
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIAS SOCIALES MAGÍSTER EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

# EXPLICIT PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION AND SECOND LANGUAGE MOTIVATIONAL SELF SYSTEM

**Tesina para optar al grado de Magíster en Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera**

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"A river cuts through a rock not because of its power, but its persistence…" First, I would like to thank my parents for having instilled the values of discipline and dedication into me. Second, I also want to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor Dr. Maurício Véliz Campos, for his guidance, support and valuable teachings throughout these two years. Third, I dedicate this work to the memory of my grandparents who await me in heaven. I am certain that they must feel proud of what I have become so far.

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**Abstract**

L2 pronunciation and motivation play a critical role in L2 learning. Empirical evidence has shown that especially post-pubertal learners could benefit from explicit pronunciation instruction (DeKeyser, 2013; Ortega, 2014; Saito, 2013). Furthermore, correlations between L2 motivation, operationalized as the L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS), and pronunciation learning have been found (Moyer, 2014). The present study aims (1) to examine the extent to which post-pubertal L2 learners benefit from explicit pronunciation instruction and (2) to determine whether explicit pronunciation instruction and pronunciation gains are related to some L2MSS components. 30 EFL high-school learners participated in this study by taking part in a 3-week quasi-experiment, thus taking pronunciation pretests, posttests and completing an L2MSS survey. The results suggest that (1) explicit pronunciation instruction was not a significant predictor of pronunciation gains and (2) high scores in the Ought-to L2-self related to low scores in pronunciation. Future research addressing the effectivity of explicit pronunciation instruction and its relation with the L2MSS is needed.

*Keywords:* explicit pronunciation instruction, pronunciation gains, L2 motivational self-system.

**Resumen**

La pronunciación y la motivación juegan un rol crítico en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Evidencia empírica ha demostrado que especialmente los estudiantes post-púberes se podrían beneficiar de la instrucción explicita de la pronunciación (DeKeyser, 2013; Ortega, 2014; Saito, 2013). Además, correlaciones entre la motivación, definida como la teoría del sistema motivacional del yo (L2MSS), y el aprendizaje de pronunciación han sido encontradas (Moyer, 2014). El presente estudio apunta a (1) examinar el grado en que los estudiantes post-púberes se benefician de la instrucción explicita de la pronunciación y (2) determinar si es que la instrucción explicita de la pronunciación y las ganancias en la pronunciación están relacionadas con algunos de los componentes del L2MSS. 30 estudiantes secundarios participaron en este estudio al tomar parte en un cuasiexperimento, por ende tomando pretests, posttests de pronunciación y completando una encuesta sobre el L2MSS. Los resultados sugieren que (1) la instrucción explicita de la pronunciación no fue un predictor significante de las ganancias en la pronunciación y (2) los puntajes altos en Ought-to L2 self se relacionan con los puntajes bajos en pronunciación. Investigaciones futuras que aborden la efectividad de la instrucción explicita de la pronunciación y su relación con los componentes del sistema motivacional del yo son necesarias.

*Palabras clave:* instrucción explicita de la pronunciación, ganancias en la pronunciación y sistema motivacional del yo (L2MSS).

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction

Many pedagogical practices have undergone changes since the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches; in fact, English lessons are by and large expected to focus on meaning-making and communication (Ellis, 2005; Westwood, 2008). Despite being a hands-on and fairly effective approach, which enables learners to experiment with language more meaningfully, an exclusively meaning-focused approach most often occurs at the expense of accuracy (Lyster, 2007).

A great deal of research has been done into the strategies to direct L2 learners' attention to forms (Lyster & Saito, 2010). However, whilst grammar and vocabulary have been abundantly studied L2 phonological development has often been overlooked. In fact, Thomson and Derwing (2015) stated that L2 pronunciation is different from other skills in L2 learning as novice learners may evidence an excellent morphosyntactic and lexical grasp, yet could still be difficult to understand. Respectively, Saito (2007) indicated that pronunciation teaching may focus on two main areas: suprasegmental (thought groups, prominence, intonation, and syllable structures) and segmental (consonants, vowels, and clustering). It is paramount to note that one must understand the segmental in order to be able to understand the suprasegmental altogether. For instance, if L2 learners fail to (re-)produce suprasegmental parts, listeners could still understand the content of the message as long as the segments in the utterance are not obscured. Accordingly, if L2 learners are not aware of the differences in minimal pairs in English such as sea or she (/s/ and /ʃ/), rock or lock (/r/ and /l/), and felt or veldt (/f/ and /v/)—this will likely result in communication breakdowns. Even though there has been a recent increase in the interest in positioning intelligibility over accuracy, this still plays a fundamental role in L2 teaching and

learning, which can be observed, for instance, in High Variability Phonetic Training (i.e., training whereby the learner is exposed to several speakers' voices in order to increase the speaker's grasp of more target-like phonemes) (Levis, 2016).

Thomson and Derwing (2015) reviewed a considerable amount of studies targeting pronunciation instruction. Among these, 73% of the studies utilized reading-out-loud tasks (pre-post tests) to test the effectiveness of instruction. Interestingly, only 20% accounted for spontaneous communication tasks (e.g., conversation) as it is more difficult to have participants produce the target features under this condition. Therefore, there exists an overarching need of using fluency tasks to ascertain the efficacy and lasting effects of pronunciation instruction. Another deleterious limitation has been the availability of a control group, which is intended to heighten a study's validity. Moreover, the application of delayed-posttests is pivotal to determine whether instruction results in sustained improvement in relation to control groups. In addition, pronunciation research has not addressed the participants' age in full detail. That is, out of 75 studies, 78% reported the efficacy of pronunciation instruction for adult learners, whilst only 12% studied younger individuals. More intriguingly, 56% of the studies involving adults displayed the participants' age (Thomson & Derwing, 2015). Hence, there have been inadequacies in previous studies concerning the age factor. Respectively, the present study analyzes individuals aged between 12 and 17 (adolescents), thus contributing to the existing body of research by reporting results of a specific and underrepresented group of L2 learners.

As far as the age variable is concerned, most studies have targeted adult learners in different contexts, from part-time workers to post-graduate students (e.g., DeKeyser, 2013). Correspondingly, recent research has yielded groundbreaking insights on post-pubertal L2 learners' difficulties to reproduce L2 target pronunciation, which are attributed to age effects in

language learning (DeKeyser, 2013; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Ortega, 2014). In effect, DeKeyser (2013) suggests that post-pubertal learners may benefit more from explicit instruction than under-12-year-olds due to their cognitive maturity; however, cognition is not the only mediating factor. For example, individual differences (e.g., motivation) across learners in L2 pronunciation studies have been given limited attention in the literature (Thomson & Derwing, 2015).

The past decade has seen the rapid development of L2 motivation in the field of SLA (Biedroń & Pawlak, 2016). Several authors (Dörnyei, 2014; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013) have also operationalized the term into instrumental and integrative motivation. The former refers to being motivated to learn the L2 for the usefulness or practicability of linguistic achievement, whilst the latter describes the desire to continue learning about the second language culture (Gilakjani, 2011; Véliz, 2012; Yousofi & Naderifarjad, 2015). One exponent of motivation research is Véliz (2012) who conducted a case study in order to uncover the language learning strategies (LLS) utilized by pre-service English teachers in Chile as mediated by L2 motivation. His study shows that motivation may relate to LLSs because (1) participants evinced an inner drive (integrative motivation) to enhance their pronunciation prior to enrolling in the university programme and (2) one participant acknowledged being in pursuit of a good pronunciation not to be an average teacher (instrumental motivation), as reported by the participant. Another example is Moyer (2007) who attempted to examine learners' attitudes towards L2 accent in a heterogeneous group of students. Namely, several participants had recently arrived in the U.S. at the time of data collection, while others had been residents for many years. In turn, Moyer (2007) argues that the individuals who were aiming at long-standing

or permanent residence were more prone to seek opportunities to utilize and perfect the target language.

