Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching on Learner’s Speech Intelligibility”, aims at offering an alternative to learners’ speech development by studying the influence of opportunistic pronunciation teaching on EFL learners’ pronunciation.

Opportunistic pronunciation teaching can be defined as an alternative to pronunciation teaching which consists of dealing with a pronunciation issue that has come up during an activity and dedicating a short amount of time to its treatment. This action requires that teachers divert from their original lesson plan when lesson realities make it inevitable (Harmer, 2001:187).

Since pronunciation is an important language aspect, one of its benefits is that it facilitates understanding of what learners wish to express in the target language. Therefore, direct pronunciation teaching takes an important place on the syllabus of modern English language textbook series.

However, what this research study seeks is to find out if opportunistic pronunciation teaching helps complement the formal and

sequential study of phonetic items in the English language by taking advantage of language use opportunities and dealing with a pronunciation issue as it comes up during the development of a language activity.

This research will not use pronunciation activities that treat pronunciation items directly as part of the course syllabus. Direct pronunciation teaching is the kind of teaching that takes place when learners encounter pronunciation tasks that are part of a unit or lesson. Since these tasks address specific pronunciation items systematically and overtly, their treatment requires a more formal and planned presentation.

In opportunistic pronunciation teaching, the items that are dealt with have come up unexpectedly or been noticed on the spot. It is a type of incidental teaching that does not require such a formal or planned approach as direct pronunciation teaching does. Pronunciation issues are addressed as they arise, which causes teachers to think and react quickly in order to treat them. These opportunities to teach pronunciation happen as a result of the interaction between language learners and the target language.

1.1 Problem Statement

Because intelligibility or the ability of being understood or comprehended is a challenge for learners when they use English orally, it is necessary for teachers to apply a variety of alternatives and techniques that allow learners to improve their level of oral comprehensibility so that they can experience more success when they speak with other English language users, be it native or not.

Pronunciation teaching plays an important role in second language learning. Not only does pronunciation teaching make learners aware of different sounds, and their characteristics, but it also helps improve their speech tremendously (Harmer 2001:183).

Pronunciation teaching can be carried out by means of different alternatives such as a pronunciation course per se, integrated phases within the textbook syllabus, discrete slots where teachers include separate pronunciation work in a systematic manner, and opportunistic pronunciation teaching, which involves teachers' deviating from their original plan when lesson realities demand it and dedicating a short amount of time to a specific pronunciation item that has come up during an activity.

This last alternative is the one this research study is going to focus on so that we can know if opportunistic pronunciation teaching has any effect on the improvement of English language learners' pronunciation.

1.2 Justification

This research study can be justified by the need to help English language learners reach intelligibility in their speech, and to prove the validity and benefits of opportunistic pronunciation teaching to this endeavor.

Opportunistic pronunciation teaching is going to be applied and studied in the language classroom to know if it contributes to learners' speech intelligibility while they are working on other language skills such as speaking, listening, vocabulary and grammar, and at the same time developing their pronunciation skills on the periphery.

It is this peripheral work that will serve as the starting point for applying opportunistic pronunciation teaching as learners require assistance with or show interest in phonetic aspects while they are performing other language tasks.

1.3 Target Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of this research will be EFL learners. If opportunistic pronunciation teaching proves to help learners improve their intelligibility, they will be able to express themselves with more confidence and clarity in the target language.

Another group of direct beneficiaries will be EFL teachers since they will have an extra tool for teaching pronunciation and working at improving learner's intelligibility. If EFL teachers have more teaching alternatives on hand, they will be able to utilize the ones they consider to be the most effective.

The indirect beneficiary may include the language school where learners are taking English lessons. If language learners speak intelligibly, this achievement will reflect on the work done by the school teaching staff, and therefore the school will give more value to the important contribution made by its teachers and add this accomplishment to its list of successes.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives that this research attempts to achieve include the following.

- To know through a quantitative study with the assistance of some qualitative instruments if opportunistic pronunciation teaching helps EFL learners improve their oral intelligibility in the English language.
- To recognize frequent learners' errors by focusing on pronunciation aspects which include sounds, stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech.
- To understand how opportunistic pronunciation teaching can complement the pronunciation work done in class.
- To raise awareness of opportunities for pronunciation teaching as learners use the target language and take advantage of these opportunities to do pronunciation work.
- To analyze the consequences of both the application and non-application of opportunistic pronunciation teaching in control and treatment groups.

1.5 Research Questions

The questions that gave rise to this research study are the following:

- Can opportunistic pronunciation teaching improve EFL learners' ability to communicate more intelligibly?
- If this is the case, how does opportunistic pronunciation teaching influence learners' speech?
- What techniques can be used in opportunistic pronunciation teaching so that it can be applied effectively?
- What kind of reaction will opportunistic pronunciation teaching trigger in the treatment group of learners?

1.6 Hypothesis

EFL learners' speech intelligibility can be improved significantly through opportunistic pronunciation teaching. The independent variable in this study is the application of opportunistic pronunciation teaching techniques aimed at dealing with pronunciation issues as they come up in a lesson. The dependent variable in this study is the positive effect on the improvement of learners' speech intelligibility.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Pronunciation Teaching, a Brief History and its Importance

From a teaching perspective it can be argued that pronunciation teaching can improve L2 learners' oral production. This argument is supported by studies that assess improvements in intelligibility using a group of untrained listeners (Derwing & Munro 2005). Pronunciation teaching is also discussed in different English language teaching manuals: Ur (1997), Kelly (2000), Harmer (2001), Scrivener (2005), and its systematic treatment is addressed in modern English language learning textbook series: Full Immersion (2012).

From a language perspective, phonology or the sound system of a language is considered as one of the five components of language systems. The other components include lexis, grammar, function and discourse analysis (Scrivener, 2005).

From the two perspectives presented above, it behooves any teacher or researcher to search for teaching alternatives that allow learners to develop intelligible pronunciation. In so doing, L2 learners will continue improving their oral production skills and get additional work on phonology.

Over more than sixty years the importance attached to pronunciation teaching has varied quite considerably. Not forming an essential part in the grammar translation method, pronunciation teaching became prominent with the implementation of the Direct Method and Audiolingualism, but it was again taken back to the sidelines with the rise of Communicative Language Teaching and the Natural Approach (Jones, 2002).

Due to research into the communicative function of suprasegmental features of pronunciation in oral communication, pronunciation teaching resurged once again. Pennington and Richards (as cited in Jones, 2002) claim that this resurgence led to a more top-down approach to pronunciation teaching, and therefore to an emphasis on the more meaningful aspects or the suprasegmental features of phonology in speech. However, researchers as Kelly (2000) state that the segmental features of pronunciation also play an important role in effective communication. A learner who constantly mispronounces a range of phonemes can be extremely difficult for a speaker of another language community to understand (Kelly, 2000:11). Therefore, the inaccurate production of a phoneme can lead to misunderstanding and teachers need to focus on these segmental features of pronunciation as well.

2.2 Pronunciation as an Important Component of Language Teaching and Learning

In order to become competent users of any language, learners need to develop communicative competence. Communicative competence can be defined as the knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in any language, but also the knowledge of whether or not it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (as cited in Brown, 2000) state that the concept of communicative competence is formed by four different components: formal competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

From the perspective of formal competence, language is a system of communication that is made up of lexis, grammar, phonology. Since language is the subject matter of language lessons, we cannot leave out any of these components or tip the scales in favor of one or two components to the detriment of the others.

Nonetheless, teachers usually place more importance on the teaching of grammar and lexis. As Kelly (2000:13) points out:

A lot of pronunciation teaching tends to be done in response to errors which students make in the classroom. Such reactive teaching is absolutely necessary, and will always be so. Grammatical and lexical difficulties arise in the classroom too, and teachers also deal with these reactively. However, when it comes to planning a lesson or devising a timetable of work, teachers tend to make grammar their first concern. Lexis follows closely behind, with items of vocabulary and longer phrases being “slotted” in where appropriate.

Yet pronunciation work should not be ignored. If pronunciation work is not included, learners will have difficulty communicating effectively. There will be communication breakdowns and misunderstandings. In regard to this issue Kelly (2000:13) also states:

Teachers should regard features of pronunciation as integral to language analysis and lesson planning. Any analysis of language that disregards or sidelines factors of pronunciation is incomplete. Similarly, a lesson which focuses on particular language structure or lexis needs to include features of pronunciation in order to give learners the full picture, and hence a better chance of being able to communicate successfully.

In light of the aforementioned, an English program that does not include pronunciation teaching will deprive learners of the opportunity to develop overall communicative competence and will not treat errors in pronunciation appropriately.

Pronunciation work allows learners to make closer approximations to the target language and therefore be better understood. Besides, in order to help learners improve their pronunciation skills, teachers of pronunciation need a good grounding in theoretical knowledge, practical classroom skills and access to good ideas for classroom activities (Kelly, 2000:13).

2.3 Concepts and Definitions Related to the Study

The following concepts are an important part of this study: intelligibility, opportunistic pronunciation teaching, and information-gap activity.

2.3.1 Intelligibility

The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2002:263) defines intelligibility as “the degree to which a message can be understood. Studies of speech perception have found that the intelligibility of speech is due to various factors including accent and intonation, the listener’s ability to predict parts of the message, the location of pauses in the utterance, the grammatical complexity of sentences, and the speed with which utterances are produced.”

The degree of understanding of the message does not require that the learners sound native or native-like, but clear enough to be capable of being understood or comprehended. Intelligibility as the goal in this study entails the most acceptable approximation to the target language pronunciation which makes the message or utterance clear with no room for interpretation. Intelligibility aims at getting the oral message across through the appropriate use of segmental features (individual phonemes such as vowel and consonant sounds) and suprasegmental elements (intonation, stress and rhythm, and connected speech).

