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Approaches to Pronunciation Teaching in the EFL/ESL Classroom

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Autor: Darío Josué Maldonado Juca

CI: 0106228406

Correo: josuemaldonado24@hotmail.com

Directora: Lcda. Mónica Patricia Abad Céleri, PhD

CI: 0102253952

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Resumen

Esta síntesis de investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar tres enfoques de la enseñanza de pronunciación en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE) e inglés como segunda lengua (ISL): el intuitivo-imitativo, el analítico-lingüístico y el integrador, y sus ventajas y desventajas para determinar su efectividad. Se recopilaron diecisiete estudios que examinaron los enfoques en diferentes contextos y con participantes de diferentes edades. En cuanto a los criterios de inclusión, los estudios debían ser empíricos, lo que ayudó a determinar los efectos de los enfoques en los estudiantes de inglés y la mejora de su pronunciación después de recibir instrucción. Además, los estudios debían estar escritos en inglés, realizados en aulas de ILE o ISL y publicados desde el año 2000. Los resultados de este análisis revelaron que tanto el enfoque intuitivo como el analítico pueden considerarse prácticos; sin embargo, el enfoque analítico-lingüístico ha ofrecido más ventajas y ha producido mejores mejoras en la pronunciación, especialmente para los estudiantes de mayor edad. Además, se sugirió una investigación futura sobre el enfoque integrador, ya que ha habido poca investigación acerca del mismo.

Palabras clave: Enfoque intuitivo-imitativo. Enfoque analítico-lingüístico. Enfoque integrador. Enseñanza de pronunciación.



Abstract

This research synthesis aimed at analyzing three pronunciation teaching approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms—the intuitive-imitative, the analytic-linguistic and the integrative approaches—and their advantages and disadvantages to determine their effectiveness. Seventeen studies that examined the approaches in different contexts and with participants of different ages were gathered. Regarding the inclusion criteria, the studies had to be empirical, which helped to determine the effects of the approaches on English learners and their pronunciation improvement after receiving instruction. Additionally, the studies had to be written in English, carried out in EFL or ESL classrooms and published since the year 2000. The results of this analysis revealed that both intuitive and analytic approaches can be considered practical; however, the analytic-linguistic approach has offered more advantages and yielded better pronunciation improvements, especially for older learners. Moreover, future research on the integrative approach was suggested since there has been little research on this approach.

Keywords: Intuitive-Imitative approach. Analytic-Linguistic approach. Integrative approach. Pronunciation teaching.



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Darío Josué Maldonado Juca

C.I: 0106228406



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Dedication

This project is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, Darío and Grecia, who have been my biggest strength and relief in moments of difficulty and whose example has inspired me to be a better human being. To my family, especially my cousins Rome, Kato, March, Tani, Fer, Adry and Janice, whose unconditional love has motivated me to continue working hard. To my dear aunts Bélgica and Germania, who have always given me their advice and support no matter what. To my loyal friends for encouraging and believing in me. To you, my dear love; I know we will find each other someday. Lastly, to God almighty who has always protected me.



Introduction

According to Turner (2019), if English learners wish to be understood and avoid serious problems when communicating with someone else, pronunciation learning should be prioritized. However, pronunciation teaching has been a neglected area regarding EFL/ESL teaching, and it has not been studied as carefully as grammar or vocabulary (Atar, 2018). In fact, some teachers have not addressed pronunciation in their classes stating that it is a very difficult area to teach because of the limited number of English pronunciation teaching strategies or techniques available for teachers (Wei, 2006). Therefore, this paper analyzes three main pronunciation teaching approaches that present various characteristics and methods that address pronunciation in different ways, which could be helpful for teachers who are not aware of different techniques to teach pronunciation effectively in their classes.

This research synthesis is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter includes the description of the research as well as the background, the statement of the problem, the rationale, the research questions and the objectives. The second chapter entails the theoretical framework, which consists of key concepts and definitions that help to understand some terms included in the research. The third chapter encompasses the literature review in which an overview of the selected studies is provided. The fourth chapter is the methodology, which describes how the research synthesis was carried out and the inclusion criteria to select the studies. The fifth chapter contains the classification and analysis of the gathered studies according to seven different categories, which helped to make connections between the studies in order to answer the research questions and meet



the objectives. Finally, the sixth chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of this project.



CHAPTER I

1. Description of the research

1.1. Background

Pronunciation in ESL/EFL classrooms has been present for a long period of time in which there have been different approaches to teach it. In fact, a historical overview of the approaches that have influenced pronunciation teaching, provided by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996), shows certain variations in the amount of importance given to this field. For instance, pronunciation teaching was greatly emphasized in The Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method; however, it was given less importance in the Cognitive Approach, which focused more on grammar and vocabulary. In addition, in the Communicative Approach, pronunciation teaching was considered necessary for oral communication, but the main focus was on fluency rather than accuracy.

According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1996), two general approaches have been used for pronunciation teaching. First, the intuitive-imitative approach which consists of listening and imitating a native speaker through the use of audiotapes or videos without any explicit teaching. Learners' pronunciation of sounds such as consonants and vowels has been successfully addressed with the help of the intuitive-imitative approach (Roohani, 2013). A similar report is found in the study carried out by Behzadi and Fahimniya (2014) in which the participants' pronunciation of consonants and pure vowels was enhanced. Moreover, the intuitive-imitative approach presented significant improvements in learners' production of diphthongs (Hashemian & Fadaei, 2011).



On the other hand, the analytic-linguistic approach focuses on the importance of an explicit intervention on pronunciation instruction by means of phonetic symbols, stress patterns, how to articulate sounds, etc. (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016). In fact, such intervention has shown a representative enhancement in the EFL learners' pronunciation performance (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014), and the use of the phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions and vocal charts has enabled L2 learners to acquire pure vowels pronunciation (Hashemian & Fadaei, 2011). Similarly, explicit interventions describing articulatory complexities such as place and manner of articulation have shown an improvement in EFL learners' pronunciation (Roohani, 2013).

In addition, the integrative approach aims at considering pronunciation as an integral part of communication rather than an isolated subskill, and it is practiced through task-based activities to facilitate learning (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010). In this approach, the focus is both implicit and explicit since it is considered that the linguistic capabilities on students are improved by using segmental and suprasegmental features, and that the communication abilities are increased by using imitation (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016). Since the integrative approach elicits oral production in learners, students' speaking skills develop (Aljumah, 2011), and when suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation are integrated in the classroom, learning becomes more meaningful because they are not taught in isolated sessions (Da Silva, 2012).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Pronunciation is extremely important if people wish to be understood and avoid serious problems when communicating with someone else (Turner, 2019). Moreover, it is



one of the most important components of the English language because of its influence on learners' proficiency; however, it has not been studied as carefully as grammar or vocabulary (Atar, 2018). In addition, the English language does not have a one to one correspondence between spelling and pronunciation, which could lead to difficulties when teaching how to produce sounds (Jam & Adibpour, 2014).