The data reported thus far appear to support the assumption that motivation is inherent in pronunciation learning either instrumentally or integratively. Nonetheless, apart from the studies above, there is a lack of research into pronunciation instruction and its effects as mediated by L2 motivation (Moyer, 2007; Huench & Thompson, 2017; Véliz, 2012). In this respect, the Second Language Motivational Self System (L2MSS) has served as a helpful framework to examine the effects that pronunciation instruction may have on L2 learners' motivation and attitudes. This framework consists of three main variables affecting the L2 learners' motivation among others: (1) The ideal L2 self (a person's ideal self-image as a capable L2 user), (2) the ought-to L2 self (the skills or attributes an L2 speaker considers she or he ought to have), and (3) L2 learning experience (situation-specific stimuli found at the immediate learning environment) (Dörnyei, 2015). Amongst these subcomponents the one that has been found to play a substantial role in motivated behavior is the ideal L2 self (Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013). Unlike the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self does not account for direct motivational practices because it is dependent on external factors such as duties and obligations imposed by others (Dörnyei, 2009). More importantly, according to Dörnyei (2019), L2 learning experience could be a powerful predictor of motivated behavior since this component has the power of determining learners' engagement. Furthermore, Kormos and Csizér (2008) reported a certain degree of variance in secondary-school L2 learners' ideal L2 self due to the dynamic nature of adolescents' self-image. Not only were secondary-school L2 learners different from adult learners in terms of ideal L2 self, but also in the way that their learning attitudes were shaped by learning experience and teachers.

### 1.2. Statement of the problem

One of the major problematic aspects in EFL teaching is the relationship between L2 learning and the preexistence of an L1 (Amaro et al, 2018) because the L1 forms or meanings may be either positively or negatively transferred to the L2, thereby resulting in facilitation or interference. For instance, since EFL learners have already learned their L1 phonology implicitly, they deliberately tend to use the L1 phonemes to replace the ones in the L2 (Wei, 2008). Hence, post-pubertal language learners should be enabled to discriminate among and identify deviant L1 features that interfere with communication and meaning in the L2 explicitly rather than implicitly (Ortega, 2014). Accordingly, it is important for EFL teachers to make their learners cognizant of the possible benefits or hindrances they may encounter due to inter-language; that is, the inner mental space where the L1 and L2 coexist (Amaro et al, 2018). Moreover, Chile falls into the category of "expanding circle" countries; that is, English is mostly used internationally rather than intranationally (Tribble, 2012). This, therefore, means that learners do not have enough opportunities to take part in L2 interactions outside the classroom. In turn, L2 learners' pronunciation mistakes are more likely to fossilize (Demirezen, 2017) due to the lack of opportunities for input, negotiation of meaning and modified output (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). This is because explicit pronunciation teaching could work as a potential tool to counterbalance the contextual L2 needs that secondary-school learners have.

Dörnyei (2014) emphasizes the importance of motivation in acquiring an L2 as it provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to uphold the long learning process. Indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent, and without motivation, students' attainment cannot be ensured even when appropriate curricula and good teaching methods are at reach. In other words, motivation plays a significant

role in L2 learning; hence, it is noteworthy to explore the factors existing in L2 learning that affect L2 motivated behavior. As stated in the previous section, the L2MSS is compounded by three main elements (ideal L2 self, ought-to self, and L2 learning experience). Each of these happens to be related to variables such as cultural interest, linguistic self-confidence, language use anxiety, classroom anxiety, parental encouragement (by and large in the case of school learners) or immediate environment (Kormos & Csizér, 2008). Several studies have suggested how L2MSS operates and indicated potential relations between the L2MSS and other associated variables (Huench & Thompson, 2017; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013), but there is still insufficient data to account for the relationship between L2MSS, explicit pronunciation teaching and its pronunciation gains.

### 1.3. Significance of the Study

Practically speaking, the present piece of research set out to bridge the linguistic gaps encountered in an EFL context as Chile. Likewise, it is within the scope of this study to advance the understanding EFL teachers have on explicit pronunciation teaching to complement communicative approaches. Additionally, another purpose of the present study is to expand the current understanding of the L2MSS and how it behaves when it is confronted with specific variables that are believed to be determinant for motivated behavior as it is learning experience. The findings should make a relevant contribution to EFL teaching in Chile and how it is carried out in the classroom.

Theoretically speaking, this research adds to a growing body of literature on L2 pronunciation instruction and L2 motivation. More specifically, it furthers the scope in which pronunciation instruction research has been conducted (it targets an underexplored group of

participants: adolescents). It also widens the scope of investigation of L2 motivation acting as a mediating variable on pronunciation gains and explicit pronunciation instruction.

### 1.4. Aim, Scope and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is (1) to examine the extent to which explicit pronunciation instruction improves L2 learners' productions of segments used in semi-spontaneous oral communication and (2) determine whether there exists a relationship between explicit pronunciation instruction, L2MSS main components, and pronunciation gains.

This study does not intend to account for other aspects of English pronunciation such as fluency, suprasegmental components or features of connected speech; nor does it aim at developing motivational strategies. Rather, this study is intended to tap into secondary-school students' metalinguistic awareness by shifting their attention to pronunciation discrete items and offer feasible solutions to EFL teaching methodologies applied in such context. In addition, this study attempts to indicate the possible relationship (if any) between explicit pronunciation instruction, the L2MSS motivational model, and pronunciation gains. This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent does explicit pronunciation instruction improve high-school Chilean L2 learners' productions of some selected segments used in semi-spontaneous oral communication?

2. What is the possible relationship between L2MSS, explicit pronunciation instruction and pronunciation gains in a selected sample of segments of the English language?

### 1.5. Overview

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The present chapter deals with the introduction to the research area and problematization within the study context. The sample is made up of two groups of students (9th and 10th grades) who study English as a foreign language at an immersion school in Santiago, Chile. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature covered to date and provides a closer perspective on how the theories have evolved up to this point in time. This section also subsumes a considerable amount of theoretical and empirical knowledge about two recurrent disciplines within the realm of SLA: pronunciation teaching and L2 motivation. Chapter 3 details the methodological decisions made in order to determine whether pronunciation instruction improves students' oral accuracy in semi-spontaneous communication and how the L2MSS is affected by this. This section also includes the instruments utilized, their administration and data collection procedures. Chapter 4 presents the results and discussions based on the data analysis. The summaries of the data are displayed in tables; these results are subsequently discussed based on the information gathered from the previously mentioned instruments. Finally, chapter 5 provides an account of the questions the present study could actually answer, the limitations, implications and further suggestions for future research.

# Chapter 2: Literature review

## 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to put the queries the research questions aim to answer into theoretical perspective. Respectively, this chapter is divided into two subsections: the first addresses pronunciation teaching by operationalizing and contextualizing this variable to later account for its crucial role in EFL pedagogy, while the second breaks down the variable L2 motivation in order to offer a historical viewpoint on how L2 motivation research has evolved thus far. Lastly, this section concludes by reviewing the developing body of research conducted into pronunciation teaching in tandem with L2 motivation.