2.3.2. Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching (OPT)

Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching is an alternative to the teaching of pronunciation which consists of dealing with some pronunciation issue as it comes up along the lesson. This treatment may involve the discussion of a pronunciation feature that is worth mentioning by the teacher due to its relevance or because it has been noticed by learners. It also includes some sort of timely error correction treatment when the learners make a pronunciation error. Regarding Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching Jeremy Harmer (2001:187) states:

Just as teachers may stray from their original plan when lesson realities make this inevitable, and teach vocabulary or grammar opportunistically because it has “come up”, so there are good reasons why we may want to stop what we are doing and spend a minute or two on some pronunciation issue that has arisen in the course of an activity. A lot will depend on what kind of activity the learners are involved in since we will be reluctant to interrupt fluency work inappropriately, but tackling a problem at the moment when it occurs can be a successful way of dealing with pronunciation.

With regard to error correction in Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching, it is important to emphasize that the type of error correction applied will depend on the stage at which the lesson is. As mentioned by Harmer above teachers need to be aware that interrupting the flow of speech during fluency work or the production stage may not be appropriate. Therefore, the error treatment can be delayed for a later time. However, if the error causes a breakdown in communication the teacher should intervene. Concerning this intervention Kelly (2001:27) claims:

Intervention at this stage by the teacher is not usually necessary, unless for some reason there is a breakdown in communication. In many instances it is pronunciation which leads to a breakdown, making it necessary for the teacher to intervene in order to get the learners back on track.

During the other stages of the lesson such as the practice stage, in Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching, errors are treated immediately through remedial correction. This remedial correction involves different possible treatments such as having the learner self-correct, inviting other learners to make the correction or the teacher's repeating the mispronounced word, phrase or sentence correctly and asking the learner to repeat after the teacher. For a more detailed explanation of the correction techniques used in this study, see Chapter 2, Section 2.9.

2.3.3 Information-gap Activity

An information-gap activity is a task that requires speakers to exchange information because information is known by only some of those present. The information-gap activity used in this study is in the form of a free dialog, and therefore the speakers have to produce authentic output, which means language that contains a wide array of language forms. The learners will perform an information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog to use all the language they have at their disposal. This dialog will serve to evaluate learners on the pronunciation features and therefore to find out if OPT had or didn't have an effect on intelligibility in authentic communication.

2.4 Theory of the Problem and Previous Studies

The question of whether or not pronunciation teaching works has been responded somewhat negatively based on two basic assumptions. The first assumption derives from the Critical Period Hypothesis, which

claims that post-adolescent language acquisition is difficult and complete learning of a second language is a goal unlikely to be realized once puberty is reached (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Some studies support the popular notion that children have an advantage over adults in learning the pronunciation of a second language (Siegler et al., as cited in Jones 2002); however, they do not prove that adults cannot acquire native-like pronunciation, and there is evidence that contradicts the assumption that adult learners are not capable of doing so (Neufeld, as cited in Jones, 2002).

The second assumption arises primarily from the work of Krashen (1982), which claims that pronunciation ability cannot be attributed to classroom training. This argument proposes that focused practice and the teaching of formal rules do not help (Krashen, 1982). Nevertheless, other studies have proven that formal rules result in improvement when used for monitoring speech and that learners are better equipped to assess their own speech and more aware of their particular pronunciation problems (Dickerson; Rusmin et al., as cited in Jones, 2002).

For the purposes of this study we are going to consider the evidence presented above that shows that pronunciation teaching has a positive effect on the learning of the phonetic features of a second language. That being said, we are going to examine the reasons why pronunciation may be problematic for learners.

2.4.1 L1 Interference

It is claimed that L1 interference or negative transfer affects the acquisition of the second language sound system (Kranke & Christison, as cited in Jones 2002). However, this negative transfer is not as strong as other factors such as overgeneralization, approximation, and avoidance. It may be that the influence of learners' native language on their pronunciation is simply more noticeable to the observer but not stronger than on the other areas of language use (Jones, 2002). There are theories that explain the way learners approach a new sound system by using existing categories taken from their L1 sound system and finding similarities between the target language and L1 and creating new categories for unfamiliar features (Fledge, as cited in Jones 2002).

2.4.2 Markedness

Another variable that plays a role in the internalization of some pronunciation features is the theory of markedness, which explains that

certain language features are more complex, peripheral or exceptional than others, regardless of the learners' language backgrounds, making it more difficult for learners to master them. An example of markedness can be found in the process of assimilation, that is, changing the voicing and/or the point of articulation of adjacent sounds so as to make them more similar (e.g. in cooked /kʊkt/ the t is devoiced so as to make it more like the voiceless /k/ that precedes it, or in the phrase “*ten men* in the class,” the /n/ in ten assimilates to /m/ so that our organs of speech get ready for the /m/ sound).

2.4.3 Perceptual Salience

Perceptual salience or salience, which is the ease with which a linguistic item is perceived, can also explain why some linguistic items are perceived more easily than others. This salience may depend on the position of a phoneme in a word, the emphasis given to the word in speech, i.e. whether it is stressed or unstressed, or the position of the word in a sentence (Richards & Schmidt, 2000). If a phonetic item is hard to perceive, it will be more difficult for the learner to notice it and therefore be able to understand it, let alone produce it. An example of this salience could be when a word such as “will” is reduced to /l/ in rapid speech when someone says, “What *will* it be?” and the listener may not be able to perceive this word in the sentence.

2.5 Pronunciation Components

In order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of what pronunciation entails we must analyze its components. The concept of pronunciation may be said to include the sounds of the language, or phonology, stress and rhythm, and intonation (Ur, 2009:47).

2.5.1 Sounds

The English language is made up of more than 40 phonemes. These sounds are the units that make English unique and different from other languages, and at the same time a challenge for learners whose native language does not have equivalent sounds.

There are two phonetic alphabets which are commonly used and which group English phonemes and the phonemes of other languages. They are the Smith-Trager system and the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet).

The Smith-Trager system was developed specifically for the English language by American linguists Henry Smith and George Trager in 1951. The IPA was devised by the International Phonetic Association to create a phonetic system applicable to any language. Its latest revision was in 2005. See appendix 1 for the Smith-Trager System and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

2.5.2 Stress and Rhythm

English is a stressed-timed language. A stress-timed language is a language with a rhythm in which stressed syllables tend to recur at regular intervals of time and the length of an utterance depends on the number of stresses rather than the number of syllables (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:517). In the English language stresses tend to recur at regular intervals. As a result, the characteristic rhythm of English is created. The stress or intensity given to speech does not only include words but also phrases and sentences. The rhythm created by these regular stress intervals divides a sentence into sound units that facilitate its comprehension.

In the Spanish language this rhythmical regularity does not exist since stresses occur on every word, for example, a line of a poem in Spanish is generally determined by the total number of syllables, stressed or unstressed alike. The lines that contain the same number of syllables have the same length. In a line of a poem in English the number of stresses in a sentence is more important than the number of syllables (Prator & Wallace, 1985:29). As a consequence the English language learners whose native language is Spanish have more difficulty in learning the stress and rhythm of the English language.

2.5.3 Intonation

The rise and fall in tone is what makes the music of language and this fall or rise is known as intonation. Intonation in English is an important aspect of pronunciation because it frequently points out the differences in meaning of the same expression said at different pitch levels.

Stress is commonly indicated not by the increased volume but a slight rise in intonation (Ur, 1997:49). This rise is made up of four different pitch levels: low, normal, high, and extra high. Depending on the kind of utterance, these pitch levels change, for example, in yes/no

questions, the pitch level is normal and high; if it is a wh-word question the pitch level is normal, high and low.

2.5.4 Connected Speech

Besides these main components, there are other aspects of pronunciation that need to be taken into account because they form part of connected speech and are a real challenge to learn due to their complexity. In rapid speech speakers tend to pronounce sounds differently from the way they do in careful speech. When this happens, new features of connected speech are created. These features are a group of processes that make up the concept of connected speech or the Sandhi of spoken English. The word Sandhi means “placing together” in Sanskrit. It is used by grammarians to refer to the influence that the morpho-syntactic context or environment has on the pronunciation of words and word endings (Prator & Wallace, 1985).

Word stress, sentence stress and intonation are aspects of connected speech as they include more than one phoneme. Weak forms, such as where *do* is pronounced as /ə/ in “*What do /ə/ they want?*” are aspects of connected speech as well. Among the processes created by connected speech or sandhi-forms of spoken English include assimilation, elision, linking, juncture, contractions, and reductions.

2.5.4.1 Assimilation

Assimilation is a process in which one sound becomes similar or identical to the sound that precedes or follows it, e.g. in the phrase *that boat* the /t/ sound in *that* sounds like /p/ to accommodate the articulators to the /b/ sound in *book*. The /t/ assimilates to a /p/. As a result the phrase *that book* sounds /ðæp bʊk/. Based on Kelly (2001), some rules for assimilation include:

1. The phonemes /t/, /d/ and /n/ often become bilabial before bilabial consonants /p/, /b/ and /m/ as in *ten men* (/n/ assimilates to /m/)
2. /t/ assimilates to /k/ before /k/ or /g/; /d/ assimilates to /g/ before /k/ or /g/ as in *good girl* (/d/ assimilates to /g/)
3. /n/ can assimilate to /ŋ/ before /g/ or /k/ as in *been going*
4. /s/ can assimilate to /ʃ/ before /ʃ/ as in *this shiny...*
5. /z/ can assimilate to /ʒ/ before /ʃ/ as in *cheese shop*

The examples presented above are cases of anticipatory assimilation. Here one sound changes because of the following sound. When two sounds combine to form a different sound, a new case of assimilation is created. This case is called coalescent assimilation.