Despite the existence of three main approaches to teach pronunciation, namely analytic-linguistic approach, intuitive-imitative approach and integrative approach, most language teachers are not familiar with useful strategies, and they do not know how to face specific problematic situations (Roohani, 2013). Moreover, there has not been a consensus regarding which approach to teach pronunciation is the most suitable, and it has become object of debate whether to teach it as a set of rules or as part of an overall system of communication (Wei, 2006).

In my personal experience, I have witnessed that some of my English teachers not only had pronunciation problems but also lacked the necessary resources to help their students improve pronunciation. In addition, since pronunciation mistakes are not always corrected by teachers, students may give less importance to it, and as a result, their development of the language could be affected, especially if they are being instructed to become future EFL teachers. Therefore, the awareness of the most effective approaches and techniques to teach pronunciation according to the students' needs could be beneficial for the improvement of English teaching and the training of future teachers.



1.3. Rationale

When it comes to teaching the English language, four main skills play an important role, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking, and in the latter, pronunciation is a major component; however, some teachers avoid dealing with it due to their lack of confidence, skills and knowledge of appropriate methods (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010). Since pronunciation plays an important role in learners' ability in the target language (Atli & Bergil, 2012), it is fundamental for EFL/ESL teachers to be very knowledgeable about the approaches to pronunciation teaching and the latest research-based teaching practices so that they can integrate the most suitable ones into their daily practice (Aydin & Akyüz, 2017).

In addition, the research that has been done regarding the approaches to teach pronunciation has made it possible to see how to address this issue. For instance, the use of implicit instruction to teach pronunciation is seen in the imitative-intuitive approach while pronunciation is addressed explicitly in an analytic-linguistic approach, and the integrative approach seeks to provide both types of instruction integrated as one component (Jam & Adibpour, 2014). However, due to a lack of consensus on how to address pronunciation in the classroom and the lack of time and resources, teachers have not been able to choose appropriate techniques to teach pronunciation and have preferred to focus on other aspects of the language (Bai & Yuan, 2018).

Therefore, a thorough understanding of the approaches to teach English pronunciation could enable EFL/ESL teachers to consider it as an important part of communication that should be incorporated into the EFL classroom (Gilakjani & Ahmadi,



2011) instead of as an issue to be ignored or paid little attention just in an incidental manner (MacDonald, 2002).

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in this research synthesis.

1. What are the most practical approaches to teach pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classroom?
2. What advantages and disadvantages does each approach have when teaching pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classroom?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1. General Objective

To determine the effectiveness of each pronunciation teaching approach in the EFL/ESL classroom.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

- To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of each approach in teaching pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classroom.
- To analyze the effects of using each approach to teach pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classroom.



CHAPTER II

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, key concepts related to the approaches to teach pronunciation are provided. These definitions are taken from academic sources and are helpful to understand the next chapter, which is the literature review. This theoretical framework includes definitions of the following terms: EFL, ESL, approach, method, procedure, technique, pronunciation, explicit instruction, implicit instruction, and integrative instruction.

2.1. EFL and ESL

Establishing the difference between EFL and ESL can be useful to know how English is taught in different contexts. EFL stands for English as a foreign language, and it refers to the English language when it is used for certain purposes such as tourism, communication with native speakers of English, reading foreign books, journals, etc. (Peng, 2019). On the other hand, ESL stands for English as a second language, which is the language that plays the same important role as the mother tongue (Peng, 2019), and according to Iwai (2011), it is used as an essential and formal tool for communication.

In addition, these two terms show that EFL and ESL students do not learn English in the same way because of their different backgrounds and the context in which the language is taught. ESL students learn English in a context where English is a necessary means of communication, and they have greater opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom due to its daily use. Nevertheless, EFL students learn the language in non-native English-speaking countries in which they may not have the same significant exposure to the language as ESL learners do, and they can only practice and use the language in their



classes (Core Languages, 2015). In the process of teaching English as a second or foreign language, different approaches with their own methods, procedures and techniques can be applied.

2.2. Approach, Method, Procedure and Technique

According to Harmer (2001), English language teaching methodology is divided into four levels of organization, in which the approach is the most general one. He defined an approach as “theories about the nature of language and language learning which are the source of the way things are done in the classroom and which provide reasons for doing them” (p. 62). Likewise, Richards and Rodgers (1986) defined an approach as “the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified” (p. 21), which represents the knowledge about theories of language and learning and describes aspects such as the nature of language, how knowledge of a language is acquired, and the conditions that promote language acquisition (Rhalmi, 2018).

The second level of organization is the method, which is defined by Richards and Rodgers (1986) as “the level at which theory is put into practice” (p. 21); in other words, it is a practical implementation of a certain approach which includes decisions about the particular skills to be taught, the roles of the teacher and the learner in language teaching and learning, the appropriate procedures and techniques, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented (Rhalmi, 2018).

The third level of organization is the procedure, which Harmer (2001) has defined as “an ordered sequence of techniques” (p. 62); therefore, in order to implement a procedure, it is necessary to implement techniques, which correspond to the fourth level of



organization. Techniques are defined as practices that operate in teaching a language according to a particular method (Rhalmi, 2018).

2.3. Definition of Pronunciation

The Oxford dictionary defines pronunciation as “the way in which a language or a particular word or sound is pronounced” (“Pronunciation”, 2020), while Szyszka (2017) stated that “pronunciation is understood as the way a learner utters or articulates both segmental and suprasegmental features of a foreign language as well as how he or she perceives and interprets them” (p. 7). In addition, according to Pratiwi (2010), pronunciation is the act or manner of pronouncing and speaking words, especially in a way that is accepted or generally understood.

2.4. Explicit Instruction

Explicit instruction has been defined- by Archer and Hughes (2011) as “a structured, systematic and effective methodology for teaching academic skills” (p. 1), which involves guiding students through the learning process with clear explanations and demonstrations of what is intended to be taught, as well as practice to provide feedback to the students. Similarly, Rosenshine (1987) defined this type of instruction as “a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students” (p. 34). According to Greene (n.d.), explicit instruction helps to teach skills to students by using direct, structured instruction, which makes lessons crystal clear and helps students to know how to succeed on a task.