### 2.1.1. English pronunciation teaching

The earliest forms of pronunciation teaching date back to 1850, according to Murphy and Baker (2015); moreover, it is believed that these methodologies primarily placed emphasis on the so-called imitative-intuitive teaching methods (i.e., pupils learned pronunciation inductively). The subsequent wave of pronunciation teaching appeared between the years 1880 and 1900, which, contrary to the imitative-intuitive, favored analytic-linguistic practices and allowed for the creation of the International Phonetic Association (i.e., learners began to learn pronunciation deductively). During the 20th century, these two currents dominated the field of L2 teaching, thus giving rise to the initial characteristics of modern English phonology. It is worth noting that the emergence of the analytic-linguistic approach did not mean for linguists and teachers to cease to use the imitative-intuitive approach; rather, these two teaching methods were intended to complement each other in order to enhance the already existing practice. It was not up until the 1980s that communicative language teaching (CLT) took hold of L2 teaching and, by default, of pronunciation teaching, which henceforth would merge with a holistic teaching method and

would progressively become rather a peripheral component of L2 teaching. Although pronunciation teaching was heavily affected by CLT, this allowed empirical research to take a stand for unresolved research topics beginning in the mid 1990s to date.

One of the fiercest debates in pronunciation teaching is that of nativeness vs intelligibility (Thomson & Derwing, 2015). On the one hand, there are scholars who contend that nativism ought to serve as a yardstick to measure how proficient an L2 learner is with regards to speaking skills and more specifically pronunciation (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011). Despite being a traditionally ingrained view throughout SLA history, this view has been strongly challenged by critical applied linguistics as it has even been deemed discriminatory and even racist (e.g., Smith, 2016). On the other hand, other scholars have espoused the intelligibility standpoint; namely, L2 learners' utterances ought to be understandable enough as to get their message across regardless of the presence of a foreign accent. In other words, the goal of native-like pronunciation is no longer seen as a realistic endeavor; in fact, the premise of ultimate attainment has been remarkably interrogated and in turn considered futile (Wang & Jenkins, 2016).

The present study approaches pronunciation from a pragmatic stand (i.e., it neither adheres the accuracy nor the intelligibility principles) and utilizes an analytic-linguistic approach to tackle issues regarded as essential even by those who embrace the intelligibility approach (e.g., English regular verbs) (Wang & Jenkins, 2016). Accordingly, consonant clusters found in initial position (e.g., sprain - street - Spanish), middle position (e.g., invite - embrace - involve), and final position of English regular verbs in past tense mainly (e.g., clogged - worked - received - laughed) are targeted in this study. This feature has categorically proved to be problematic for L2 learners, whose mother tongue is Spanish (Amaro et al, 2018) as such consonant clusters do not occur in Spanish phonology. In spite of the existence of an ever-growing body of research on

how grammatical and morphological elements could be taught (Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013; Sato & Lyster, 2013; Sato & Loewen, 2018), little has been said regarding the role that phonetics and phonology actually play in producing inflectional morphemes accurately.

### 2.1.2. Pronunciation teaching in EFL contexts

The past decade has seen the rapid development of pronunciation teaching in ESL contexts. However, few writers have been able to draw on systematic research to come up with a principled approach to EFL pronunciation teaching (Gilakjani, 2011; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016a, 2016b; Levis, 2016). As ESL and EFL contexts differ mainly in terms of the access and quantity of input available for L2 learners in their surroundings, this deliberately scales down the opportunities English learners have to engage in conversation with other (equally or more competent) English users, whereby pivotal processes take place, namely, comprehensible input intake, opportunities for output, negotiation for meaning and modified output (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). Not only are EFL learners deprived of the main elements that constitute the Interaction Hypothesis but they, especially post-pubertal learners, are also susceptible to negatively transfer features from their L1 to their developing L2. Some of these features become deviant forms from the target language and eventually become fossilized if not granted the proper negative evidence (Demirezen, 2017). Central to the entire discipline of applied linguistics is the concept of Critical Period Hypothesis or Sensitive Period. That is, L2 learners, who have already moved beyond puberty (+12-year-olds), have become unable to learn an L2 without having to deliberate about its structure and use alternative mechanisms (e.g., problem-solving capacities) to succeed at learning an L2 (DeKeyser, 2013). In fact, although L2 learners may still develop a fairly intelligible inventory of lexical and grammatical items, their oral

productions could still be unintelligible, unless the learner is supplied with explicit pronunciation instruction (Saito, 2007, 2012, 2013).

All in all, pronunciation instruction can and ought to play an important role in an EFL context. What it is known about pronunciation teaching in EFL contexts is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate how the overt teaching of pronunciation discrete items leads to pronunciation gains either at segmental or suprasegmental levels (Lee, Jang & Plonsky, 2015). Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, what remains *terra incognita* is how to consistently and gradually teach pronunciation under a step-by-step, well-established methodology, the possible gains that this methodology can render, and its possible relationship with motivational profiling following the L2MSS model. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) define pronunciation as "the way of producing the sounds that are used to make meaning when speakers speak" (p. 1), which is divided, by and large, into segments (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm and intonation). In the past 20 years, a debate has been taking place between the advocates of teaching segmental and suprasegmental features concerning the merits of each. In this respect, Saito (2012) sensibly warns that teachers should base their instructional choices of segmental or suprasegmental features on their learners' proficiency level, personal goals and L1 background. Practically speaking, just like in grammar teaching, focus-on-formS and focus-on-form instruction have a place in pronunciation teaching. In turn, interventions conducted under a focus-on form scope coupled with communicative language teaching strategies have proved to have a positive impact on pronunciation gains for both segments and suprasegmental features (Saito, 2012). There are also sets of strategies that teachers can employ to teach pronunciation; for example, (a) meaningful materials, (b) songs, games and tongue twisters and (c) evaluate learners' improvement (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Correspondingly, assessment and evaluation

turn out to be controversial as intelligibility is often perceived as dependent on the speaker as well as on the listener.

### 2.1.3. Pronunciation assessment and evaluation

Pronunciation assessment is at the heart of our understanding of the English language assessment per se. Assessment refers to the act of collecting information about learners' language development in order to draw conclusions regarding their language ability (Isaacs, 2018). Machines and humans have served as raters of L2 learners' pronunciation throughout history, and albeit spurious in several cases, these have been in charge of making judgements about L2 learners' articulatory output. Interestingly, such judgements have aroused major controversies when being reported against individuals in order to pinpoint their social class, nationality or ethnicity. These biases are frequently based on stereotyped views of language patterns representative of a particular language variety (Isaacs, 2018). For instance, the Language Analysis for the Determination of the regional or social Origin (LADO) of asylum seekers is a gate-keeping mechanism that perpetuates the aforementioned practice as the government officials who carry out the analysis lack the necessary linguistic knowledge and preparation to rate the examinees' speech (McNamara, 2012). In fact, listeners can be quite perceptive of accented speech: differentiating native from non-native speakers in short speech samples (30 seconds) is possible even for listeners without linguistic training; nevertheless, they are far from being accurate in determining exact origin (Isaacs, 2018). In other words, pronunciation assessment should be done with utmost caution and preparation.