6. /t/ and /j/ coalesce to form /tʃ/ as in *didn't*you
7. /d/ and /j/ coalesce to form /dʒ/ as in *would*jou

2.5.4.2 Elision

Elision describes the process through which a sound disappears to economize the effort of pronouncing a sound in a word to ease pronunciation and to maintain a regular speech rhythm and speed. For example, in the utterance, *Her exam is next week* speakers would generally elide or omit the /t/ in *next* saying /neks wi:k/. Based on Kelly (2001), some rules for elision include:

1. The most common elisions in English are /t/ and /d/, when they appear within a consonant cluster.
We arrived the next day. (/t/ elided between /ks/ and /d/)
We bought a lovely carved statuette. (/d/ elided between /v/ and /st/)
2. Complex consonant clusters are simplified.
She acts like she owns the place. (/æktʃ/ can be simplified to /æks/)
3. /ə/ can disappear in unstressed syllables.
I'll love you forever, promise. Well, perhaps. (/ə/ can disappear)
4. /v/ can disappear in *of* before consonants.
My birthday's on the 11th of November.

2.5.4.3 Linking

Linking or liaison is a process which connects the final sound of one word or syllable to the beginning sound of the next. In the English language words ending in a tense vowel (/ey/, /i:/, /aɪ/, /ou/, /ju:/) and a following word or syllable beginning with a vowel are usually linked with a glide /j/ or /w/, e.g. *I agree* /aɪjə/ or *Go on* /gouwan/

When a word or syllable ends in a consonant cluster, which is a sequence of two or more consonants, and it is followed by a syllable beginning with a vowel, the final consonant of the cluster is frequently

pronounced as part of the next syllable, e.g. *left arm* /lef tarm/; *hold on* /houl dan/.

2.5.4.4 Juncture

Juncture refers to the boundary between two phonemes defining the flow and pauses between sounds in speech. Three common types of juncture are frequently recognized.

- a. Close juncture, which is a rapid transition between two sounds, as in the word *spea*k.
- b. Open juncture, which is a slight pause between sounds, as in *I scream* versus *ice cream*.
- c. Terminal juncture, which is a pause after a sound, as before and after “*Mr. Thomson is here*” in “*My boss, Mr. Thomson, is here.*”

2.5.4.5 Contractions

Contractions occur as two words combine so that they can be pronounced and written as one word, or syllable. Common examples of contractions are the following:

I'm /aɪm/, you're, he's...

I'll /aɪl/, you'll, he'll...

Would've /wudəv/, could've...

2.5.4.6 Reductions

Reductions can be seen as weakened forms in unstressed function words and as the process by which two words that are commonly found together combine to form a reduced sound. Following is a list of words subject to reduction in American English based on Prator and Wallace (1985).

Word	Stressed Form	Reduced Form	Example
1. as	/æz/	/əz/	<u>as</u> good <u>as</u> gold
2. at	/æt/	/ət/	look <u>at</u> her
3. from	/frəm/	/frəm/	came <u>from</u> Ica
4. than	/ðæn/	/ðən/	better <u>than</u> ever more <u>than</u> that

Word	Stressed Form	Reduced Form	Example
5. he	/hi:/	/i:/ /ɪ/	<u>he</u> 's gone I thought <u>he</u> did
6. her	/hər/	/ər/	made <u>her</u> glad
7. him	/hɪm/	/ɪm/	wish <u>him</u> luck
8. his	/hɪz/	/ɪz/	break <u>his</u> neck
9. she	/ʃi:/	/ʃɪ/	did <u>she</u> walk?
10. them	/ðem/	/ðəm/ /əm/	I saw <u>them</u> give <u>them</u> hell!
11. what	/hwat/	/wət/	that's <u>what</u> I said
12. you	/ju:/	/jʊ/ /jə/	will <u>you</u> sing? how do <u>you</u> do?
13. am	/æm/	/əm/ /m/	I <u>am</u> sure I' <u>m</u> sure
14. do	/du:/	/dʊ/ /də/	how <u>do</u> I know? what <u>do</u> you want?
15. must	/məst/	/məs/	we <u>must</u> leave now
16. will	/wɪl/	/wəl/ /əl/ /l/	Jim <u>will</u> work it mother <u>will</u> be there what <u>will</u> it be?
17. would	/wʊd/	/əd/	people <u>would</u> like

Following is a list of verbs which are reduced when coupled with “to” and carry their own meaning. This list comes from Prator and Wallace (1985) as well.

Full Form	Pronunciation of Reduction	Meaning
1. going to	/'gəʊnə/	intention
2. got to	/'gʌdə/	necessity
3. has to	/'hæstə/	necessity
4. have to	/'hæftə/	necessity
5. ought to	/'ɒdə/	moral obligation
6. used to	/'ju:stə/	former habit
7. want to	/'wʌnə/	desire

In order to develop intelligible pronunciation it is important to be aware of these components and how they relate to each other within an expression. By being aware of them and learning to use them in

communication, learners will make closer approximations to the target pronunciation system they are studying and sound clearer. This study seeks to focus on these pronunciation components to know if through opportunistic pronunciation teaching a positive effect on pronunciation learning can be obtained.

2.6 Types of Pronunciation Teaching

Jeremy Harmer (2001) describes four typical alternatives to pronunciation teaching that teachers follow. These four types of pronunciation teaching are whole lessons, discrete slots, integrated phases, and opportunistic teaching.

2.6.1 Whole Lessons

Pronunciation teaching can be the center of a course and include the different features of spoken language in the course syllabus. The treatment of pronunciation features becomes extensive and learners take one or more courses dedicated to the skill of pronunciation. These whole lessons give learners intensive work on pronunciation and offer them plenty of theory and practice.

2.6.2 Discrete Slots

Some aspects of pronunciation can be inserted into lesson sequences as part of a systematic approach to the teaching of pronunciation. Teachers can insert separate bits of pronunciation work over a period of time as a break from other activities or as a change of pace and activity during a lesson. This pronunciation work can become effective for learners since they focus their attention on the phonetic aspects selected by the teacher.

2.6.3 Integrated Phases

Pronunciation teaching forms an integral part of a lesson sequence. The features of pronunciation are included as part of the course syllabus along with other skills. This integration is commonly found in textbook series which include especially designed activities for learners to develop their pronunciation skills and which form part of other procedures that complete a unit or chapter in a language book.

2.6.4 Opportunistic Pronunciation

Pronunciation issues are addressed as they arise and teachers deviate from their original lesson plan to tackle these issues. The idea is that when lesson realities trigger the emergence of pronunciation features, both teacher and learners take advantage of these opportunities and learn about phonology while learners are engaged in other skill work. This incidental way of teaching pronunciation allows teachers to tackle a pronunciation problem or to make learners aware of certain pronunciation features when they occur and it can be a successful way of teaching pronunciation.

2.7 Rationale behind Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching

Little do we know so far about the effect of opportunistic pronunciation teaching on the attainment of intelligible pronunciation. It is assumed that it has a positive effect or it can be a successful way of teaching pronunciation as it was stated previously, but there are not any studies available that support this claim. This research seeks to find out if opportunistic pronunciation teaching is an effective technique to attain intelligible pronunciation by studying the outcomes of its application in the development of segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation features.

2.8 Techniques Used in Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching

In this study five teaching techniques are going to be used in the implementation of OPT. These techniques are used in different kinds of skill work and allow learners to raise their awareness of language features and give them opportunities for language practice. The techniques used in this study are noticing, explanation, repetition, reformulation or recasts, and board work.

2.8.1 Noticing

Noticing will take place every time the teacher sees fit to focus the learners' attention on some pronunciation feature found in the input they receive. This noticing will be made obvious by explicitly asking the learners to listen carefully or by asking them a question about the pronunciation feature in the input they hear. It can also take place when the learners notice a pronunciation feature by themselves and ask the teacher about it.

2.8.2 Explanation

Explanations take place when the teacher himself gives explanations about the pronunciation features that have arisen in communication. These explanations will be offered when the learners ask about a pronunciation feature they have noticed or at the end of a communicative activity so that the flow of ideas is not interrupted by these explanations.

2.8.3 Repetition

Learners will repeat individually and chorally after the audio or the teacher's model. This technique will allow learners to get their tongues around the word sounds in conversations or language samples that are part of the lesson.

2.8.4 Elicitation

Elicitation involves an attempt to directly elicit the correct pronunciation of a phonetic feature from learners. Elicitation will take place in this study when the teacher asks learners to use a segmental or suprasegmental feature by asking them a question related to this feature. This technique can also work as a way of checking comprehension of what has been said about a pronunciation feature.

2.8.5 Reformulation or Recasts

While the learners are communicating with each other or the teacher, the utterances that contain an error will be reformulated by the teacher so that the learners get an appropriate model and can correct their pronunciation. The idea is that they hear the utterance back as a reformulation or recast. This technique does not involve explanations.

2.8.6 Board Work

Whenever arrows, lines, stress symbols and the like are necessary to help the learners to notice or to know more about new or important pronunciation features, the teacher will make use of the board to write information such as key words or draw arrows or phonetic symbols so that learners can have a visual representation of the sounds being used.

This visual stimulus will allow learners to better understand the explanations or input offered to them.

2.9 Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching and Error Correction at Practice and Production Stages

OPT seeks to take advantage of the pronunciation issues that arise during a lesson to address them and provide learners with information on the pronunciation feature at hand or with correction of the phonetic error that was made.

During the practice and production stages of a lesson OPT can take the form corrective feedback. This corrective feedback can be offered through repetition, reformulations, explanations and elicitation.

If the learners are doing controlled practice of a grammatical or lexical feature by drilling, the teacher will have learners focus on the phonetic item which was mispronounced and use choral and individual repetition to help learners improve their pronunciation of this selected phonetic item.

If the learners are performing a restricted communicative task (controlled practice of a selected language form with a focus on meaning) or an authentic communicative task (free practice including a wide range of forms with a focus on meaning), the teacher will use reformulations or give explanations at the end of the activity. Elicitation as a form of comprehension check can also be applied here. In both cases corrective feedback needs to be handled carefully because if it is overdone, learners may lose confidence when attempting to use the target language. They may feel that every time they say something it will come out wrong.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Type

The research type that this study falls into is quantitative. In quantitative research a hypothesis is formed and then tested. The hypothesis in this study is the following: EFL learners' speech intelligibility can be improved through opportunistic pronunciation teaching. This hypothesis will be examined in order to know if there are any cause-and-effect relationships. In this case, the effect opportunistic pronunciation teaching has on learners' intelligibility. Finally, a general statement regarding the effect of opportunistic pronunciation teaching will be put forth for further applications.