In addition, Hammond (2019) has stated that explicit instruction is known as “fully guided” practice in which teachers demonstrate and model what they are teaching, and in these explicit teaching practices students are shown what to do and how to do it. Moreover, explicit instruction is defined as an instructional approach that includes some of the aforementioned characteristics such as providing step-by-step explanations, modeling, engaging in guided practice, and eliciting student interest. The main focus of this type of instruction is to increase the amount and quality of student learning (Hall, 2002). In the field of pronunciation, this type of instruction uses phonetic symbols and stress patterns to teach this area in an explicit way (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016).

Finally, this type of instruction can be deductive or inductive. The former refers to going from the general to the particular, and it involves teaching through a process in which rules are given before examples. On the other hand, the latter refers to going from the particular to the general, and the examples are given first in order to explain the rules to follow afterwards (Salbego & Specht, 2013).

2.5. Implicit Instruction

According to Smith (2017), implicit instruction is a teaching practice in which the instructor does not offer explanations overtly, but the information is presented to the students in a way in which they make their own conclusions, create their own conceptual structures, and store the information in the most appropriate and logical way for them. In addition, Ellis, et al. (2009) stated that this type of instruction enables learners to infer language rules without the need of being explicitly aware of them, and this is achieved by means of exposure to examples of a rule or pattern that students are expected to learn. By



means of implicit instruction, students are involved in a learning environment in which they are able to internalize rules or patterns with an implicit and natural focus rather than an explicit and systematic one.

Similarly, Salbego and Specht (2013) stated that implicit instruction exposes learners to a great amount of exemplars of linguistic forms as a way to direct their attention to communicative input and involves teaching without outlining goals explicitly. With this type of instruction, implicit learning is seen as “a passive process, where students are exposed to language and acquire knowledge of that information simply through exposure, excluding metalanguage” (p. 4). In the area of pronunciation instruction, students learn based on intuition and imitation without any detailed explanation, which involves an implicit way of teaching (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016).

2.6. Integrative Instruction

This type of instruction seeks to provide an authentic language environment for students to develop their language skills simultaneously in a meaningful context. Communicative activities are introduced in order to help students learn rules in an embedded way, and learners have many opportunities available to comprehend and put into practice the concepts that are presented to them (Wan, 1996). In the field of pronunciation, this approach focuses on integrating pronunciation teaching with other areas of the language since it is considered as an integral component of communication instead of an isolated drill (Aydin & Akyüz, 2017). Therefore, this type of instruction helps to improve the linguistic capabilities of the students as well as their communication abilities (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016).



In this chapter, several concepts and theories regarding the approaches to teach pronunciation were presented. These concepts are fundamental to understand the different studies that have been carried out in the area of pronunciation teaching in EFL/ESL classrooms by means of three approaches. These studies will be described in the following chapter.



CHAPTER III

3. Literature Review

The following literature review aims at providing an overview of the analyzed studies in order to place this research synthesis within the context of existing literature and to identify possible gaps in research. These studies provide findings about diverse approaches to teach pronunciation in the ESL/EFL classroom. This literature review has been organized in the following way: the intuitive-imitative approach, the analytic-linguistic approach, the integrative approach, and the effects of pronunciation instruction on EFL/ESL students.

3.1. The Intuitive-Imitative Approach to Teach Pronunciation

When a language is acquired as a native language, its features such as grammar, syntax, and pronunciation are naturally mastered, and they are performed spontaneously (Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, 2015). In fact, the focus of this approach is on implicit instruction in which learners are exposed to the language, but its rules, in the case of pronunciation, are not taught explicitly so that they are mastered as naturally as possible.

Jam and Adibpour (2014) carried out a research study to determine the effects of teaching three consonant sounds, namely /t/, /θ/ and /w/ with the imitative-intuitive and the analytic-linguistic approaches. They found that participants who were taught with the imitative-intuitive approach had certain problems distinguishing /t/ and /θ/ as well as having no correct pronunciation in the latter sound. It was concluded that this approach can cause problems when teaching dental sounds. However, although the use of this approach seemed



confusing when teaching consonants, it was found that students were highly motivated to pay attention and learn. In addition, research conducted by Buss (2016) sought to report practices of Brazilian EFL instructors regarding pronunciation. Participants were given a questionnaire with a list of pronunciation techniques and activities, and the results showed that strategies such as imitation and repetition were the most commonly used by 91.2% of the participants. Moreover, a study carried out by Hashemian and Fadaei (2011) focused on the effectiveness of intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic approaches to teach pure vowels and diphthongs. The participants that were taught with the intuitive-imitative approach listened and tried to imitate vowel sounds and diphthongs, and the results showed that the students improved their pronunciation of sounds, especially diphthongs.

Additionally, the use of this approach presented positive results in the studies carried out by Roohani (2013) and Behzadi and Fahimniya (2014) since in both studies, the intuitive-imitative approach helped to improve the pronunciation of consonants, pure vowels, and diphthongs. These authors have acknowledged that the intuitive-imitative approach is one of the most effective approaches that can be used in the classroom to address pronunciation problems.

3.2. The Analytic-Linguistic Approach to Teach Pronunciation

This approach is focused on explicit instruction in which pronunciation is addressed by means of using rules referring to how sounds should be produced, the phonetic alphabet with phonetic symbols, stress patterns, and how learners should be able to analyze the sounds thoroughly to try to produce them accordingly (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016).



A study conducted by Ghorbani, Neissari, and Kargozari (2016) sought to determine whether explicit pronunciation instruction would enhance learners' vowel perception, and both the intuitive-imitative and the analytic-linguistic approach were applied. After carrying out the study with audio CDs to listen and practice pronunciation, the analytic-linguistic approach showed better results, and it was concluded that formal explicit vowel instruction does enhance learners' perception of vowel sounds. Nevertheless, the study presented some limitations regarding the low number of participants because the authors stated that with a larger number, more general conclusions could have been drawn. In addition, explicit instruction on pronunciation was applied in the study carried out by Hamzah, Nashuha, and Abdullah (2017) in which learners were taught with a software designed to teach the phonetic symbols through the use of a phonetic alphabet and tutorial videos on how to pronounce the /θ/ and the /r/ sounds. To test their effectiveness, the participants were given a questionnaire about their attitudes towards the software that was used to teach them pronunciation, and the answers were positive; for example, the participants stated that the process was easy to follow and helped them to improve their pronunciation of the target sounds.