As previously pointed out, pronunciation assessment has exerted great influence on English assessment, especially in standardized testing (e.g., Cambridge examinations), yet it reached its heyday during the early-mid 20th century; then, it gradually faded as CLT took over

the field from 1980 onwards. In recent years, pronunciation assessment has been increasingly referenced in the SLA literature, having intelligibility as its main benchmark as opposed to what the Audio-Lingual method pursued, that is, the eradication of L1 traces (Isaacs, 2018). In order to assess intelligibility numerous rating scales have been devised over time, which have not always favored the principle of intelligibility in spite of the empirical evidence available to date. For example, the CEFR Phonological control scale associates intelligibility with more native-like accent or foreign accent-free speech at the high criterion of the scale (Isaacs, 2018). This heightens the need for devising assessment instruments that validly assess pronunciation. Similarly, as noted earlier, the raters' experience and understanding of the constructs under scrutiny is another problematic aspect of assessing an L2 learner's utterances. Namely, when rating a scale, inexperienced raters may have a misleading grasp of what "comprehensible", "intelligible" or even "B1 level" mean (Isaacs, 2018). Therefore, it is fundamental to clarify the major constructs before the actual utilization of the scale within an assessment situation. Relevant advancement has been made in this respect by Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012), who designed a holistic, analytical scale intended for formative purposes. The scale ascribes to the concept of comprehensibility (i.e., ease of understanding by the rater), which is central to the intelligibility principle. More specifically, the scale is also intended for international university L2 learners to perform monologic speaking tasks. The scale is supplemented with error samples that interfere with communication and thus understanding such as (1) misplaced words stress, (2) sound substitutions and (3) not stressing important words in a sentence. A revolutionary distinction is made in relation to ultimate attainment as it is overtly stated for the rater's information that "sounding native-like is not expected" (Isaacs, 2018 p. 31). In this study, pronunciation assessment operates under the intelligibility principle mainly; that is,

pronunciation assessment is intended to (1) assist the learners in articulating consonant clusters that are essential for effective communication and (2) confirm the effectiveness of classroom intervention. Lastly, as far as pronunciation learning is concerned, it is believed that the more motivated L2 learners are the more they could benefit from instruction (Moyer, 2014). This is because L2 motivation is deemed as a fundamental variable in this study.

## 2.2. L2 Motivation

Second language motivation is an increasingly important area in applied linguistics and has been abundantly addressed by a growing body of research across different contexts in the recent time (Dörnyei, 2019; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Moyer, 2014; Véliz, 2012; Yousofi & Naderifarjad, 2015). This is because, as Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) point out, motivation "provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long, often tedious learning process... ", and subsequently emphasize that "all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent" (p. 72). The commencement of motivation research dates back to the 1960s when Gardner postulated his socio educational model, which broadly consists of integrative (interpersonal, affective dimension) and instrumental motivation (practical, utilitarian dimension) (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Despite its wider and more complex psychological notion, Gardner' socio educational model to L2 motivation was mainly operationalized as integrative and instrumental motivation by most applied linguists. This set the threshold for other researchers to introduce the social context model, which accounted for individuals' motivation in multi-ethnic settings pursuing learning and use of another community's L1. This process was mediated by the constructs of self-confidence and self-efficacy, which later in history would be further investigated (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). In addition, it is noteworthy that the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was devised

in 1985 so as to measure motivation quantitatively. This marked the study field as AMTB was largely used during the 1980s and 1990s (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Another key aspect of L2 motivation postulated by Gardner is integrativeness, which basically translates into the acculturation of one L2 learner into the target language community (Doucerain, 2019). Nevertheless, a primary concern of the concept was that it lacks applicability and accountability in today's dynamic, fast-moving globalized world. After all, if L2 learners happen to feel identified with the target language community, they should integrate to the L2 community rather than assimilate its culture ubiquitously (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Furthermore, this becomes problematic for EFL learners, who do not often count on the presence of an L2 community in their immediate environment; consequently, it seems unlikely for them to actually feel part of an unfamiliar group. This is also congruent with the notion of native speakers being role models (e.g., native English teachers) and, in turn, figures of power for EFL communities (Phillipson, 2012). As questions have been raised about the safety and applicability of the prolonged use of the term integrativeness, it was then reconceptualized and retheorized as "international posture" (i.e., interest, willingness and readiness to be engaged in international affairs and communicate with foreigners in the target language) (Lee, 2018). After this new consensus, L2 motivation had another shift from a macro (i.e., whole communities) to a micro perspective concerning the L2 learner. This change in scope brought about two novel theoretical paradigms: self-determination and self-attribution theories (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The former posits that L2 learners seek three psychological needs: autonomy (feeling of control), relatedness (feeling of belonging), and competence (feeling of capability). This theory also contributed to the creation of another scientific assessment instrument, the Language Learning Orientations scale (Tanaka, 2013). In a similar vein, attribution theory hypothesizes that potential L2 learners

recognize the subjective factors that drove them through (previous) success and failure, and as a consequence, this is what shapes their motivational dispositions (Kalman & Gutierrez, 2015). Accordingly, L2 motivation researchers came to the realization that motivation itself is a changing behavior that does not follow a linear nature; rather, it is characterized by its unsteadiness (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). All in all, it is the concept of "self" that paved the path for the flourishing L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS).

### 2.2.1. L2 Motivational Self-System

A good deal of research has been published on the L2MSS in the last decade (Barnett et al, 2017; Dörnyei, 2019; Huensch & Thompson, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2014; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013; Mendoza & Phung, 2019; Papi, 2010). In 2005, Dörnyei developed a language learning motivation theory called Second Language Motivational Self System (L2MSS) by merging elements from Gardner's socio-psychological model (explained above) and Higgins' self-discrepancy theory, which deals with the feelings associated with the differences between self-guides (idealized self-images) and current self (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Self-discrepancy theory is divided into three domains of the self: (a) the actual self (attributes that someone actually has), (b) the ideal self (attributes that the person would like to have), and (c) the ought self (attributes that a person ought to have) (Barnett et al., 2017). Accordingly, Dörnyei readapted these components with the purpose of catering for the L2MSS, which consists of three main variables affecting the L2 learners' motivation: (1) the ideal L2 self (a person's ideal self-image as a capable L2 user); (2) the ought-to L2 self (the skills or attributes an L2 speaker considers she or he ought to have); and (3) the L2 learning experience (situation-specific stimuli found at the immediate learning environment) (Dörnyei, 2019). The L2MSS components have been

extensively measured and analyzed under correlational studies and structural equations as shown in Kim and Kim (2014), Papi (2010), and Dörnyei (2019).

In order to ascertain the relationship between perceptual learning styles, English learning motivation, and achievement, Kim and Kim (2014) investigated 2,682 Korean EFL students' visual, auditory, kinesthetic styles, imagination, ideal L2 self, motivated behavior, and English proficiency. Regarding the ideal L2-self, the correlational analysis revealed that elementary school students' ideal L2 self is conducive to better English proficiency regardless of the intervention of motivated behavior since the ideal L2-self could operate independently in the case of elementary school learners. However, motivated behavior was the most relevant factor tapping into English proficiency for high school students. This is because motivated L2 learning behavior manifests itself, for instance, while learners make active use of strategies in an attempt to learn the target language.

As far as the ought-to L2 self is concerned, Papi (2010) sheds light on its role by testing a theoretical model that subsumes the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience along with English anxiety and intended effort to learn English. The survey was filled out by 1,011 Iranian high school students and was specifically designed to be used in the context of Iran. The results suggest that while the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience alleviated students' English anxiety, the ought-to L2 aggravated it. This finding is substantiated on the basis of learners' fear of negative evaluation and apprehension.

Recently, Dörnyei (2019) suggested that L2 learning experience is the most powerful predictor of motivated behavior as this component could help either increase or decrease student's engagement, which is operationalized as "active participation and involvement in certain behaviors" (Dörnyei, 2019, p, 24). This is particularly relevant to L2 learning as the L2

skills automatization entails a sustained period of practice that implies the learner's genuine participation. Amongst the mediating factors operating between L2 experience and motivated behavior, the following have been found to override its fluctuation: school context, syllabus and teaching materials, learning tasks, one's peers and teacher. This finding is critical to the present study as it includes a classroom intervention, which can have an impact (either positive or negative) over the learners' L2 motivation.