3.2 Research Design

The research design applied in this study is quasi-experimental, and the type of quasi-experimental design is non-equivalent group, pre-test and post-test. Both control and treatment groups will take a pre-test and post-test on the pronunciation components to compare performance before and after the manipulation of the independent variable. Besides, there will be other instruments such as surveys and oral assessment of the

pronunciation features addressed in the study to measure the effect of the independent variable and guarantee more internal validity.

Since quasi-experimental research resembles experimental research in some degree, the steps of this quasi-experimental research follow those of experimental research studies listed by Lodico et al. (2010), and include:

Step 1: Selection of a research topic

The topic of this research is pronunciation teaching. The role that pronunciation plays in second language learning and acquisition is of great importance because it is through the sounds of the language that we get to be understood.

Step 2: Review of the literature and specification of a research question

Based on the publications available the study of opportunistic pronunciation teaching has been dealt with from a rationalistic perspective, which means that no research studies have been published so far as to the validity of this alternative to pronunciation teaching. The research question in this study is, “Does opportunistic pronunciation teaching really work?”

Step 3: Development of a research hypothesis

The research hypothesis in this study is non-directional, which means that the direction of the difference between the two groups in this study cannot be specified, but some difference is predicted to occur between these two groups. The hypothesis is the following:

There will be a significant difference in intelligibility between EFL learners who receive opportunistic pronunciation teaching and those who do not.

Step 4: Selection and assignment of participants to groups

This research study includes two groups: a control group and a treatment group. The participants are already in pre-existing groups, which means that this study lacks random selection of the subjects (participants) and therefore falls into the category of quasi-experiment.

Step 5: Selection of instruments

The instruments chosen to measure the dependent variable in this study include a pre-test and post-test, an oral assessment of the pronunciation components addressed during the period of time when learners were exposed to these components through opportunistic pronunciation teaching, interviews, and surveys.

Step 6: Administration of experimental treatments

For this step the questions posed by Lodico et al. (2010) will guide the administration of the experimental treatment. The questions are, (1) Specifically, what happens to the participants in each group? (2) How does the treatment for the treatment group differ from that of the control group?

1. Specifically, what happens to the participants in each group?

Control group: the participants will receive no error correction in case pronunciation problems occur during the practice or production stages or during other skill work such as speaking.

Treatment group: the participants will receive error correction in case pronunciation problems occur during the practice or production stages or during other skill work such as speaking.

2. How does the treatment for the treatment group differ from that of the control group?

The treatment for the treatment group will include the techniques used in opportunistic pronunciation teaching outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.8. These techniques will not be included in the control group.

Step 7: Collection and analysis of data

The data will be collected and analyzed for both treatment and control groups. Based on the data gathered, both groups will be assessed on the accuracy of the production of sounds using the tests specially designed for this study (see Appendix 2) and the information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog (see Appendix 4). Then based on performance the samples obtained will be classified into three descriptors: accomplished, developing, and poor. The first descriptor means that the learner produced the item or items intelligibly, the second descriptor means that the learner's production of the item or items needs more time to develop and therefore be intelligible, and the third descriptor means the learner produced the item or items with no clarity or naturalness. Finally the results will be tallied to see the ratio between accomplished and developing pronunciation.

Step 8: Decision about the hypothesis

Based on the results a decision must be reached whether there is substantial evidence to support the idea that there is significant difference in intelligibility between EFL learners who receive opportunistic pronunciation teaching and those who do not.

Step 9: Formulation of conclusions

After the statistical analyses have been conducted, the conclusions regarding the effect of opportunistic pronunciation teaching on learners' intelligibility will be formulated. These conclusions will state the probable implications of using or not using opportunistic pronunciation teaching in class and suggestions for further study.

3.3 Population and Study Sample

The research population is composed of a collection of learners enrolled in a mid-intermediate level class. These learners receive English language instruction in daily sessions of ninety minutes each. The specific course both groups of learners, treatment and control, are taking is called Intermediate Five. Both groups are made up of an average of 15 learners who attend class on a daily basis. These learners are of mixed language ability. The learners in these groups are teenagers (from 15 to 19 years old) and young adults (from 20 to 22 years old). 60 % of the learners are women and 40% are men.

The study sample obtained is based on percentage. To determine the sample size needed to reach a desirable level of accuracy, a high case percentage has been considered (at least 90%). This percentage is the norm for both treatment and control groups, considering subjects that may be absent on assessment days. Since both groups have an average of 15 learners, all individuals from each group are expected to provide samples of sound production based on a pre-test, a post-test, and an information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog.

3.4 Variables

The variables that this study considers include the following: independent variable, dependent variable, controlled variable, and possible third variable.

3.4.1 Independent Variable

The independent variable of this study is made up of the group of techniques used in opportunistic pronunciation teaching which are aimed at improving learners' pronunciation and which have been explained previously. For further analysis, please refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.8. These techniques are succinctly outlined below.

- a. Noticing (awareness of phonetic items)
- b. Explanation (reasons and clarifications about phonetic items)
- c. Repetition (choral and individual)
- d. Elicitation (obtaining acceptable phonetic samples from learners)
- e. Reformulation or recasts (modeling phonetic item for learners)
- f. Board work (writing key words or drawing phonetic symbols)

3.4.2 Dependent Variable

The effect of these techniques on learners' intelligibility is the dependent variable of this study. This effect or outcome will be measured by the analysis of data gathered at the end of the experiment.

3.4.3 Controlled Variable

The factor that needs to remain constant in this experiment is the no-teacher intervention in the control group when a pronunciation issue comes up incidentally during practice and production stages. This no-teacher intervention will help determine if the treatment group showed an improvement in their pronunciation.

3.4.4 Possible Third Variable

Other factors that may have an influence on the dependent variable other than the independent variable in this study may include a learner's state of mind, attention in class, previous contact with pronunciation features, and absence from class. However, most of the subjects (at least 90% in each group) are expected to receive assessment during the period of this study. This percentage will help counteract any possible third variable.

3.5 Techniques and Instruments for Data Collection

To guarantee triangulation, several methodological techniques have been applied in this study. The main techniques include pre-test, post-test, oral evaluation through an information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog, and survey.

3.5.1 Pre-test

A pre-test to know the level of control over the phonetic components on the part of the learners will be administered at the outset of the study. This pre-test includes items that will measure the learners' level of phonetic competence before the study starts and will be administered to both control and treatment groups. The following rubric will be used for analyzing the performance on the pre-test. See Appendix 2 for pre-test.

Accomplished (A)	Developing (D)	Poor (P)
Pronunciation is generally intelligible and natural.	Pronunciation is somewhat intelligible and natural.	Pronunciation is not intelligible or lacks naturalness.

3.5.2 Post-test

A post-test will be administered at the end of the study for both control and treatment groups. This post-test includes the same phonetic items used in the pre-test to know if there is any difference between both groups at the beginning and the end of the study. The following rubric will be used for analyzing the performance on the pre-test. See Appendix 2 for post-test.

Accomplished (A)	Developing (D)	Poor (P)
Pronunciation is generally intelligible and natural.	Pronunciation is somewhat intelligible and natural.	Pronunciation is not intelligible or lacks naturalness.

3.5.3 Oral Evaluation through an Information-gap Activity in the Form of a Free Dialog

An information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog has been chosen to test the effectiveness of OPT. An information-gap activity is a task that requires speakers to exchange information because there is a communicative gap that needs to be filled. It is a free dialog when speakers have to produce authentic output, which means language that contains a wide array of language forms. The learners will perform an information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog to use all the language they have at their disposal. This dialog will serve to evaluate learners on the pronunciation features and therefore to find out if OPT had or didn't have an effect on intelligibility in authentic communication. They will be evaluated using the following rubric. See appendix 4 for information-gap activity.

Accomplished (A)	Developing (D)	Poor (P)
Pronunciation is generally intelligible and natural.	Pronunciation is somewhat intelligible and natural.	Pronunciation is not intelligible or lacks naturalness.

3.5.4 Survey

The learners will be surveyed to know what pronunciation features they find the most challenging, what strategies they use for dealing with difficult or new pronunciation features, how good or bad they feel they are at pronunciation, and their opinions about the pronunciation teaching approaches they have received and the approach used in this study. In the end the results of the survey will be analyzed to know what the tendencies are in terms of learners' beliefs about their pronunciation skills and the best approach to the teaching of pronunciation. See Appendix 3 for survey.

CHAPTER 4: THE FINDINGS

4.1 Research Findings

For both treatment and control groups certain steps were followed to guarantee reliable and valid results. In the treatment group, learners were given a pre-test to find out their level of intelligibility before the techniques used in OPT were applied. After the application of OPT techniques learners were recorded doing an information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog to see the influence of OPT in more open communication. They also took a post-test to compare the first results of the pre-test with the post-test. Finally they took a survey to know their perspective on their own pronunciation skills and on pronunciation teaching. In the control group the same steps were followed except for the application of OPT techniques which were only reserved for the treatment group. All of these steps were used to guarantee methodological triangulation through the application of different methods for the gathering and analysis of data. Following is a detailed description of the techniques and events that took place during this experiment.

4.1.1 Treatment Group

4.1.1.1 Pre-test and Analysis

The pre-test consisted of reading aloud an excerpt from the book “The Country of the Blind” by H. G. Wells. This excerpt contains samples of the pronunciation features discussed in this study. The learners’ pronunciation was analyzed to identify their level of intelligibility when pronouncing English before the treatment was given. Following is an analysis of their speech using the rubric presented previously. See appendix 2 for pre-test.