Additionally, the study conducted by Gordon, Darcy, and Ewert (2013) aimed to investigate the influence of explicit instruction in the acquisition and production of L2 phonological features. The participants were divided into three groups that received pronunciation instruction in different ways. The first two groups were taught with explicit phonetic training; one group received instruction on segmentals such as vowels and minimal pairs, and the other group on suprasegmentals such as rhythm, stress, and linking. In the third group, pronunciation was not taught explicitly, so they only practiced drills on



words and phrases. The participants were audio-recorded individually before and after carrying out the study to analyze the effects of the lessons, and in these recordings, they had to read sentences that were designed to measure the segmental and suprasegmental aspects studied by the groups. The results showed that explicit phonetic instruction can lead to positive outcomes in learners' pronunciation, and the authors suggested that suprasegmental instruction could help learners improve faster in comprehensibility rather than only making emphasis on vowel sounds.

Nevertheless, the analytic-linguistic approach showed negative outcomes in the study carried out by Algethami (2017). This study attempted to examine the effect of explicit pronunciation instruction of some English segments on the degree of perceived foreign accent in EFL students. The participants were divided into an experimental group, which received pronunciation instruction on segments, and a control group, which did not. Pronunciation was introduced to the students in the experimental group by means of the IPA and articulatory phonetic descriptions of how the sounds are produced. Five sentences that contained the sounds taught to them were chosen as a pretest and a posttest in order to analyze the effects of the instruction, and when the participants read the sentences after the study, no effect of explicit pronunciation instruction on the degree of perceived foreign accent was found since there were no differences between the results of the pretest and the posttest. Similarly, in the study carried out by Saito (2011), a reduction in foreign accent was not fully achieved after the participants were taught specific segments by means of explicit phonetic instruction.



3.3. The Integrative Approach to Teach Pronunciation

Another way to address pronunciation in the EFL classroom is by means of integrating it with other components of the language, and it is achieved when teachers have a pronunciation goal in mind regardless of what they are teaching (Zielinski & Yates, 2014). In this approach, which is considered as a combination of both the intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic approach, segmental and supra-segmental features are taught to enhance the linguistic capabilities of students, and imitation is also used to increase the communicative abilities (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016).

A study conducted by Da Silva (2012) sought to find out the effects of applying the integrative approach on EFL Brazilian students. In this study, the author integrated pronunciation instruction with grammar lessons given to children and adults, and in these sessions, suprasegmental features such as rhythm and stress were taught along with the structure of the simple present tense. Classes were recorded and analyzed qualitatively in order to determine if the method applied with the children and the adults had been successful or not. Even though the two groups showed different responses; for example adults wanted a wider explanation about how rhythm works, the outcomes of the study based on the classes and reactions were positive since students reflected an awareness of many different aspects of English.

Moreover, a study carried out by Alhussain (2009) aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using an integrative approach to improve students' communicative skills. Participants were 105 EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, who were assigned to different groups: the experimental group and the control group which were taught in different ways. The



control group was taught grammar, reading, listening, and speaking in different sessions for each skill while the experimental group was taught with the integrative approach in sessions that encompassed the four aforementioned components. In order to see the outcomes of each teaching method, an oral pre-test was applied to measure the students' proficiency, and an oral post-test aimed at measuring students' retention of the content taught. In these tests, pronunciation was measured as a sub-part of oral production. The findings of this study show more positive results from the experimental group that was taught with the integrative approach since there was an improvement in their communicative abilities in which pronunciation played an important role.

Nevertheless, the study carried out by Wardani (2017) showed negative outcomes of using this approach. The focus of the study was on techniques used by a teacher in a Vocational High School to correct pronunciation mistakes. The researcher analyzed data qualitatively and employed two data collection techniques which were observations and interviews. Three techniques were found with the analysis, namely the drilling technique, the minimal pairs drilling technique, and techniques including explicit and self-correction, which were employed in reading activities in which pronunciation was integrated with the reading skill. However, these techniques were not effective since students did not achieve the basic competences of pronunciation.

3.4. The Effects of Pronunciation Instruction on EFL/ESL Students

As Fraser (1999) stated, pronunciation is rated as a priority both for learners and for teachers since they agree that it is in fact an imperative part of language courses. The effects of teaching pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classrooms either explicitly, implicitly or



in an integrative way have been generally positive as they show productive outcomes from learners. This can be seen in the study carried out by Couper (2006) which aimed to determine the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction, and in order to accomplish its objective, 21 ESOL learners received pronunciation instruction regarding segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation. Students had certain difficulties such as problems with certain phonemes and stress prior to receiving instruction, but when those problems were finally addressed, it was found that learners made fewer mistakes at the moment of speaking.

Similarly, the study conducted by Saito and Saito (2016) focused on the effects of suprasegmental instruction on the development of comprehensibility and features such as stress, intonation and rhythm. Students received sessions in which they were instructed on the suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, and after a test was taken to analyze the effectiveness of the sessions, the results determined that the students enhanced their comprehensibility, improved their rhythm, marked stressed syllables with longer and clearer vowels, and corrected their misuse of intonation patterns.

As it could be seen throughout this review of some of the existing studies regarding pronunciation teaching, the three main approaches to teach pronunciation involve different features and suggest methods that address pronunciation in different ways. This information can be helpful for teachers who may not be aware of all the approaches to teach pronunciation or the way they should be applied in classrooms, which could be the reason why pronunciation skills are sometimes neglected or seen as insignificant (Shah, Othman &



Senom, 2017). In the fifth chapter, the advantages, disadvantages, and the effectiveness of each pronunciation teaching approach in the EFL/ESL classroom will be addressed.



CHAPTER IV

4. Methodology

The present research synthesis, which has been defined by Norris and Ortega as “the systematic secondary review of accumulated primary research studies” (2006, p. 4), was exploratory and bibliographical in order to obtain significant information about the chosen topic. To obtain meaningful data about the approaches to teach pronunciation in the EFL/ESL classroom, a thorough analysis of relevant literature was carried out. The articles were found in relevant databases such as ERIC, ResearchGate, Scholar Google and Science Direct, which based on preliminary research, have been useful academic sources with essential information for this work. There were some points to take into consideration for choosing appropriate sources. First, the articles must be written in English since it is the language in which the study was focused to analyze the approaches to teach pronunciation. Second, the studies must contain analyses carried out in EFL or ESL classrooms in order to have a wider view of the approaches to teach pronunciation. Third, they must be either empirical or theoretical. Therefore, they must present a research that has been done about the chosen topic in order to get real information in the field to analyze, or they can be literature reviews that provide appropriate information to be considered. The empirical articles must contain a methodology, research questions to be answered through the study, participants and instruments. Fourth, they must have been published in one of the aforementioned databases or in any other academic source. Fifth, the articles have to have been published since 2000 in order to see different ways in which the approaches have been used.