### 2.2.2 L2 Motivation and pronunciation learning

Investigating the premise of ultimate attainment is a continuing concern within L2 pronunciation teaching (Abrahamsson, 2012; Moyer, 2014, 2017, 2018; Muñoz & Singleton, 2011), although this has only proved feasible in very particular cases. It is fundamental to point out that this study does not subscribe to the ultimate attainment viewpoint; rather, it aims to explore its rare occurrence due to L2 motivation-related variables, thus bearing in mind its implications for the exceptional L2 learners that have attained such a standard. Moyer (2014) conducted a meta-analysis that delves into possible explanations for 'exceptional' results in L2 phonology in order to determine whether such learners' abilities are due to a 'knack' for the L2 (learning process), a metacognitive learning method, a specific social psychological direction, or previous learning experience. Interestingly, the study reports that high-achieving L2 learners often believe that they are able to make desired improvements through consistent effort and practice. This learners' belief is also understood as "self-efficacy", a salient aspect in L2 motivation theories (Moyer, 2014). Similarly, the dated, yet existing concept of "integrativeness" may still play a significant role in ultimate attainment. That is, learners have a desire of affiliation with the target language culture, although it is not clear whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation is more influential in this process (Yousofi & Naderifarjad, 2015). More importantly,

the L2MSS component "ideal L2 self" is thought to be an effective motivator as long as the learner has a desired future L2 self-image and handles procedural strategies that provide direction to move forward. Respectively, SLA researchers are advised to inquire how accomplished L2 learners use motivation, establish emotional connections, keep positive attitudes, develop goal setting, engage in social interaction, self-evaluate and draw reflections (Moyer, 2014). Another component of the L2MSS that is believed to influence pronunciation learning greatly is learning experience. Indeed, immersion L2 learning turns out beneficial for late L2 learners, especially when they have been previously taught (explicitly) to distinguish deviant phonemic features (Lord, 2010). Therefore, the immersion experience and explicit pronunciation teaching work hand in hand as learners become better L2 users. Other studies on pronunciation (Saito, 2012) have also confirmed the gains and positive perceptions learners have on communicative English lessons accompanied by form-focused pronunciation instruction.

To sum up, an exhaustive set of attributes, desires, strategies, experiences and goals is demanded for a learner to achieve the so-called "ultimate attainment". As L2 learners coexist in arguably heterogeneous classes in terms of personalities, motivation and proficiency levels, the premise of "exceptional" learners remains as such (only exceptions) since solely a small portion of L2 learning characteristics coincide with the ones of highly-motivated L2 learners, who are willing to spend a considerable deal of time and effort in achieving "native competence" in pronunciation. Nevertheless, it is still pertinent to observe how motivation can fuel some L2 learners' cognition and metalinguistic awareness to the extent that they become avid L2 users and in turn cast doubt on empirically validated research. Above all, this suggests that causal relations exist between motivation and pronunciation learning.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological decisions made by the author in order to answer the research questions posed earlier in the study. The first section addresses the methodology used and provides a brief overview of its theoretical underpinnings. The second section deals with the methods (instruments) utilized in this study to collect the data. Subsequently, the procedure is accounted for by describing (1) how and when the instruments were applied, (2) the treatment, and (3) how the treatment was applied. The third section displays the sample's description and sampling procedure. The fourth section addresses the statistical procedures followed to analyze the data. Finally, the fifth section explains how ethical issues were approached and dealt with.

## 3.2 Methodology

There are three traditional research methodologies, namely quantitative, which adheres to the post-positivist school of thought (i.e., it deals with laws, theories and hypotheses that govern the world); qualitative, which belongs to the constructivist school of thought (i.e., it deals with views, ideas or perceptions rather than fixed theories); and mixed methods, which is fairly a combination of both quantitative and qualitative (Cresswell, 2014). Quantitative research in particular is ruled by a deterministic philosophy which holds that certain outcomes are obtained as a result of specific causes or reasons. In order to illustrate such a case, quantitative researchers use variables that can be measured with instruments that yield scores or numerical values (Cresswell, 2014). The present study uses a quantitative methodology as it attempts to measure the effects of (a) one independent variable (i.e., explicit pronunciation instruction as part of the treatment) on (b) a dependent variable (i.e., the learners' oral accuracy) as stated in the first

research question. Another variable being under scrutiny in this study is (c) the learners' L2MSS, which falls into the category of mediating variables as the L2MSS may "affect the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 110). In other words, this study attempts to establish relationships among the L2MSS (i.e., ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and Learning Experience), pronunciation explicit instruction and pronunciation gains as stated in the second research question. In addition, this study has the characteristics of a quasi-experimental design as participants were chosen in a nonrandomized manner, and extraneous factors are likely to exert influence over the results the participants get in the pronunciation test. Contrary to the true experimental design, this study was conducted in an online educational setting rather than in a laboratory (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013).

### 3.3 Methods

Two instruments were utilized for data collection in this study: pre-post tests (see Appendices 1 and 2) and an L2MSS survey (see Appendix 3). The pre and post tests were devised by the researcher in order to assess the learners' production of consonant clusters accordingly. In order to ensure the instrument's validity, a test specifications table was followed (see Appendix 4) following Hughes (2003). Therefore, a pretest was administered to determine the learners' current grasp and skill at pronouncing consonant clusters prior to the research intervention, whilst the posttest purpose was to determine whether the intervention was effective or not. The posttest can be deemed as an achievement test since its purpose was to establish whether the learners had acquired the appropriate knowledge and skills to pronounce consonant clusters accurately after having being exposed to control and experimental conditions (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). More specifically, the content the tests were intended to assess is consonant clusters in initial, middle and final position, thus placing important emphasis on -ed

endings. The tests were designed to be completed in the course of no more than 5 minutes and included three sections: (1) isolated words, (2) phrases and (3) sentences. The vocabulary items included in the test are part of the contents of the syllabus for this grade, which in this case are different countries revolutions such as the Mexican revolution and the American revolution. This content was chosen mainly due to the linguistic forms this type of text offers (e.g., verbs in past and other clusters). In terms of medium and channel, the tests were intended to be taken orally via Google Meet given the pandemic the world was undergoing. Each section of the tests is made up of 10 points, thereby totaling 30 points. It is fundamental to highlight that to score one point, regardless of the section, each consonant cluster presented at the word, phrase or sentence level was required to be uttered correctly.

As indicated previously, a survey about the L2MSS was also administered, which was adapted from the one in Moskovsky et al (2016). The survey in its original form consisted of 48 close-ended questions about the ideal L2-self (10), ought-to L2-self (15), learning experience (15) and intended learning efforts (8) and it had a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Hence, the survey was tailored to meet the present study's objective; namely, it now consists of 30 close-ended statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 where 1 means strongly disagree and 4 means strongly agree. The adaptation of the Likert scale was made in order to avoid ambiguity in the learners' answers. Moreover, solely three components of the L2MSS were targeted in the survey: the ideal L2-self, statements 1, 4, 7, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30; the ought-to L2-self, statements 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 28; and finally learning experience, statements 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 29. Lastly, it is noteworthy to point out that the survey was translated into Spanish in order to assure the learners' full understanding of the items in question.