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 1	D	D	D	D
Candidate 2	D	A	A	D
Candidate 3	D	P	P	P
Candidate 4	D	D	P	P
Candidate 5	D	P	D	P
Candidate 6	P	P	P	P
Candidate 7	A	D	D	D
Candidate 8	D	P	D	P
Candidate 9	D	D	D	D
Candidate 10	A	A	A	D
Candidate 11	D	A	A	D
Candidate 12	D	D	D	D
Candidate 13	D	D	D	D
Candidate 14	D	D	D	D
Candidate 15	D	D	D	D

As this chart shows, most candidates’ intelligibility in the treatment group falls into the D category (39 D answers in total), which means they have reached a developing level of intelligibility before the treatment. The second highest category is P for poor (13 P answers in total). Only a small number of candidates performed the task in an accomplished manner or got an A for Accomplished in more than two pronunciation areas (8 A answers in total).

4.1.1.2 Application of Opportunistic Pronunciation Teaching Techniques and Analysis

During 13 consecutive weekdays the treatment group had English lessons of 90 minutes each, which included 7 applications of opportunistic pronunciation teaching techniques. The learners in the treatment group received opportunistic pronunciation teaching through

the techniques explained previously: noticing, explanation, repetition, elicitation, reformulations or recasts, and board work. The treatment offered was organized by event. Following is an event-by-event list that outlines the pronunciation features treated and the techniques applied.

Event 1

Individual words and phrases such as “huge, in touch” appeared in a description as part of a vocabulary activity. The pronunciation of these words was presented and the learners practiced their pronunciation. The teacher took advantage of this opportunity to teach individual sounds.

Event 2

Learners had trouble assimilating the words “would + you,” unreleasing the /t/ sound in “went out,” and reducing certain sounds (for /fər/, of /əv/). The teacher reformulated the standard pronunciation of these sounds. The words were written on the board and a curved line was drawn under the pair of words whose sounds were assimilated, unreleased and reduced. The learners were taught about the concept of assimilation. The learners repeated the standard pronunciation of all these words through choral and individual repetition.

Event 3

The concept of stress and rhythm was taught when learners were reading a paragraph aloud. The teacher took advantage of this opportunity to remind learners that English is a stress-timed language and that rhythm is created by the regular pattern created by both stressed and unstressed sounds altogether. The learners practiced sentence stress, linking, and reductions as they read the paragraph once again.

Event 4

The learners were introduced to the concept of linking when they encountered a word ending in a tense vowel followed by a vowel (be able). They also received feedback on the pronunciation of several words that were mispronounced while they were doing a controlled practice activity. They also noticed the difference in pronunciation between minimal pairs such as /iy/ and /ɪ/ in leave and live as the teacher pointed them out.

Event 5

The learners practiced the pronunciation of wh-questions (who should we hire?). This question was written on the board. They also practiced linking (on the other hand; tucked ed in), reductions (I haven't seen her/seen him). These samples were modeled for the learners and reformulated when the learners had trouble pronouncing them.

Event 6

The learners repeated the pronunciation of individual words whose phonemes didn't correspond to their spelling as in "owl." They also noticed the contractions of subject pronoun + have as in "I've." They also encountered a sentence that used a higher tone to express emotion as in the sentence "Don't be such a HOMEbody."

Event 7

The learners were taught about letters which are not pronounced in some words. The learners found the word "island" in a text and the teacher took advantage of this opportunity to teach some other words whose letters are not pronounced as in "calm, half." The teacher wrote them on the board and the learners repeated them.

The techniques applied during the seven events described above allowed learners to notice and practice pronunciation features that otherwise would go unnoticed. Several opportunities to discuss or treat pronunciation issues came up and the learners received OPT through the application of the techniques outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.8. These techniques helped learners focus their attention on the different features and receive some sort of treatment aimed at giving learners more control over these features.

4.1.1.3 Information-gap Activity in the Form of a Free Dialog and Analysis

At the end of the treatment the learners performed an information-gap activity in the form of a free dialog in which they had to tell a memorable story using simple past structures and lexical expressions to start the story, keep it going, and end it. They also had to interrupt to ask for clarification. The learners used all the language they knew to perform this task and this allowed them to communicate openly and apply all their oral skills. The dialog was an important opportunity for analyzing the

effect of OPT on freer communication. The stories were recorded. Following is an evaluation of the learners' pronunciation as they told their stories. See appendix 4 for information-gap activity.

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 1	A	A	A	A
Candidate 2	A	A	D	A
Candidate 3	A	D	D	D
Candidate 4	A	D	A	D
Candidate 5	D	D	D	D
Candidate 6	D	D	D	D
Candidate 7	D	A	A	D
Candidate 8	D	D	D	D
Candidate 9	D	D	D	D
Candidate 10	A	A	A	A
Candidate 11	D	A	A	A
Candidate 12	A	D	D	D
Candidate 13	A	D	D	D
Candidate 14	A	D	A	D
Candidate 15	A	D	A	A

This chart shows that the D category for Developing is the category that obtained the highest score (34 D answers in total) in all the pronunciation areas. The A category for Accomplished comes in second (26 A answers in total). The P category for Poor does not appear. No candidate in the treatment group performed poorly in any of the pronunciation areas, a fact which can be attributed to the application of OPT since the candidates in this group were taught through OPT techniques.

4.1.1.4 Post-test and Analysis

At the end of the treatment the learners took a post-test which compared their performance with the results obtained on the pre-test. This post-test is the same as the pre-test, an excerpt from the book "The Country of the Blind" by H. G. Wells. This excerpt contains samples of the pronunciation features discussed in this study. The learners' pronunciation was analyzed to identify their level of intelligibility when pronouncing English after the treatment was given. Following is an

analysis of their speech using the rubric presented previously. See appendix 2 for post-test.

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 1	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 2	A	A	A	A
Candidate 3	A	D	D	D
Candidate 4	D	P	D	P
Candidate 5	D	D	D	D
Candidate 6	D	P	P	P
Candidate 7	A	A	A	D
Candidate 8	D	D	D	D
Candidate 9	D	D	A	D
Candidate 10	A	A	A	D
Candidate 11	D	A	A	D
Candidate 12	D	D	D	D
Candidate 13	D	D	D	D
Candidate 14	A	A	A	D
Candidate 15	D	D	D	D

As this chart shows, most candidates' intelligibility in the treatment group falls into the D category (34 D answers in total), which means their level of intelligibility is developing after the treatment they received. The second highest category is A for Accomplished (17 A answers in total). Only a small number of candidates performed the task in a poor manner or got P for Poor (5 P answers in total) in more than two pronunciation areas.

4.1.1.5 Survey and Analysis

At the end of the treatment the learners were surveyed to find out what they think about pronunciation learning and teaching. The questions they answered are related to their perception on what pronunciation features they find to be the most difficult or the easiest, how clear they believe their pronunciation is, what pronunciation teaching option they prefer, and what they think about their experience with pronunciation teaching. Following is a tally of the answers they provided. See Appendix 3 for survey.

Question 1: What pronunciation elements do you find the most difficult?

- 1 learner out of 11 chose option a. individual sounds.
- 5 learners chose option b. stress and rhythm.
- No one chose option c. intonation.
- 5 learners chose option d. connected speech.
- No one chose option e. all options.

Question 2: What pronunciation elements do you find the easiest?

- 4 learners out of 11 chose option a. individual sounds.
- 1 learner chose option b. stress and rhythm.
- 3 learners chose option c. intonation.
- 3 learners chose option d. connected speech.
- No one chose option e. all options.

Question 3: How clear do you think your pronunciation is?

- No one out of 11 chose option a. very clear.
- 9 learners chose option b. clear.
- 1 learner chose option c. somewhat clear.
- No one chose option d. not clear.

Question 4: How can you improve your pronunciation?

- 9 learners out of 11 chose option a. receive pronunciation instruction when there are pronunciation activities in the books.
- 2 learners chose option b. receive pronunciation instruction when the opportunity comes up.
- No one chose option c. not receive pronunciation instruction because pronunciation happens naturally.

Question 5: Do you prefer a teacher who...?

- No one out of 11 chose option a. teaches pronunciation when the book presents it.
- 1 learner chose option b. teaches pronunciation when an opportunity happens.
- 10 learners chose option c. both a and b.

Question 6: What do you think about your experience with pronunciation teaching? Offer some suggestions for your teachers.

The answers to this question varied since it is an open-ended question. The answers are detailed below. Although some answers are not clear, an effort was made to interpret them.

Answer 1: In my opinion not all the words are easy, but when the teacher teaches the difficult words ...

Answer 2: I think that in this class I learned individual sounds thanks to the teacher because he told us about his project. I think all the teachers should follow this methodology.

Answer 3: I think that teachers need to have more patience with students and do more projects like my teacher did.

Answer 4: I think it is going well because the teacher used computer programs and the book too.

Answer 5: I think that if you are not good at pronunciation, you have to practice a lot. In my case I listen to music and watch movies in English and try to understand. Teachers need to speak a lot in English and we need to ask about the vocabulary.

Answer 6: Well, pronunciation is very interesting. I could learn a lot about it, to pronounce some difficult words and to know the difference between some similar words. In this case I don't have any suggestions.

Answer 7: I think pronunciation teaching is important to help us improve our language. The things I've learned this month will help me a lot.

Answer 8: Pronunciation could be taught with English songs, by teaching phonetic sounds to students and learning how to move your tongue, lips and mouth. Also by teaching the intonation of sentences, questions.

Answer 9: Using some websites to practice, listening to some conversations and then repeat, using music to practice pronunciation.

Answer 10: It's good but I need to practice more some new words I don't know.... practice new words and more exercises.

Answer 11: The teacher should promote pronunciation activities and use online material to reinforce our pronunciation.

The answers provided by the candidates in this treatment group are very informative. Most learners find stress and rhythm to be the most

difficult pronunciation feature to master and individual sounds to be the easiest. It is interesting to know that learners are aware of the complexity of suprasegmental features such as stress and rhythm. Most of them also believe their pronunciation is clear; however no one in this group says they believe their pronunciation is very clear. It is good to know this group of learners feels there are pronunciation aspects that need to be worked on. Finally, most learners expect teachers to address pronunciation areas. They appreciate the work and research done by teachers and feel it is beneficial for them.