Relevant words and terms that were used to choose appropriate sources were the following: (a) intuitive-imitative approach, (b) analytic-linguistic approach, (c) integrative approach, (d) and pronunciation teaching. No restriction was set regarding the type of approach, so the studies could be qualitative, quantitative or mixed. The sources used to carry out the present research were digital since it was complicated to find physical studies in our academic context (Appendix 1). Finally, there were codes that could serve as means to categorize the articles according to different criteria, and these emerged while the analysis was being carried out.

The following were the journals reviewed for selecting the studies analyzed:

International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research; Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences; Prospect: an Australian journal of TESOL; Research in Language; International Journal of Science Technology and Management; Journal of Education and Practice; Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences; Language Teaching Research; Pensar Línguas Estrategias; Australian Language Matters; Language and Literacy; Proceedings of the 4th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference; The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; Journal of Language Teaching and Research; The Reading Matrix; Advances in Language and Literary Studies; IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies; The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly; Explicit Teaching and Teacher Training. Journal of Teacher Education; Language Awareness; Revista Interlinguagens; Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics; RETAIN.



CHAPTER V

5. Data Analysis

This chapter seeks to analyze the findings of the 17 selected studies in order to draw conclusions from the data, which will help to answer the research questions (see section 1.4) and meet the objectives (see section 1.5). The studies were organized according to the following categories: pronunciation teaching approaches, pronunciation feature, advantages and disadvantages of the pronunciation teaching approaches, EFL/ESL context, research location, participants' age, and the effectiveness of the pronunciation teaching approaches.

5.1. Approaches to Pronunciation Teaching

Table 1

Approaches to pronunciation teaching

Author/Year	Approach	N	%
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013)	The Intuitive-Imitative Approach	6	40
Algethami (2017); Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Couper (2006); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert (2013); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam and Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013); Saito (2011); Saito and Saito (2016)	The Analytic-Linguistic Approach	12	80
Alhussain (2009); Da Silva (2012); Wardani (2017)	The Integrative Approach	3	20
Total		15	100



Table 1 presents the three main pronunciation teaching approaches analyzed in this synthesis. For this category, 15 out of 17 studies were chosen since they focused on one or two of the approaches to teach pronunciation while the other two focused on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding pronunciation teaching without specifying any approach.

As it can be seen, table 1 shows that the intuitive-imitative approach is applied in only six articles, which might indicate that not much research has been done with this pronunciation teaching approach. Moreover, in these six articles, the intuitive-imitative approach is studied along with the analytic-linguistic approach, and the authors attempt to make comparisons between the two approaches to examine their similarities and differences and to determine which one is more helpful to teach pronunciation. However, the study carried out by Hashemian and Fadaei (2011) clearly shows how the approach works since the researchers taught pure English vowels and diphthongs by making the participants listen and imitate the rhythm and sounds of the L2.

Another aspect that can be seen in Table 1 is a high availability of studies on the analytic-linguistic approach because it has been applied in 12 articles, which indicates that from the studies analyzed, this approach is the most widely studied. Additionally, the predominance of this approach over the other two shows that researchers may be more interested in finding how explicit instruction by means of phonetic charts and articulatory descriptions helps to teach pronunciation. Moreover, even though this approach is also studied along with the intuitive-imitative approach in six articles, the other six focus exclusively on the analytic-linguistic approach, and this allows to see the characteristics



and the effects of this approach in a thorough way. In fact, the study carried out by Gordon, Darcy, and Ewert (2013) shows how the approach works since the participants received explicit pronunciation instruction on rhythm, stress, vowels, articulation, and minimal pairs.

Moreover, table 1 shows that the integrative approach is the least used approach in the analyzed studies since it is applied in only three articles. Da Silva (2012) has stated that the aim of this approach is to integrate pronunciation in the oral communicative part of a lesson instead of dealing with it as an isolated feature, but according to table 1, it seems that researchers have not studied the effects of this approach in much detail since not many studies have been conducted by applying it. Additionally, it was quite difficult to find studies that used the term “integrative approach” in order to refer to the approach that was being applied in the research, which might indicate lack of research in this approach. Therefore, in terms of the integrative approach, more research is needed to determine how this approach works at the moment of teaching pronunciation.

5.2. Pronunciation Feature

Table 2

Pronunciation feature

Author/Year	Pronunciation Feature	N	%
Algethami (2017); Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013); Saito (2011); Wardani (2017)	Segmental feature	10	62.5



Da Silva (2012); Saito & Saito (2016)	Suprasegmental feature	2	12.5
Buss (2016); Couper (2006); Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert, (2013); Shah, Othman & Senom (2017)	Both	4	25
Total		16	100

Table 2 presents the pronunciation feature targeted in the analyzed articles. For this category, 16 out of 17 studies were chosen since they specified the feature of pronunciation that the studies measured while the remaining study did not focus on a specific aspect.

The segmental feature of pronunciation refers to isolated sounds such as consonants, vowels or diphthongs, and, as table 2 shows, the great majority of studies have focused on this feature. In these 10 articles, the segmental feature has been studied mostly by applying the analytic-linguistic approach because explicit instruction is more related to the acquisition and production of segments. This can be seen in the study carried out by Hamzah, Nashuha, and Abdullah (2017) which focuses on segments since the researchers targeted the / θ / and the /r/ sounds, and they used a software that included the IPA chart and videos that explained how to produce those sounds in isolation. However, the intuitive-imitative approach has also been applied to study the segmental feature; in fact, the study carried out by Jam and Adibpour (2014) targeted the /t/, / \check{u} /, and /w/ sounds, and the participants were asked to listen and imitate those segments.

On the other hand, the suprasegmental feature refers to speech attributes such as stress and intonation that accompany consonants and vowels, and often extend over syllables, words, or phrases (Wang, Li & Lin, 2015). According to table 2, this feature has been exclusively studied only by two articles, which may indicate that the suprasegmental



part of pronunciation might be an ignored area in pronunciation teaching, and thus, more research is needed to see the effects of addressing features such as stress, rhythm, or intonation. Nevertheless, suprasegmental teaching can be seen in the study carried out by Saito and Saito (2016) in which the participants received three hours of instruction on suprasegmentals during six weeks, after which aspects such as word stress, rhythm, and intonation were measured.