### 3.3.1. The procedure

The pretest was administered at the beginning of the intervention, while the post test was administered at the end of the intervention for the control and experimental groups. Both tests were administered and video-recorded online via Google Meet and every learner answered each test individually in isolation from the rest of the class. The learners' utterances were later transcribed by the researcher using the International Phonetic Alphabet with the purpose of marking their tests accurately and providing a graphic illustration of their results. The resulting transcriptions and overall assessment were double checked by the supervisor, which added to the inter-rater reliability level. It was found that only minor differences in less than a handful cases posed a difference of opinion, accounting for less than 2% of the total number of consonant clusters activities. The intervention consisted of five lessons, which were divided into the following materials and tasks for the experimental group: lesson 1, PowerPoint Presentation about consonant clusters including terminology as the syllable structure (onset, nucleus and coda) and a consonant clusters quiz (progress test/formative assessment) (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010); and lesson 2 to lesson 5, information-gap activities. Likewise, these lessons were also given through Google Meet and each lesson lasted 40 minutes. Dissimilarly, the control group was taught with the same materials except for the PowerPoint presentation and the focus-on-form items included in the quiz and information-gap tasks employed by the experimental group. More specifically, learners in the control group were deprived of explicit pronunciation instruction and only engaged in the tasks communicatively; that is, the items were intended for information exchange and meaning making above all. All lessons were given by an English teacher who has worked with both groups for at least 5 years. The entirety of the intervention spanned three weeks as the learners had two lessons a week. Upon the completion of

the posttest, the learners in the experimental group were requested to complete the L2MSS survey.

### 3.4. Sample and sampling procedure

In the present study the participants were 30 English-as-a-Foreign-Language learners from a high-school in Santiago. Amongst the learners, 33.3% belonged to 7th grade, 23.3% belonged to 8th grade, and 44.6% belonged to 10th grade. Participants from 7th and 8th grade served as a control group and the ones from 10th grade served as the experimental group. Furthermore, the learners in the experimental group were expected to conclude 10th grade having a B1 level of English according to the instructional material (coursebook) employed during the year. From the sample, 60% learners were male and 40% were female, and the mean age of the participants was 14.5. The participants in this study were chosen first and foremost due to their age as they have already gone over the Critical Period.

In the case of this study, a non-probabilistic sampling procedure was used as it enables researchers to select their participants based on their readiness, convenience and availability (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, eligibility criteria required individuals to be post-pubertal L2 learners who were adolescents in order to extend the scope of research on pronunciation teaching. Namely, previous studies approaching pronunciation teaching have targeted mostly university students or adult workers (Thomson & Derwing, 2015).

### 3.5. Data analysis

The numeric data collected through the instruments were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

There are four types of scales: nominal scales (i.e., they indicate categories such as 1=males or 2=females), ordinal scales (i.e., they classify and place the data in a specific order

such as 1=strongly disagree or 4=strongly agree), interval scales (i.e., they indicate a metric, regular and equal interval between data points, however there is not true 0 in interval scales) and ratio scales (i.e., this one allows the researcher to determine proportions such as "two times the amount of" and there is a true 0) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). In the case of this study, ordinal scales were used; namely, Likert scales were included in the L2MSS survey. It is essential to account for and understand the types of scales being used as the type of statistical test is dependent on the type of scale.

The first and second research questions implied the use of the two types of statistics in quantitative research: descriptive and inferential. On the one hand, descriptive statistics' name is self-explanatory as their function is to describe and present data. In this study the data coming from the pre and post tests are presented under the following categories considered in descriptive statistics: (1) the mean (the average score) and (2) the standard deviation (the measure of dispersion of a dataset from its mean). On the other hand, inferential statistics have the potential of making inferences and predictions based on the data collected. For example, when a research question asks whether there is a relationship between two variables (as in the present study), inferential statistics are used in order to establish correlations. Nonetheless, one must be cautious in interpreting correlations as they must not be understood as causal explanations; rather, they objectively show relations between variables (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Indeed, the first and second research questions of this study entailed a correlational analysis in order to pinpoint the relationship of the independent variable and mediating variables over the dependent variable. Accordingly, analysis of variance (ANOVA) (for RQ1) and linear regressions (for RQ2) were conducted to observe the degree of influence amongst the variables. More specifically, ANOVA enables the researcher to identify whether statistical significance was/was

not reached between one independent and one dependent variable, whilst linear regressions allow the researcher to establish the extent to which two or more independent variables can predict the relationship with a dependent variable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013).

### 3.6. Ethical considerations

The main ethical issue this study faced was that of the nature of participants; namely, they are underage individuals. In order to comply with ethical considerations, a consent letter was sent to the participants' parents, whereby they were informed about the study's characteristics, confidentiality and the participants' rights. Moreover, the letter ascribes to the four elements that constitute informed consent: competence (mature individuals are actually making a decision), voluntarism (participation is free from imposition), full information (the times and nature of the research were fully explained) and comprehension (the readers fully comprehend what is being done) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). After the tutors read and agreed to have their children participate in the study, they signed the letter and sent it back to the researcher's email. The letter was adapted from Mackey and Gass (2015) and translated into Spanish for the participants' parents to fully understand its content. In addition, it is important to mention that the participants' names were replaced by the pseudonym "student 1, 2, 3" and so on in order to comply with confidentiality.

# Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

## 4.1. Introduction

As stated earlier, the purposes of this study were twofold: (1) to examine the extent to which explicit pronunciation instruction improves L2 learners' productions of segments used in semi-spontaneous oral communication; and (2) to determine whether there is a relationship between explicit pronunciation instruction, L2MSS main components, and pronunciation gains. The present chapter presents the results and subsequent discussion based on the data obtained through the pre and posttests, which had a total score of 60 points; and the L2MSS survey, which had a Likert-scale of 4 points that ranged from 1= completely disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, 4= completely agree. All descriptive statistics used for ANOVA by condition are shown in Table 1, while linear regression models are presented in Table 2.

As per the L2MSS survey, the dimension Ideal L2 self showed a high reliability ($\alpha = .91$). However, Ought-to L2 self ($\alpha = .69$) and Learning experience ($\alpha = .63$) exhibited values below 0.7, which is the minimum value suggested by the literature (Bernardi, 1994). An inspection of the items showed that the elimination of the items Q14, Q25, and Q29 would improve the reliability of both scales ($\alpha_s = .77$ and .71, respectively). For this reason, the average scores were computed for all these three dimensions excluding the above-mentioned items.

Given that this study follows a quasi-experimental design, which means that participants were not randomly assigned to the experimental and control conditions, both groups were compared at the baseline. This procedure helped the researcher identify if both groups were equivalent in pronunciation before receiving different English instruction. To conduct these comparisons, the scores were submitted to a series of analyses of variance using condition (control vs. experimental) as the independent variable (Hays, 1994).

To answer the first research question, repeated measures of analysis of variance were used (Huck & McLean, 1975). In these models, the condition (control vs. experimental) was included as the independent variable and the pronunciation scores both in the pretest and posttest as a within variable. By doing so, it was possible to determine whether there were differences between (a) the pretest and posttest, (b) the conditions, and (c) whether the differences between the pretest and posttest were in turn different by condition.

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics*

| | Control condition | | Experimental condition | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| Isolated words (pretest) | 0.52 | 0.38 | 0.42 | 0.43 |
| Phrases (pretest) | 0.69 | 0.21 | 0.72 | 0.17 |
| Sentences (pretest) | 0.83 | 0.12 | 0.73 | 0.18 |
| Total (pretest) | 0.73 | 0.17 | 0.67 | 0.21 |
| Isolated words (posttest) | 0.68 | 0.28 | 0.61 | 0.32 |
| Phrases (posttest) | 0.80 | 0.17 | 0.80 | 0.16 |
| Sentences (posttest) | 0.76 | 0.14 | 0.73 | 0.15 |
| Total (posttest) | 0.76 | 0.15 | 0.73 | 0.16 |
| Ideal L2 self | 3.64 | 0.36 | 3.20 | 0.85 |
| Ought-to L2 self | 2.91 | 0.64 | 2.79 | 0.65 |
| Learning experience | 3.57 | 0.33 | 3.16 | 0.52 |

Finally, to answer the second research question, linear regression analyses were used (Aiken & West, 1991). Given the low sample size, the difference between the pretest and posttest was computed for all four pronunciation scores (i.e., isolated words, phrases, sentences, and total). These scores were treated as dependent variables in different models, which also included condition, Ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self, and Learning experience as moderating variables. In addition, to explore if there were differences in the associations between the L2MSS variables

and the difference scores in pronunciation, the interaction terms between L2MSS variables and condition were also included. All the analyses were conducted using the statistical software R (R Core Team, 2013).