4.1.2 Control Group

4.1.2.1 Pre-test and Analysis

The control group also took the pre-test consisting of reading aloud an excerpt from the book “The Country of the Blind” by H. G. Wells. This excerpt contains samples of the pronunciation features discussed in this study. The learners’ pronunciation was analyzed to identify their level of intelligibility when pronouncing English. In order to compare results between both treatment and control groups, the learners in the control group were given the same pre-test. Following is an analysis of their speech using the rubric presented previously. See appendix 2 for pre-test.

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 1	D	P	D	P
Candidate 2	D	D	D	D
Candidate 3	D	D	A	D
Candidate 4	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 5	D	P	P	P
Candidate 6	D	D	D	P
Candidate 7	D	D	D	D
Candidate 8	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 9	D	P	P	P
Candidate 10	P	P	P	P
Candidate 11	P	P	P	P
Candidate 12	P	P	P	P
Candidate 13	P	P	P	P
Candidate 14	D	P	P	P

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 15	A	A	A	D
Candidate 16	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 17	D	D	D	D
Candidate 18	D	D	A	D

As this chart shows, most candidates' intelligibility in the control group falls into the D category (27 D answers in total), which means they have reached a developing level of intelligibility. The second highest category is P for Poor (28 P answers in total). Only a small number of candidates performed the task in an accomplished manner or got an A for Accomplished (5 A answers in total) in more than two pronunciation areas.

4.1.2.2 Information-gap Activity in the Form of a Free Dialog and Analysis

The control group performed a dialog in which they had the opportunity to produce authentic output in a communicative environment. This dialog served to evaluate the learners' pronunciation when no previous pronunciation teaching took place. The purpose here is to find out whether or not the absence of OPT had any effect on the learners' intelligibility. The activity consisted of sharing personal stories and reacting to them. The stories were recorded. Following is an evaluation of the learners' pronunciation as they told their stories. See appendix 4 for information-gap activity.

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 1	D	D	D	D
Candidate 2	A	D	D	D
Candidate 3	D	D	A	D
Candidate 4	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 5	D	D	D	D
Candidate 6	A	A	A	D
Candidate 7	A	A	A	D
Candidate 8	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 9	P	P	D	P
Candidate 10	D	P	D	P
Candidate 11	D	P	P	P
Candidate 12	D	P	P	P
Candidate 13	D	D	D	P
Candidate 14	A	A	A	A
Candidate 15	D	D	A	D
Candidate 16	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 17	A	D	D	D
Candidate 18	A	P	D	P

As this chart shows, most learners' performance fell into the Developing category (31 D answers in total). The next category that got the second highest score is Accomplished (15 A answers in total), and the third group fell into the Poor category (14 P answers in total). There was no application of OPT techniques to this group, but despite this fact, the results show that most learners' pronunciation is developing. It seems that these learners picked up pronunciation features as they heard English and communicated in the target language. However, there is a good number of learners whose pronunciation fell under the Poor category and might benefit from the application of OPT techniques or could transition from Poor to Developing or from Developing to Accomplished.

4.1.2.3 Post-test and Analysis

The control group took a post-test which compared their performance with the results obtained on the pre-test. This post-test is the same as the pre-test, an excerpt from the book "The Country of the Blind" by H. G. Wells. This excerpt contains samples of the pronunciation features discussed in this study. The learners' pronunciation was analyzed to identify their level of intelligibility when no treatment was given. Following is an analysis of their speech using the rubric presented previously. See appendix 2 for post-test.

Pronunciation Features	Sounds	Stress and Rhythm	Intonation	Connected Speech
Candidate 1	D	P	D	P
Candidate 2	A	D	D	D
Candidate 3	D	D	A	D
Candidate 4	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 5	D	P	P	P
Candidate 6	D	D	D	P
Candidate 7	D	D	D	D
Candidate 8	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 9	P	P	P	P
Candidate 10	P	P	P	P
Candidate 11	P	P	P	P
Candidate 12	D	P	P	P
Candidate 13	P	P	P	P
Candidate 14	D	D	D	P
Candidate 15	A	A	A	D
Candidate 16	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated	Not evaluated
Candidate 17	D	D	D	P
Candidate 18	D	D	A	D

As this chart shows, most candidates' intelligibility in the control group falls into two categories: Developing and Poor. The D category obtained 27 answers in total and so did the P category, 27 answers in total. The A category obtained only 6 answers in total. The results for P are high, which shows that some sort of treatment must be followed to help these learners improve their pronunciation or to help increase the number of learners who fell into the A category because the number obtained for this category is low.

4.1.2.4 Survey and Analysis

The learners in the control group were surveyed to find out what they think about pronunciation learning and teaching. The questions they answered are related to their perception on what pronunciation features they find to be the most difficult or the easiest, how clear they believe their pronunciation is, what pronunciation teaching option they prefer,

and what they think about their experience with pronunciation teaching. Following is a tally of the answers they provided. See Appendix 3 for survey.

Question 1: What pronunciation elements do you find the most difficult?

- 3 learners out of 14 chose option a. individual sounds.
- 6 learners chose option b. stress and rhythm.
- 2 learners chose option c. intonation.
- 2 learners chose option d. connected speech.
- No one chose option e. all options.

Question 2: What pronunciation elements do you find the easiest?

- 5 learners out of 14 chose option a. individual sounds.
- 4 learners chose option b. stress and rhythm.
- 1 learner chose option c. intonation.
- 4 learners chose option d. connected speech.
- 1 learner chose option e. all options.

Question 3: How clear do you think your pronunciation is?

- No one out of 14 chose option a. very clear.
- 7 learners chose option b. clear.
- 7 learners chose option c. somewhat clear.
- No one chose option d. not clear.

Question 4: How can you improve your pronunciation?

- 4 learners out of 14 chose option a. receive pronunciation instruction when there are pronunciation activities in the books.
- 8 learners chose option b. receive pronunciation instruction when the opportunity comes up.
- 2 learners chose option c. not receive pronunciation instruction because pronunciation happens naturally.

Question 5: Do you prefer a teacher who...?

- No one out of 14 chose option a. teaches pronunciation when the book presents it.
- 2 learners chose option b. teaches pronunciation when an opportunity happens.
- 12 learners chose option c. both a and b.

Question 6: What do you think about your experience with pronunciation teaching? Offer some suggestions for your teachers.

The answers to this question varied since it is an open-ended question. The answers are detailed below. Although some answers are not clear, an effort was made to interpret them.

Answer 1: It's good. All of the teachers I've met explain about pronunciation but they can all tell us at the end of the speaking how it was and if we made mistakes.

Answer 2: Some teachers don't teach good pronunciation but others teach well, so teachers should focus on pronunciation and on how people learn.

Answer 3: I think my teacher teaches good pronunciation. I know I don't have an excellent pronunciation. For this reason I would like to learn about it. I think my teacher has to give us more speaking activities. He can try to teach u how to read in English well. We need to learn about intonation. He can also give us new words and how to say them.

Answer 4: Teachers should teach and speak slowly because when they speak fast students can't understand.

Answer 5: Teachers should include songs to teach pronunciation, include more speaking activities, and play videos and discuss them.

Answer 6: My experience with pronunciation is OK. I like to learn how to pronounce correctly and speak fast. So my advice is including more conversations and listening to each other.

Answer 7: It's great because we can improve our pronunciation. One suggestion is that the teacher should ask students about the difficult words.

Answer 8: It is good, but I think the teacher should make us practice a little more.

Answer 9: I learned new words and how to pronounce them.

Answer 10: I think that it's a little hard because some words sound similar so I think to improve our pronunciation the students can write the words on the board and then repeat them several times.

Answer 11: I think it is better for the teacher to teach pronunciation through games because people learn more when something is funny.

Answer 12: I think teacher need to pay more attention to students who have problems with pronunciation and try to help them with extra activities so that they can improve their pronunciation.

Answer 13: In this class I learned new words. The teacher taught me about pronunciation and words.

Answer 14: Maybe the teacher could provide the students with texts and have them read them so that they can improve their pronunciation.

The answers provided by the candidates in this control group are also very informative. Most learners find stress and rhythm to be the most difficult pronunciation feature to master and individual sounds to be the easiest. These learners are aware of the complexity of suprasegmental features such as stress and rhythm. Most of them also believe their pronunciation is clear or somewhat clear, and no one in this group believes their pronunciation is very clear. It is also good to know this group of learners feels there are pronunciation aspects that need to be improved. Finally, most learners expect to receive pronunciation instruction as part of the course program and furthermore they expect teachers to deal with pronunciation areas as they come up, a fact which is surprising since this group of learners did not receive OPT.