Finally, the table indicates that four studies focused on both features of pronunciation; in other words, they measured or took into account the segmental and the suprasegmental feature at the same time. The study carried out by Gordon, Darcy, and Ewert (2013) shows this dual focus since the researchers taught each aspect separately by dividing the participants into groups. The first group was composed of 12 participants who received instruction on suprasegmentals by analyzing features such as rhythm, stress, reductions, and linking, and the second group was composed of eight participants who focused on segmentals such as minimal pairs, vowels, and articulation.

5.3. EFL/ESL Context

Table 3

EFL/ESL context

Author/Year	Context	N	%
Algethami (2017); Alhussain (2009); Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Buss (2016); Da Silva (2012); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki &	EFL	13	76.5



Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013); Saito & Saito (2016); Wardani (2017)			
Couper (2006); Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert (2013); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Saito (2011); Shah, Othman & Senom (2017)	ESL	5	29.4
Total		17	100

Table 3 presents the classification of the studies according to the context in which English pronunciation was analyzed. The two contexts were EFL and ESL, and for this category, all the 17 studies were chosen since the context was specified and relevant in every article.

As it can be seen, table 3 shows that 13 studies were carried out in EFL contexts, which might indicate that researchers prefer to conduct studies about pronunciation in this context. This may happen because in EFL contexts, the participants are not exposed to the English language in their daily lives, and they only use it in the classroom, which does not allow them to practice their pronunciation naturally. In addition, in EFL contexts, the students sometimes have problems with certain sounds due to their mother tongue influence, and this can be seen in the study carried out by Roohani (2013) which aimed at analyzing the effects of pronunciation teaching on the production of several sounds that were considered difficult to learn by the participants because they did not exist in their first language, which was Persian. However, these problematic sounds were successfully acquired by the participants after receiving pronunciation instruction by means of the intuitive-imitative approach and the analytic-linguistic approach. In fact, problems with



specific sounds are more likely to appear in EFL contexts, and the majority of articles have addressed this issue by applying one of the main pronunciation teaching approaches.

On the other hand, table 3 shows that only five articles have focused on the study of pronunciation in ESL contexts, and this may suggest that more research is needed to see the effects of teaching pronunciation in this context. On the other hand, the ESL context allows students to be exposed to the language every day, which may be a reason for the small amount of studies carried out to teach pronunciation. Nevertheless, the study conducted by Couper (2006) aimed to teach pronunciation to ESL learners by means of explicit instruction, and even though the participants were able to practice English naturally, they had some problems with sounds, stress, and rhythm. This might indicate that even in ESL contexts, students could have several difficulties with pronunciation. Additionally, as the study carried out by Shah, Othman, and Senom (2017) showed, pronunciation skills are neglected in ESL classrooms since many teachers still hold the belief that pronunciation teaching is not important.

5.4. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Pronunciation Teaching Approaches

Table 4

Advantages and disadvantages of the approaches

Author/Year	Approach	N	%
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013)	Advantages of the Intuitive-Imitative Approach	5	33.3
Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Roohani (2013)	Disadvantages of the Intuitive-	3	20



	Imitative Approach		
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Couper (2006); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert (2013); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam and Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013); Saito (2011); Saito & Saito (2016)	Advantages of the Analytic-Linguistic Approach	11	73.3
Algethami (2017); Couper (2006); Saito (2011)	Disadvantages of the Analytic-Linguistic Approach	3	20
Alhussain (2009); Da Silva (2012)	Advantages of the Integrative Approach	2	13.3
Da Silva (2012); Wardani (2017)	Disadvantages of the Integrative Approach	2	13.3
Total		15	100

Table 4 shows a classification of the studies according to the advantages and disadvantages that each pronunciation teaching approach presents. In order to analyze this category, 15 out of 17 studies were selected since they focused on a specific approach, which allowed to determine any advantages or disadvantages.

As table 4 shows, the great majority of the analyzed studies on the intuitive-imitative approach presented advantages, which are mostly related to the pronunciation of segmentals. For instance, the studies carried out by Behzadi and Fahimniya (2014), Hashemian and Fadaei (2011), Khanbeiki and Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015), and Roohani



(2013) concluded that this approach helped participants improve their pronunciation of consonants, pure vowels, consonant clusters, and diphthongs, which appeared to be difficult to learn and pronounce by the participants. Moreover, two additional advantages were found in the studies carried out by Jam and Adibpour (2014) and Roohani (2013). The first study determined that with the use of the intuitive-imitative approach, the participants were highly motivated to pay attention and learn, and the second study concluded that this approach was more beneficial for young learners. However, as it can be seen in table 4, three studies have also presented some disadvantages of this approach. For instance, Jam and Adibpour (2014) found that teaching dental sounds such as /ð/ with the intuitive-imitative approach was not useful since the participants confused that sound with the /t/ sound and continued pronouncing them interchangeably.

Another aspect that table 4 shows is that 11 studies show advantages of the analytic-linguistic approach, and these advantages encompass both the segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation. Regarding the segmental feature, the results of the studies carried out by Behzadi and Fahimniya (2014), Hamzah et al. (2017), Hashemian and Fadaei (2011), Ghorbani et al. (2016), Jam and Adibpour (2014), Khanbeiki and Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015), and Roohani (2013) concluded that this approach helped participants improve their pronunciation of segments such as vowels, diphthongs, dentals, liquids, and consonant clusters. On the other hand, the study conducted by Saito and Saito (2016) found that the analytic-linguistic approach also presented advantages in the improvement of suprasegmental features since learners marked stressed syllables with longer and clearer vowels, reduced vowels in unstressed syllables, and used appropriate intonation patterns. Additionally, Gordon et al. (2013) and Saito (2011) determined that



explicit pronunciation instruction helped learners in the development of comprehensibility, and Roohani (2013) found that the analytic-linguistic approach was more beneficial for older learners. Nevertheless, Algethami (2017), Couper (2006), and Saito (2011) determined some disadvantages of this approach since the results showed that a significant reduction in foreign accents was not achieved, and the activities to practice pronunciation were not communicative.

Finally, the table shows that the same amount of studies determined advantages and disadvantages of the integrative approach. For instance, Alhussain (2009) concluded that this approach gave the participants more time to communicate in English since they were exposed to conversational input which helped them to improve their own output. Additionally, Da Silva (2012) applied the integrative approach with adults and children, who showed a positive and immediate response to the activities since they were fun for them. However, some disadvantages have been determined by Da Silva (2012) and Wardani (2017). In the first study, the activities based on the integrative approach were not clear for the adults since they wanted a wider explanation on how rhythm in English works, and in the second study, the techniques applied did not help the students to achieve the basic competencies related to pronunciation since they only focused on how to produce sounds correctly.

