



# THE IMPACT OF EXPLICIT PRONUNCIATION TRAINING ON THE ACCURACY OF INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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## Abstract

In foreign language environments where exposure to actual input is restricted, pronunciation is still one of the most difficult aspects of learning a second language. Modern language pedagogy is dominated by communicative approaches; however pronunciation is often taught implicitly rather than systematically. This study examines how explicit pronunciation instruction affects intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. The study used a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group approach, drawing on theoretical frameworks that highlight the importance of conscious awareness in language acquisition. Thirty university students in their intermediate years were split into experimental and control groups. For four weeks, the experimental group was taught in an organized manner with an emphasis on intonation patterns, minimal pair discrimination, articulatory explanation, phonetic symbols, and stress placement. The two groups' post-test performance differed significantly, with a considerable impact size, according to statistical analysis. According to the results, phonological accuracy and intelligibility are both increased by specific pronunciation training. The study offers empirical evidence in favor of including targeted pronunciation instruction into EFL classes.

**Keywords:** Explicit pronunciation instruction; pronunciation accuracy; EFL learners; phonological awareness; segmental features; suprasegmental features; intelligibility; second language acquisition.



## **Introduction**

This study investigates how well intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy may be improved through explicit pronunciation teaching. The study is supported by theories of second language acquisition, namely those that address the importance that conscious awareness plays in phonological development. With 30 intermediate students split into experimental and control groups, a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test approach was used. Both segmental and suprasegmental aspects were the focus of four weeks of methodical explicit pronunciation training for the experimental group. When learners got explicit coaching, their pronunciation accuracy significantly improved, according to statistical research. The results emphasize the pedagogical benefits of increasing students' phonological awareness and encourage the inclusion of organized pronunciation instruction in EFL curriculum.

One of the most important aspects of communicative ability in learning a second language is pronunciation. In foreign language training, lexical knowledge and grammatical accuracy are frequently given priority, yet poor pronunciation can seriously impair comprehension. Inaccurate vowel contrasts, improper stress patterns, or inappropriate intonation can cause learners to lose communication even if they have sufficient language skills. Since pronunciation is considered a secondary skill in many EFL contexts, it is often addressed implicitly through speaking and listening exercises without specific instruction. However, research on second language acquisition suggests that exposure may not be sufficient to eliminate persistent phonological errors. Particularly among intermediate learners, fossilized pronunciation patterns are prevalent and require targeted intervention. The case for explicit instruction is theoretically supported by cognitive perspectives on language acquisition. Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis states that conscious attention to linguistic form is necessary for acquisition. Therefore, phonological development may be accelerated by explicit pronunciation instruction that emphasizes articulatory mechanisms and prosodic elements. Though interest in pronunciation pedagogy is growing, little attention has been paid to the value of structured explicit training in university-level EFL contexts. In order to the value of structured explicit training in university-level EFL contexts. In order to ascertain whether explicit pronunciation instruction



significantly improves the pronunciation accuracy of intermediate EFL learners, the current study was conducted.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Pronunciation and Intelligibility**

The focus of modern pronunciation research is on intelligibility rather than achieving a native-like accent. The degree to which a listener can comprehend a speaker's message is known as intelligibility. Studies have shown that comprehensibility is influenced by both segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental (stress, rhythm, intonation) characteristics. Incorrect consonant substitutions or vowel length distinctions are examples of segmental errors. However, suprasegmental mistakes like improper intonation contours or misplaced stress frequently have a bigger effect on the overall comprehensibility of speech. Both levels of phonological representation must therefore be covered in an effective intonation contours or misplaced stress frequently have a bigger effect on the overall comprehensibility of speech. Both levels of phonological representation must therefore be covered in an effective pronunciation lesson.

### **2.2 Explicit versus Implicit**

While implicit instruction relies on exposure and communicative practice without overt rule explanation, explicit instruction entails direct explanation of linguistic rules and a conscious focus on form. Explicit training in pronunciation instruction may involve structured drills, phonetic transcription, articulatory description, and corrective feedback.