4.1.3 Results in Number of Participants

4.1.3.1 Pre-test

Treatment Group	Sounds	Stress and rhythm	Intonation	Connected speech
Accomplished	2	3	3	0
Developing	12	8	9	10
Poor	1	4	3	5

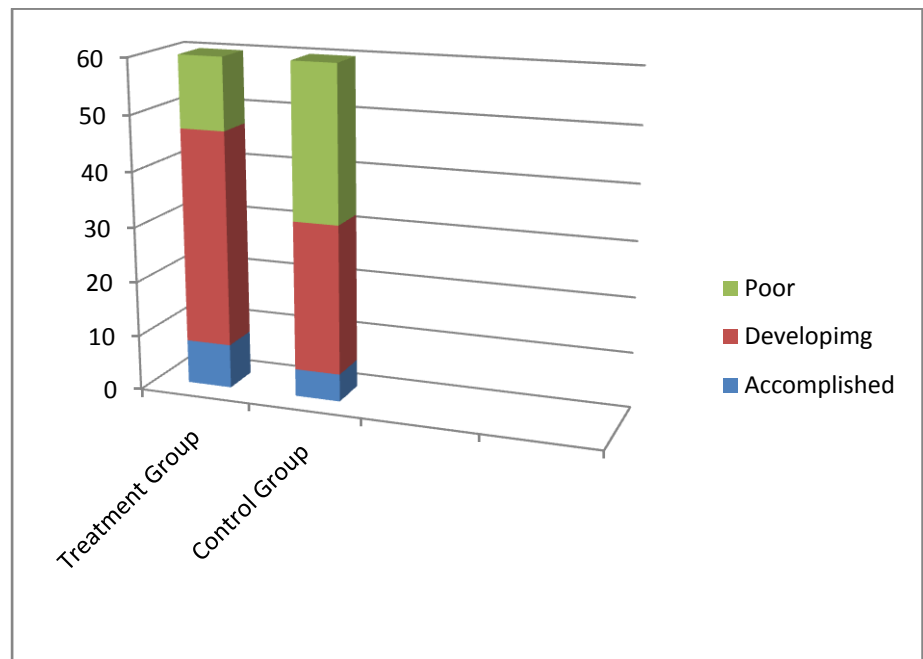
Control Group	Sounds	Stress and rhythm	Intonation	Connected speech
Accomplished	1	1	3	0
Developing	10	6	5	6
Poor	4	8	7	9

4.1.3.2 Post-test

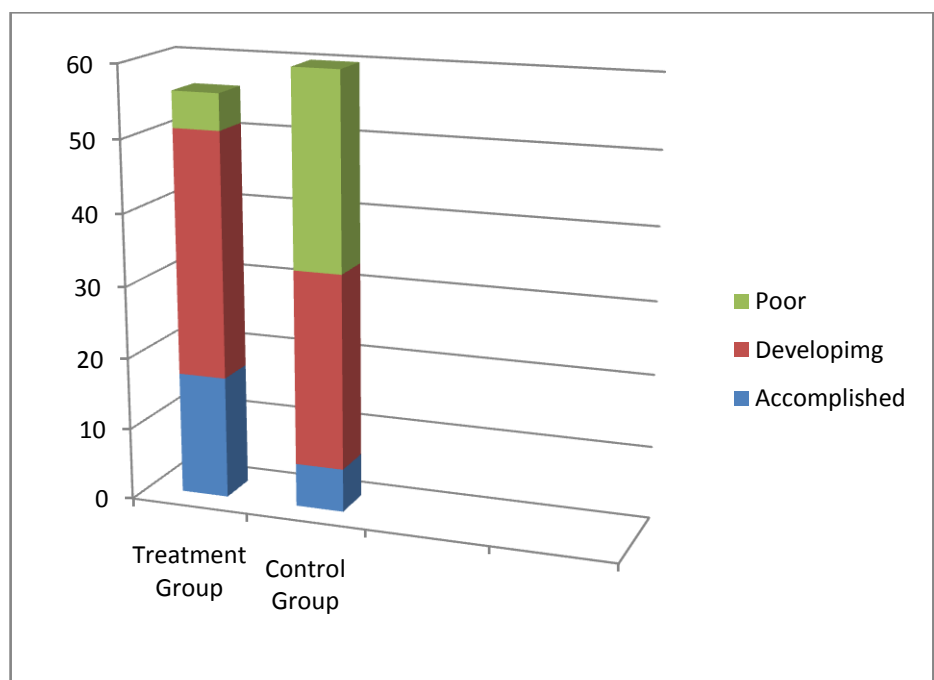
Treatment Group	Sounds	Stress and rhythm	Intonation	Connected speech
Accomplished	5	5	6	1
Developing	9	7	7	11
Poor	0	2	1	2

Control Group	Sounds	Stress and rhythm	Intonation	Connected speech
Accomplished	2	1	3	0
Developing	9	7	6	5
Poor	4	7	6	10

4.1.3.3 Pre-test Graph



4.1.3.4 Post-test Graph

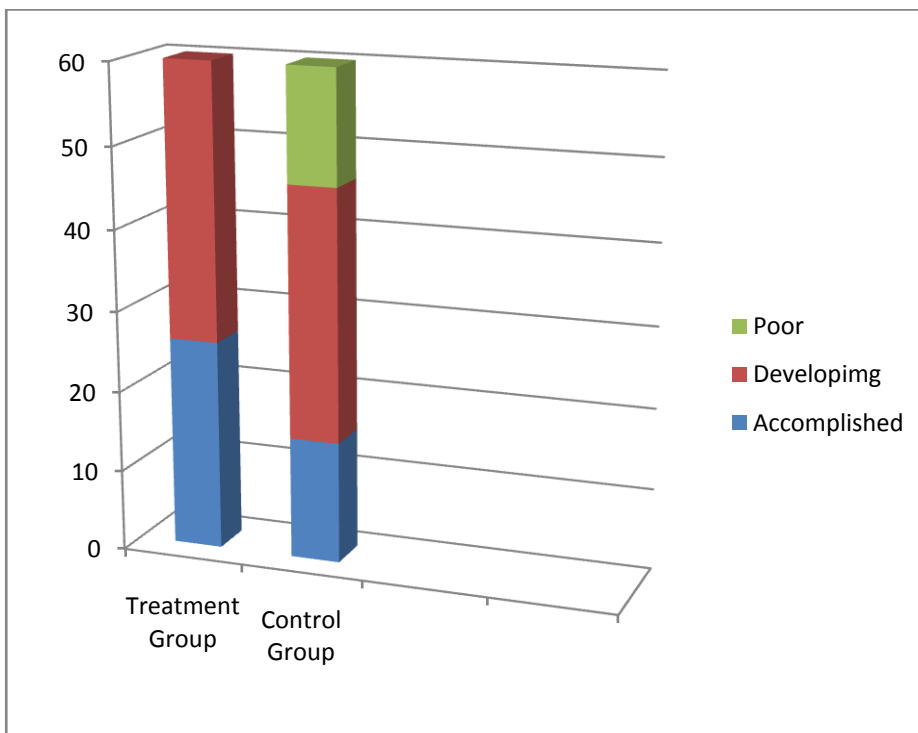


4.1.3.5 Information-gap Activity (Free Dialog)

Treatment Group	Sounds	Stress and rhythm	Intonation	Connected speech
Accomplished	9	5	7	5
Developing	6	10	8	10
Poor	0	0	0	0

Control Group	Sounds	Stress and rhythm	Intonation	Connected speech
Accomplished	6	3	5	1
Developing	8	7	8	8
Poor	1	5	2	6

4.1.3.6 Information-gap Activity Graph



4.1.3.7 Results in Percentages: Pre-test, Post-test, and Information-gap Activity

Treatment Group

Accomplished: 28.97%

Developing: 60.79%

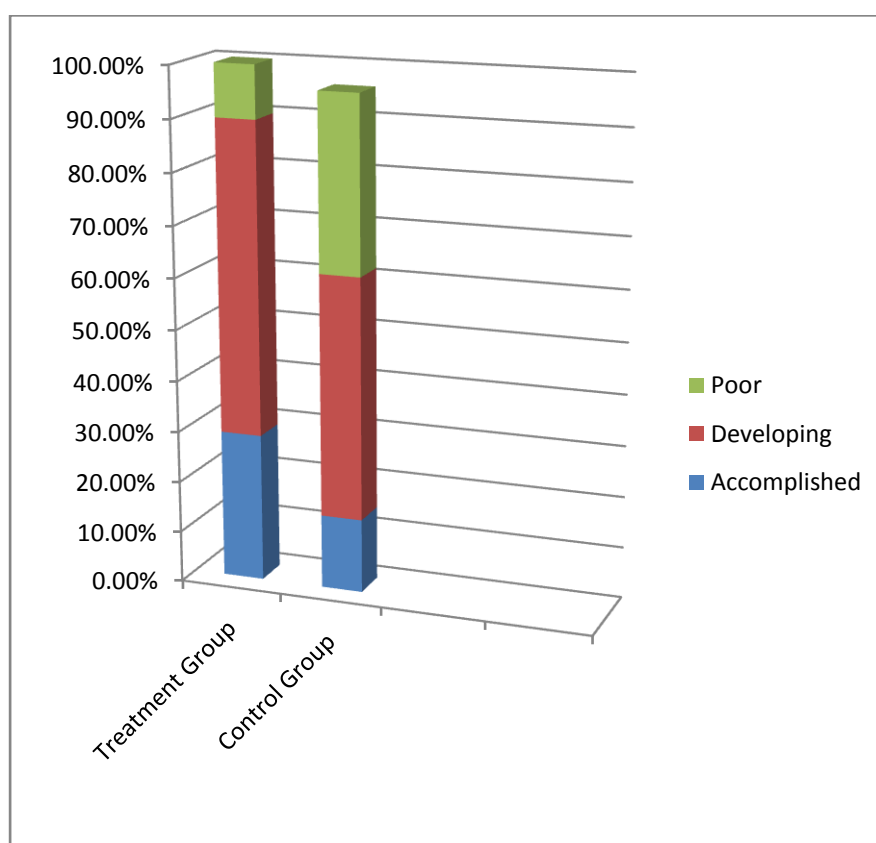
Poor: 10.22%

Control Group

Accomplished: 14.44%

Developing: 47.22%

Poor: 38.33%



4.2 Discussion

The results of this research study show that opportunistic pronunciation teaching has a positive effect on learners' intelligibility. The fact that the treatment group did better in the rubric of Accomplished (14.53% higher than that of the control group) and Developing (13.57% higher than that of the control group) proves the efficacy of opportunistic pronunciation teaching. These overall results consider the analysis of the pre-tests, post-tests and information-gap activities in the form of a free dialog. Another difference between both groups is that the percentage of learners who did poorly on the tests is lower in the treatment group (10.22%) than that of the control group (38.33%).