5.5. Research Location

Table 5

Research Location



Author/Year	Location	N	%
Algethami (2017); Alhussain (2009); Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013); Saito & Saito (2016); Shah, Othman, & Senom (2017); Wardani (2017)	Asia	12	70.6
Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert (2013); Saito (2011)	North America	2	11.8
Buss (2016); Da Silva (2012)	South America	2	11.8
Couper (2006)	Oceania	1	5.9
Total		17	100

Table 5 presents the classification of studies according to the research location. For this category, all the 17 studies were taken into account since all of them specified the continent where the study was conducted.

As evidenced in table 5, the great majority of the analyzed studies were conducted in Asia, which shows that there is a high availability of research on pronunciation in this continent. Moreover, table 5 shows that both in North America and South America, only two studies were found, which might indicate that more research on pronunciation is needed in these continents, and the fact that the two studies carried out in South America took place in Brazil shows that it might be difficult to find studies carried out in Latin America due to limitations in the publications available online. In addition, no studies on pronunciation were found in European or African countries. Finally, the remaining study took place in Oceania, which allowed to see how pronunciation is addressed in an ESL context.



5.6. Participants' Age

Table 6

Participants' Age

Author/Year	Age	N	%
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Da Silva (2012); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Roohani, (2013)	Pre-teens (9-13 years old)	4	28.5
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Da Silva (2012); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki (2015); Roohani, (2013)	Teens (14-18 years old)	6	42.8
Algethami (2017); Alhussain (2009); Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Couper (2006); Da Silva (2012); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert (2013); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Roohani, (2013); Saito (2011); Saito & Saito (2016)	Adults (19-40 years old)	11	78.5
Total		14	100

Table 6 presents the classification of studies according to the participants' age. Fourteen out of 17 studies were chosen for this category since the subjects of those studies were students while the subjects of the other three studies were teachers. These teachers were all adults, but their age range was not considered for this analysis since the purpose of this category is determining the effectiveness of the approaches on learners according to their age.

As it can be seen in table 6, while most of the studies have been conducted with adults, few studies have been carried out with younger learners such as teens and pre-teens, and no studies conducted with children were found, which shows that future research



should aim at analyzing the use of the approaches to teach them pronunciation. In addition, even though the number of studies found with younger learners as subjects is low in each sub-category, these studies have yielded positive results, especially by using the intuitive-imitative approach, which was the focus of 6 studies that were conducted with young learners (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014; Hashemian & Fadaei, 2011; Jam & Adibpour, 2014; Khanbeiki, 2015; Roohani 2013). In fact, as Harmer (2007) states, younger learners seem to have the ability of replicating pronunciation well, and this was clearly seen in the study by Roohani (2013), which showed that younger learners benefited more from this approach since they lacked sufficient knowledge to study pronunciation in an analytic way and learned through listening and repetition. Additionally, Da Silva (2012) applied the integrative approach with young learners, and the results showed that they followed the classes with enthusiasm since they were fun for them. Finally, since the great majority of studies conducted with older participants applied the analytic-linguistic approach with positive results, it could be said that this approach might be the most appropriate and beneficial to teach pronunciation to adults; in fact, some studies reported that explicit instruction can help to establish new phonetic boundaries (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014; Roohani, 2013).

5.7. The Effectiveness of the Pronunciation Teaching Approaches

Table 7

The effectiveness of the pronunciation teaching approaches

Author/Year	Approach	N	%
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam	The effectiveness of	6	46.2



& Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013)	the Intuitive-Imitative Approach		
Behzadi & Fahimniya (2014); Couper (2006); Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari (2016); Gordon, Darcy, & Ewert (2013); Hamzah, Nashuha, & Abdullah (2017); Hashemian & Fadaei (2011); Jam & Adibpour (2014); Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok (2015); Roohani (2013); Saito (2011); Saito & Saito (2016)	The effectiveness of the Analytic-Linguistic Approach	11	84.6
Alhussain (2009); Da Silva (2012)	The effectiveness of the Integrative Approach	2	15.4
Total		13	100

Table 7 presents the classification of studies according to the effectiveness of each pronunciation teaching approach. For this category, 13 out of 17 studies were taken into account since they allowed to determine the effectiveness of the approaches to teach pronunciation.

As evidenced in table 7, six studies on the intuitive-imitative approach show its effectiveness since in all these studies, students improved their pronunciation. In fact, the advantages that this approach presents, which were aforementioned in table 4, might be the reason why researchers have concluded that the intuitive-imitative approach is among the most effective approaches to teach pronunciation (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014; Hashemian & Fadaei, 2011; Jam & Adibpour, 2014; Roohani, 2013). Nevertheless, Ghorbani, et al. (2016), and Roohani (2013) concluded that pronunciation should not be taught only with the intuitive-imitative approach since the participants needed more explicit explanations on



how to produce certain sounds. In addition, since this approach has been studied in the selected articles along with the analytic-linguistic approach, researchers have concluded that even though the intuitive-imitative approach helps students improve their pronunciation, the analytic-linguistic approach is more effective (Khanbeiki & Abdolmanafi-Rok, 2015).

Another aspect evidenced in table 7 is that 11 studies show the effectiveness of the analytic-linguistic approach. Six of these studies have analyzed this approach along with the intuitive-imitative approach, and as mentioned before, the analytic-linguistic approach has been considered more effective. Researchers have concluded that explicit interventions work better towards teaching pronunciation (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014), and exposure to natural speech is not enough to improve EFL learners' performance since they need to analyze phonetic aspects of the target language (Ghorbani, Neissari, & Kargozari, 2016). Moreover, Roohani (2013) determined that the explicit analytic nature of this approach can provide a higher state of effectiveness because it offers more detailed instruction and explanation about target sounds. Finally, the studies that have focused only on the analytic-linguistic approach have also determined its effectiveness because in those studies, the participants made significant improvements in their pronunciation (Saito & Saito, 2016) and corrected their speaking errors after receiving instruction (Couper, 2006).

Additionally, the effectiveness of the integrative approach can be seen only in two studies due to the fact that not enough articles that test this approach were found. In these two studies, the integrative approach has been effective since the nature of this approach allowed students to integrate pronunciation with other aspects of the language such as



grammar (Da Silva, 2012), and it helped the participants to communicate in English better by exposing them to conversational input in order to improve their own output (Alhussain, 2009). However, more studies on the integrative approach are needed in order to determine its effectiveness.