Explicit instruction improves metalinguistic awareness and makes it easier for interlanguage systems to be restructured, according to cognitive theories of language learning. Learners are more likely to monitor and modify their speech production when they become aware of particular pronunciation contrasts.

### **2.3 Empirical evidence**

According to empirical research, targeted pronunciation training enhances speech production in quantifiable ways. It has been demonstrated through the synthesis of quasi-experimental studies that learners who receive systematic pronunciation training outperform those who are only exposed to communicative input.



Numerous earlier studies, however, were carried out in intensive programs or ESL environments. The efficacy of explicit pronunciation instruction in structured EFL classroom settings, especially for intermediate learners, requires more study.

### **Methodology**

In a quasi-experimental study conducted by Ghorbani, Neissari, and Kargozari (2016), undergraduate EFL learners received eight weeks of explicit pronunciation instruction focusing on vowel perception. The results revealed that the experimental group achieved a significantly higher gain score ( $M = 34.05$ ,  $SD = 2.29$ ) compared to the control group ( $M = 27.52$ ,  $SD = 3.62$ ). An independent samples t-test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). These findings indicate that explicit pronunciation instruction plays a crucial role in improving learners' phonological accuracy. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, which emphasize the effectiveness of explicit instruction in enhancing pronunciation performance (Saito, 2012; Derwing & Munro, 2015).

### **4. Results and Discussion**

The study's findings demonstrate that giving intermediate EFL learners explicit pronunciation instruction greatly increases their pronunciation accuracy. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test results revealed a significant improvement in learners' phonological performance following the implementation of explicit instruction. The experimental group showed a much higher level of improvement than the control group, which did not receive targeted pronunciation training. This suggests that students who receive systematic and intentional instruction are better able to understand and employ the articulatory qualities of sounds in their speech production. These results are consistent with those of Saito (2012), who discovered that explicit pronunciation instruction considerably increases learners' phonological accuracy. Similarly, Derwing and Munro (2015) emphasize that specific pronunciation training improves intelligibility and comprehensibility. There are a number of reasons why the experimental group showed improvement. First, by highlighting particular aspects of sounds, explicit instruction raises students' phonological awareness. Second, learners are able to recognize and fix their mistakes thanks to



corrective feedback. Lastly, accurate pronunciation is reinforced by repeated practice using structured exercises like phonetic exercises and minimal pairs. It should be mentioned, though, that the control group only slightly improved, indicating that exposure is not enough to develop correct pronunciation. This result lends credence to the idea that, in EFL contexts, pronunciation should be taught explicitly rather than implicitly. Overall, the findings support the idea that explicit pronunciation training is a useful teaching strategy for raising intermediate learners' pronunciation accuracy.

## **5. Conclusion**

The impact of explicit pronunciation training on intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy was examined in this study. The results show that learners' phonological production is greatly enhanced by systematic and structured pronunciation instruction. When compared to participants who followed a typical communicative curriculum, those who received explicit training demonstrated significant improvements in both segmental and suprasegmental accuracy. These results reinforce theoretical perspectives emphasizing the importance of conscious awareness in second language acquisition. The study confirms that pronunciation development benefits from direct instruction, articulatory explanation, and corrective feedback rather than relying solely on implicit exposure. The results imply that pronunciation should not be neglected in EFL courses from a pedagogical standpoint. Rather, it ought to be incorporated as a methodical part of language training. Incorporating phonetic symbols, minimal pair practice, stress marking, and structured feedback into regular classroom practice are some ideas that educators may want to think about. However, it is important to recognize a few limitations. The results' generalizability may be limited by the comparatively small sample size and brief intervention period. Larger participant groups, longer teaching times, and longitudinal analysis to look at the long-term retention of pronunciation improvements could all be used in future studies. In conclusion, explicit pronunciation training is a successful teaching method for improving intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. Incorporating it into EFL classes could greatly enhance students' comprehension and communication skills.



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