### 4.2. Research question 1

To analyze if there were differences between conditions at the baseline, the scores in the pretest were compared. There were no significant differences in Isolated words, $F(1, 28) = .54$, $p = .470$, $\eta^2 = .02$, Phrases, $F(1, 28) = .09$, $p = .770$, $\eta^2 = .00$, Sentences, $F(1, 28) = 3.41$, $p = .075$, $\eta^2 = .11$, or the Total score, $F(1, 28) = .79$, $p = .380$, $\eta^2 = .03$. In other words, both groups showed similar scores in all pronunciation variables before receiving formal instruction.

To answer research question 1, a series of repeated measures analyses of variance were conducted. The model for Isolated words showed that condition was not a significant predictor, $F(1,55) = 1.62$, $p = .210$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and there were no differences by time (i.e., pretest vs. posttest), $F(1, 55) = 3.69$, $p = .060$, $\eta^2 = .06$. The interaction term between condition and time did not reach conventional levels of significance either, $F(1, 55) = .05$, $p = .830$, $\eta^2 = .00$. The model for Phrases showed that condition was not a significant predictor, $F(1,55) = 3.46$, $p = .068$, $\eta^2 = .05$, but there were significant differences by time (i.e., pretest vs. posttest), $F(1, 55) = 4.83$, $p = .032$, $\eta^2 = .08$. This means that the average score in this pronunciation dimension increased from the pretest (M = .70, SD = .19) to the posttest (M = .80, SD = .17), $t(29) = 4.00$, $p < .001$. The interaction term between condition and time did not reach conventional levels of significance, $F(1, 55) = .05$, $p = .825$, $\eta^2 = .00$. These results suggest that there were differences in this pronunciation score between the pretest and posttest, but these differences were similar when comparing the experimental and control conditions. The model for Sentences showed that condition was not a significant predictor, $F(1,55) = .13$, $p = .720$, $\eta^2 = .00$, and there were no

differences by time (i.e., pretest vs. posttest), $F(1, 55) = .99$, $p = .320$, $\eta^2 = .02$. The interaction term between condition and time did not reach conventional levels of significance either, $F(1, 55) = .86$, $p = .360$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Finally, the model for the Total score showed that condition was not a significant predictor, $F(1,55) = 1.49$, $p = .230$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and there were no differences by time (i.e., pretest vs. posttest), $F(1, 55) = .94$, $p = .340$, $\eta^2 = .02$. The interaction term between condition and time did not reach conventional levels of significance either, $F(1, 55) = .16$, $p = .690$, $\eta^2 = .00$. These results suggest that there were no differences in most pronunciation scores (except for phrases) between the pretest and posttest, and between conditions. In addition, it was found that the differences between the pretest and posttest did not vary when comparing the control and experimental conditions.

### 4.2.1. Effects of the intervention: Discussion

The first research question in this study aimed to determine the extent to which post-pubertal EFL students' pronunciation can be improved through explicit pronunciation instruction. The ANOVA (one way) showed that the results previously presented were not statistically significant, thereby leaving the RQ1 open to a negative answer. The results of this study indicate that (1) the intervention (i.e., explicit instruction) did not have significant effects on the experimental group (pretest: M=67; posttest: M=73) and (2) the control group outperformed the experimental group in both tests (pretest: M=73; posttest: M=76), although neither score achieved standard levels of significance. Contrary to expectations, the intervention did not constitute a significant predictor between conditions, and the results differ from previous studies that have documented the efficacy of pronunciation instruction with statistically significant results and, with unlike this study's, robust samples (48 or 66 participants) (Thomson & Derwing, 2015). Indeed, even though the experimental group improved their productions of

consonant clusters after the completion of the intervention, this improvement is minor and is hardly attributable to the intervention. Notwithstanding the similarities at the baseline tests, the control group slightly outperformed the experimental group in the pre and posttests, which lessens the likelihood of the intervention being accountable for the limited positive results in the experimental group. The reason for this is not clear, but it may relate to the type of instruction the participants in the control group have been exposed to throughout their school years. On the one hand, the control group participants belong to an immersion programme, which goes from kindergarten to 6th grade and has had them taught in an inductive EFL approach for 7-8 years. In other words, they have learned English rules and patterns by osmosis, thereby making them able to produce consonant clusters somewhat subconsciously and, in some cases, with a native-like pronunciation (Ortega, 2014). On the other hand, the experimental group participants never partook in the immersion programme as they joined the school later than 6th grade) and therefore lacked competence due to the quantity of exposure and practice they have had due to their late L2 learning start (Ortega, 2014).

These results must be interpreted with caution as they do not indicate that explicit pronunciation instruction is ineffective; conversely, it is possible to hypothesize that (1) these conditions could be less likely to occur in homogenous samples, where all (or at least most) students have learned an L2 under the same instructional approaches over a sustained period of time, (2) other results may be yielded when working with larger samples (+66 participants) in order to obtain smaller effect sizes, which could translate into a significant effect and (3) different results may be obtained by analyzing parametric or non-parametric data; therefore, other versions of ANOVA (Mann Whitney) should be employed accordingly.

### 4.3. Research question 2

The research question 2 was analyzed through linear regression models, which are presented in Table 2. First, the model with Isolated words as the dependent variable was nonsignificant, $F(7, 22) = 1.45$, $p = .236$, $R^2 = .32$. Second, the model with Phrases as the dependent variable was nonsignificant, $F(7, 22) = 1.56$, $p = .198$, $R^2 = .33$. In this case, however, one of the predictor variables was significantly associated with the dependent variable. Specifically, Ought-to L2 self negatively predicted differences between the posttest and pretest in this pronunciation score. In other words, high scores in Ought-to L2 self were related to lower differences in Phrases between the posttest and pretest. Third, the model with Sentences as the dependent variable was nonsignificant, $F(7, 22) = 1.38$, $p = .262$, $R^2 = .31$. Finally, the model with the Total score as the dependent variable was nonsignificant, $F(7, 22) = 1.87$, $p = .124$, $R^2 = .37$. This means that almost none (except for the Ought-to self) of the variables used as predictors was significantly associated with the difference between the posttest and pretest in all pronunciation scores.