In this chapter, an analysis of some relevant studies related to different pronunciation teaching approaches was carried out in order to determine their advantages, disadvantages and effectiveness. These studies were previously described in the literature review, and in this chapter, they were grouped and classified into seven different categories in order to analyze them thoroughly, make significant connections between the studies, and draw the final conclusions, which will be developed in the following chapter.



CHAPTER VI

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

The aim of this research synthesis was to determine the most practical approaches to teach pronunciation through the analysis of their advantages, disadvantages, and effectiveness, which was accomplished by exploring the findings of 17 published studies. After having carried out this analysis, the following conclusions can be stated.

Regarding the first research question, the synthesized findings from the 17 studies selected show that the nature and characteristics of the intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic approaches have yielded productive results at the moment of applying them to teach pronunciation such as motivation to learn in the case of the intuitive approach and vowel acquisition in the case of the analytic approach. These aforementioned characteristics mainly refer to techniques such as imitation and examination of sounds, which are practices that correspond to their respective method (Rhalmi, 2018) and show how the approaches are put into practice (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Indeed, the implicit instruction provided in the intuitive-imitative approach has allowed students to improve their pronunciation through listening and imitation, and the explicit instruction in the analytic-linguistic approach has offered students the possibility of examining the features of sounds in a systematic way, which has also helped them improve their pronunciation with even better outcomes. Therefore, according to the results of the studies, the most practical approaches



to teach pronunciation are the intuitive-imitative approach and the analytic-linguistic approach.

In fact, several studies have demonstrated that the intuitive-imitative approach allows students to improve their pronunciation through listening, intuition, and imitation, which, according to Arimilli, Kanuri, and Kokkirigadda (2016), correspond to implicit teaching. In addition, the procedures applied in this approach have allowed learners to infer language rules without any explicit intervention (Ellis, et al., 2009), and the positive results that the studies have reported such as improvement in the production of sounds including consonants, pure vowels, diphthongs and semivowels suggest that this approach can be one of the most practical ones.

Similarly, the explicit instruction used for the analytic-linguistic approach, which offers the possibility of examining and teaching the features of sounds in a structured and systematic way (Archer & Hughes, 2011), has helped learners improve their pronunciation with better outcomes than the intuitive-imitative approach since the former type of instruction fully guides learners on the process of learning (Hammond, 2019). Therefore, the analytic-linguistic approach can also be considered practical to teach pronunciation since it makes use of phonetic symbols and stress patterns to teach pronunciation explicitly (Arimilli, Kanuri, & Kokkirigadda, 2016), which according to the results reported in the studies, has also helped students master their pronunciation.

Regarding the second research question, the three approaches that were analyzed (the intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic and integrative approaches) do offer learners certain advantages such as pronunciation improvement of segmental and suprasegmental



features, motivation to learn, development of comprehensibility, and exposure to conversational input. For example, the studies demonstrate that the three approaches help to master the articulation and perception of segmental and suprasegmental features, which are considered as an essential part of pronunciation (Szyszka, 2017). Likewise, the intuitive-imitative approach can make learners feel motivated to pay attention and learn pronunciation (Jam & Adibpour, 2014) and is the most suitable approach to teach young learners as they are able to replicate pronunciation successfully (Harmer, 2007). In addition, the studies on the analytic-linguistic approach have demonstrated that it is the most useful approach to enhance comprehensibility since explicit instruction benefits students' development of comprehensible speech (Gordon et al., 2013) and is the most beneficial approach to teach pronunciation to older learners as it can help them establish phonetic boundaries (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014). Finally, the integrative approach has allowed students to be exposed to conversational input in order to improve their output (Alhussain, 2009) and has offered benefits for younger learners since it allows them to enthusiastically follow the classes and learn the rhythm of sentences accurately (Da Silva, 2012).

However, there are some disadvantages reported in the studies. For instance, the intuitive approach is not useful to teach dental sounds (Jam & Adibpour, 2014), the analytic approach does not help to reduce foreign accent (Algethami, 2017), and the integrative approach does not always offer techniques that help students achieve the basic competencies of pronunciation (Wardani, 2017).



Additionally, the effectiveness of some of the approaches has also been determined. Even though the intuitive-imitative approach has been considered effective by several authors (Behzadi & Fahimniya, 2014; Hashemian & Fadaei, 2011; Jam & Adibpour, 2014; Roohani, 2013), the analytic-linguistic approach appears to be even more effective since the outcomes reported in the studies show better pronunciation improvements (Roohani, 2013; Saito & Saito, 2016; Couper, 2006), especially for older learners and for EFL learners who do not have significant exposure to English and only practice it in class (Core Languages, 2015). Moreover, several studies have acknowledged the fact that the combination of the intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic approaches could be the most effective way of teaching pronunciation (Behzadi & Fahimniya; Jam & Adibpour, 2014; Roohani, 2013). Nevertheless, determining the effectiveness of the integrative approach was not possible through this analysis since not enough studies that used this approach were found.

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the results reported in the analysis, the following recommendations can be stated. Firstly, it is noticeable that the great majority of studies have focused on the analytic approach with very positive results for adults; therefore, English teachers could implement this approach and its techniques in order to teach pronunciation to older learners. However, a combination of both intuitive and analytic approaches is suggested when teaching pronunciation since this combination could lead to even more positive outcomes (Behzadi & Fahimniya; Jam & Adibpour, 2014; Roohani, 2013).

Secondly, since most of the studies have been conducted in EFL contexts, more research should also be held in ESL contexts since pronunciation research has been a little



bit neglected in such contexts (Shah, Othman & Senom, 2017). Additionally, more studies are needed in Latin America in order to analyze the effectiveness of the methods or techniques teachers use to address pronunciation in their classrooms; gathering this empirical data from a closer and more familiar context will allow teachers who neglect pronunciation to adopt some of these techniques to improve their teaching and help students who face pronunciation issues. Moreover, since the studies selected focused on pre-teens, teens and adults, more research on pronunciation should be conducted with children to analyze how the pronunciation teaching approaches influence their learning. Finally, even though the integrative approach has been applied in some studies, and certain authors classify it as one of the main pronunciation teaching approaches along with the intuitive and analytic approaches, more research is necessary to widely analyze how it works in order to determine its effectiveness.



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Appendix 1

List of Primary Studies for Analysis

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