In terms of specific pronunciation features such as sounds, stress and rhythm, intonation, and connected speech, the results within groups differ. In the treatment group individual sounds and intonation were the features with the highest score in the rubric of Accomplished (16). Stress and rhythm came in second (13) and connected speech came in last (6). In the control group intonation came in first (11). Individual sounds came in second (9), stress and rhythm third (5), and connected speech last (1). These results tell us that the feature that showed the least growth was connected speech. It seems that the nature of suprasegmental features poses a higher challenge to learners because the concepts of assimilation, elision, linking, juncture, contractions, and reductions are in themselves complex and probably take more time and exposure to acquire. But overall there was more progress in the development of this feature in the treatment group (6 in contrast with 1) through opportunistic pronunciation teaching.

When it comes to the learners' perspective on what kind of pronunciation teaching they prefer, in both treatment and control groups the survey results show that most learners chose a direct approach to pronunciation teaching. The survey results show that they prefer that teachers teach pronunciation activities directly and that teachers take advantage of opportunities to teach pronunciation as these opportunities come along in the development of the course. It is very interesting to know that most learners want teachers to address pronunciation issues and do not consider that pronunciation is a skill that happens naturally. Most of them believe that instruction helps them improve their intelligibility. Therefore, based on the results of the survey given, learners favor sequenced pronunciation teaching and opportunistic pronunciation teaching as well.

4.3 Implications

By including opportunistic pronunciation teaching in class, learners will be likely to improve their intelligibility and therefore be better understood as well as develop awareness of pronunciation features. However, teachers have to be careful enough not to overdo opportunistic pronunciation teaching, especially in the form of corrective feedback because this may have a negative effect on learner's confidence to produce language. Learners may stop themselves from attempting to speak since they may feel that they will be corrected every time they make a mistake. Additionally, teachers need to be aware that pronunciation skills take some time to be honed, especially when it comes to the teaching of suprasegmental features. These features seem to be more difficult to acquire and therefore need to be presented to learners more often and to be addressed effectively through appropriate teaching techniques.

Since learners expect to be taught pronunciation features directly, teachers need to be prepared to meet these expectations. Teaching pronunciation may be challenging, especially if pronunciation is not a teacher's strength. This can cause some problems in class like not being able to address segmental and suprasegmental features appropriately or missing opportunities for teaching opportunistic pronunciation in a timely manner. Therefore, teachers need to constantly develop their pronunciation skills. A few ways of reaching this objective include taking a course on effective pronunciation, using reference materials that deal with all the pronunciation features, listening to and imitating acceptable language models. In order to help learners improve their intelligibility, teachers need to be intelligible too.

Another important requirement to meet learners' expectations is that teachers need to become more and more familiar with teaching techniques that help learners develop their intelligibility. Based on this study the techniques applied to the treatment group served this purpose. Techniques such as noticing, explanation, repetition, elicitation, reformulation or recasts, and board work had a beneficial effect on learners' pronunciation. As a consequence, teachers need to include these and other appropriate techniques in their teaching repertoire. The more familiar teachers are with these techniques, the more assistance they provide learners in their development of intelligible pronunciation, and as it was said above, learners expect teachers to teach pronunciation so teachers must know how to apply these techniques effectively.

4.4 Limitations

The limitations of this study include the fact that it is not possible to generalize results since each class is different. There are learners whose learning style may not be analytic and learn language more holistically. This second kind of learners may benefit more from language exposure and interaction rather than from an analysis of features. There are also learners whose state of mind may influence their level of participation or involvement in class, or learners whose previous knowledge of pronunciation may be more developed than other learners because they have had more contact with the target language by having lived in an English-speaking country or interacted with native speakers of English. Besides, the learning and acquisition of intelligible pronunciation is a long and challenging process for all learners and they need time, support, plenty of input, feedback, and timely instruction that helps them notice pronunciation features as they use the target language.

4.5 Recommendations for Further Study

Since pronunciation is a skill that plays an important role in the learning and acquisition of a foreign or second language, it is necessary that teachers find different approaches to pronunciation teaching that help learners develop intelligibility in their speech. Opportunistic pronunciation teaching seeks to provide a reliable alternative to the attainment of this goal.

This study has demonstrated the positive effect of opportunistic pronunciation teaching on the improvement of learner's intelligibility; however, it is also recommendable to think about certain questions which arose along the development of this study and which are worth researching.

These questions are (1) How much corrective feedback is beneficial when it comes to error correction in pronunciation? (2) Will the positive results obtained in this study show continuity in time? (3) What role does input play in the acquisition of segmental and suprasegmental features? (4) Do learners' beliefs influence their effort and strategies for improving their pronunciation skills?

The questions presented above can be the starting point from which further study into the area of pronunciation can be carried out.

CONCLUSIONS

Opportunistic pronunciation teaching is an effective technique to help learners improve their speech intelligibility and make them aware of pronunciation features that may go unnoticed as a result of the numerous activities that are carried out in a lesson. By taking advantage of the opportunities that arise in class, teachers can help learners move a step forward in the learning and acquisition of intelligible pronunciation, but it is important not to overdo this kind of teaching so that the effects can be more positive.

In terms of degrees of progress, this study shows that the learning and acquisition of segmental features develop faster than suprasegmental features. The reason for this is that segmental features deal with individual sounds that can be better managed because their articulation is localized. Nonetheless, suprasegmental features are more complex and go beyond individual segments. They include significant features such as stress and rhythm, intonation, and connected speech that occur simultaneously with vowels and consonants in an utterance. Since the processing of suprasegmental features takes more effort, it is logical that their learning and later acquisition demand more time and treatment.

Even though their progress is slow, the study shows opportunistic pronunciation teaching is a useful tool in promoting their development.

In terms of learners' beliefs the survey results show that learners think that teachers need to provide explicit pronunciation instruction and should take advantage of the opportunities that come up as learners use the target language so that teachers can reinforce good pronunciation habits. Learners expect teachers to know the subject matter of pronunciation and therefore teachers need to be prepared to live up to these expectations. Since language learning and acquisition is a long but rewarding process, teachers should be life-long learners. By being life-long learners, teachers will keep honing their language and teaching skills, and learners will definitely acknowledge the ability, effort and dedication offered by teachers.

Finally, there are some issues that remain pending for further study. These issues arose as a result of this research. Among these issues are the amount of corrective feedback that is right so that learners do not lose their confidence when speaking, the continuity in time of the progress obtained, and the influence of learners' beliefs on their effort and strategies for improving their pronunciation skills. Fortunately, there is still more that remains to be discovered.

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APPENDIX 1

The Smith-Trager System and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

Vowels Smith- Trager	Vowels IPA	Consonants Smith- Trager	Consonants IPA
ʌ	ʌ	b	b
a	a:	d	d
æ	æ	f	f
ɛ	e	g	g
ə	ə	h	h
ɪ	ɪ	y	j
iy	i:	k	k
ɔ	ɔ:	l	l
ʊ	ʊ	m	m
uw	u:	n	n
ay	aɪ	ŋ	ŋ
aw	aʊ	p	p
ey	eɪ	r	r

APPENDIX 1

The Smith-Trager System and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (Continued)

Vowels Smith- Trager	Vowels IPA	Consonants Smith- Trager	Consonants IPA
ow	ou	r	s
ɔy	ɔɪ	s	ʃ
εə	eə	š	t
		t	tʃ
		č	θ
		θ	ð
		ð	v
		v	w
		w	z
		z	ʒ
		ž	dʒ
		j	

APPENDIX 2

Pre-test and Post-test

Pronunciation Test

Instructions:

Read aloud the following text as naturally as possible.

In South America there's an old legend about a lost valley high in the mountains where all the people are blind. It is said that at one time the people could see but long ago a disease came to the valley which caused them to lose their sight. This disability was passed to the next generation and their children were born blind and couldn't see at all. How can this be possible? Is there any logical explanation?

APPENDIX 2

Pre-test and Post-test (Continued)

Around this time there was a terrible earthquake and the mountain roads leading to the valley were blocked by huge rocks. No one could come in or go out and the valley was cut off from the rest of the world and forgotten, except in the legend. No one now knows where the valley is.

APPENDIX 3

Survey

Pronunciation Survey

Name:

Course: I05

Date:

These questions are about your opinion on pronunciation. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. This survey is personal. It is **not** part of your evaluation. It is part of a research study. Thanks!

1. What pronunciation elements do you find the most difficult?
Circle the best option.
 - a. Individual sounds (sonidos individuales que componen las palabras)
 - b. Stress and rhythm (énfasis y ritmo del idioma).
 - c. Intonation (entonación o la música del idioma).
 - d. Connected speech (lenguaje conectado como reducciones, asimilaciones, contracciones, uniones).
 - e. All options (todas las opciones).

APPENDIX 3

Survey (Continued)

2. What pronunciation elements do you find the easiest?
 - a. individual sounds (sonidos individuales que componen las palabras)
 - b. stress and rhythm (énfasis y ritmo del idioma)
 - c. intonation (entonación o la música del idioma)
 - d. connected speech (lenguaje conectado como reducciones, asimilaciones, contracciones, uniones)
 - e. all options (todas las opciones)
3. How clear do you think your pronunciation is? Circle the best option.
 - a. very clear
 - b. clear
 - c. somewhat clear
 - d. not clear
4. How can you improve your pronunciation? Circle the best option.
 - a. receive pronunciation instruction when there are pronunciation activities in the books
 - b. receive pronunciation instruction when the opportunity comes up
 - c. not receive pronunciation instruction because pronunciation happens naturally
5. Do you prefer a teacher who...?
 - a. teaches pronunciation when the book presents it
 - b. teaches pronunciation when an opportunity happens
 - c. both a and b
6. What do you think about your experience with pronunciation teaching? Offer some suggestions for your teachers.

APPENDIX 4

Information-gap Activity (Free Dialog)

Pair work. Think of a time when one of these things happened. Then tell your partner a story about it. Your partner will make comments or ask follow-up questions. Take turns telling your stories.

- You saw something scary.
- You lost something important.
- You did something very embarrassing/funny/risky.