Table 2

*Linear regression models*

| | Isolated words | | | | Phrases | | | | Sentences | | | | Total | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | se | *t* | *p* | b | se | *t* | *p* | b | se | *t* | *p* | b | se | *t* | *p* |
| Intercept | 0.24 | 0.08 | 2.99 | .007 | 0.12 | 0.04 | 3.28 | .003 | -0.05 | 0.03 | -1.54 | .140 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 2.08 | .04 |
| Condition | -0.08 | 0.12 | -0.70 | .491 | -0.06 | 0.05 | -1.13 | .270 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.73 | .470 | -0.02 | 0.04 | -0.43 | .66 |
| Ideal L2 self | -0.16 | 0.20 | -0.79 | .441 | -0.11 | 0.09 | -1.20 | .243 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.22 | .830 | -0.05 | 0.07 | -0.82 | .42 |
| Ought-to L2 self | -0.06 | 0.11 | -0.53 | .621 | -0.10 | 0.05 | -2.08 | .050 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.43 | .670 | -0.04 | 0.04 | -0.96 | .34 |
| Learning experience | -0.31 | 0.22 | -1.46 | .157 | 0.07 | 0.10 | 0.74 | .465 | -0.13 | 0.09 | -1.47 | .160 | -0.09 | 0.07 | -1.29 | .21 |
| Condition by Ideal L2 self | -0.11 | 0.24 | -0.46 | .649 | 0.06 | 0.11 | 0.59 | .562 | -0.01 | 0.10 | -0.12 | .910 | 0.00 | 0.08 | -0.03 | .97 |
| Condition by Ought-to L2 self | 0.25 | 0.17 | 1.45 | .162 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 1.50 | .149 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.54 | .590 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 1.74 | .09 |
| Condition by Learning experience | 0.41 | 0.30 | 1.38 | .181 | -0.15 | 0.14 | -1.07 | .298 | 0.03 | 0.12 | 0.22 | .830 | 0.03 | 0.10 | 0.34 | .73 |

### 4.3.1. L2MSS components, explicit pronunciation instruction, and pronunciation gains

The second research question in this study was intended to bring about insights into the possible relations (if any) found among the Ideal-L2 self, the Ought-to L2 self and Learning Experience with explicit pronunciation instruction and pronunciation gains. Amongst all the L2MSS components (treated as moderating variables in this study), none was significantly associated with the dependent variables except for the Ought-to L2 self, which showed a moderate negative correlation with the model of Phrases (b=-0.10; se=-0.05; t= 2.08; p=.050). Nonetheless, these data must be interpreted with caution as a Bonferroni test could prove this value non-significant. In other words, high scores in the Ought-to L2 self accounted for lower scores in pronunciation for the model of Phrases. This finding is consistent with Papi (2010) who found that the Ought-to L2 self increases L2 anxiety when learners, whose motivated behavior is dominated by their Ought-to L2 self. Furthermore, these learners tend to be especially concerned about others' impressions and evaluations due to an inner fear of disapproval (Papi, 2010). Nonetheless, these findings cannot be extrapolated to all L2 learners as the ones in this study belong to a specific age group: adolescents. That is, they are particularly concerned about their significant others and their L2 self-images undergo considerable changes throughout such a life stage (Kormos & Csizér, 2008). This combination of findings may provide support for the conceptual premise that L2 anxiety hinders speaking skills and in turn correct pronunciation (Baran-Łucarz, 2011).

Notwithstanding the interesting finding addressing the Ought-to L2 self and pronunciation gains, the rest of results indicated nonsignificant correlations between the moderating variables and dependent variables, which was not very encouraging. Unlike previous research (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2014; Papi, 2010), this study has been unable to demonstrate that the Ideal L2 self could relate to better performance and results with regards to

L2 learning. More specifically, the present study did not find any relation between the Ideal L2 self and L2 pronunciation learning, which has not been previously described. In fact, the ideal L2 self is believed to be an effective motivation enhancer if the learner has a desired L2-self future image and uses strategies that provide direction to move forward. Similarly, this study also failed to identify Learning Experience as a strong predictor of L2 pronunciation leaning (as Dörnyei (2019) suggested), which is inherent in L2 learning. Respectively, Learning Experience did not relate to any pronunciation score, thus finding no correlation with L2 pronunciation learning. Future studies on the current topics are therefore recommended in order to trace possible relations between L2 pronunciation and the Ideal L2 self, Learning Experience or other L2MSS components.

# Chapter 5: Conclusions

## 5.1 Introduction

The purposes of this study were (1) to examine the extent to which explicit pronunciation instruction improves L2 learners' productions of segments used in semi-spontaneous oral communication; and (2) to determine whether there is a relationship between explicit pronunciation instruction, L2MSS main components, and pronunciation gains. This chapter presents the conclusions, limitations, and considerations for further research based on the findings that were obtained in the present study.

## 5.2. Conclusions

One of the more significant findings from this study is that explicit pronunciation instruction does not sufficiently account for gains in L2 pronunciation. The hypothesis formulated in this respect is that the effects of implicit or explicit pronunciation instruction are also dependent on the type of instruction L2 learners had previously received. In other words, it must be borne in mind that, in this case, the type of instruction seems to be contingent on the teaching approach used over a sustained period of time prior to the intervention. An implication of these findings is that both implicit and explicit pronunciation instructions should be further interrogated in high-school contexts where +12-year-olds are the study subject.

Another significant finding this study encountered was the negative correlation between the Ought-to L2 self and pronunciation scores as it confirms previous empirical studies' hypotheses (Papi, 2010). Whilst this study did not find any correlation between the Ideal L2 self and Learning Experience with explicit pronunciation instruction and pronunciation gains, it did partially substantiate the assumption that the Ought-to L2 self heightens L2 anxiety as learners,

whose motivated behavior is dominated by their Ought-to L2 self, are more prone to experience more L2 anxiety. Moreover, taken together, these results suggest that L2 anxiety seems to inhibit speaking skills and thus correct pronunciation (Baran-Łucarz, 2011).

### 5.3. Limitations

One important concern in this study is the sample size. A larger sample size, holding other characteristics constant, is associated with less Type II error. This means that if there is a true effect in the population, a larger sample size would be more likely to find such a significant effect (Hays, 1994). An a-priori power analysis, using the software G*Power v. 3.1 (Faul, et al, 2007), showed that to have a statistical power of .80, which is considered as the minimum value in the literature, 26 participants would be needed to detect an effect size as large as the largest effect size obtained in this study ($\eta^2$ = .08 in the time effect for Phrases). This suggests that this sample size was appropriate to detect such effect sizes. However, for smaller effect sizes, similar to some of those obtained in this study ($\eta^2$ = .02), at least 100 participants would be required. This means that this sample size is not appropriate to find smaller effects such as those found in this study. Therefore, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some of the nonsignificant effects are merely due to the sample size and not because the intervention was not successful.

Another important limitation is the small number of treatment lessons, which in turn reduces the total length of the intervention. That is, having a larger number of treatment lessons, whereby the study subject is inspected over a substantial period of time, could bring about more significant changes in pronunciation gains (Saito, 2012). Also, according to previous research into pronunciation instruction, it is crucial to count on more than only one rater when assessing L2 learners' oral productions in order to prove the data reliable (Isaacs, 2018). The data in this

study were transcribed and assessed by the researcher and supervisor; however, no measure (e.g., intraclass correlation) was applied to the percentage of data they rated. Thus, not having such a measure negatively affects inter rater reliability. Moreover, the L2MSS survey showed low reliability measures for the Ought-to L2 self ($\alpha = .69$) and Learning experience ($\alpha = .63$) before the elimination of the items Q14, Q25, and Q29. According to Cresswell (2014), this instrument should have been administrated again after being modified, which did not occur in the present study due to time constraints. Respectively, having answered the L2MSS survey after the experiment may also have had an impact on the participants' L2MSS since their responses could have been shaped by the experimental conditions.

### 5.4. Further research

This research has important implications for future investigation. Firstly, further studies could assess the long-term effects of explicit pronunciation instruction on post-pubertal school learners that had not had earlier exposure to an L2 prior to the critical period. Secondly, it would be interesting to count on a larger sample and a more prolonged intervention in order to attest each method thoroughly. Thirdly, this study was conducted under adverse circumstances: the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, instruction was deliberately given via online, although the mode of instruction was not deemed as a variable within the literature review. Finally, previous research (Kim & Kim, 2014; Papi, 2010; Dörnyei, 2019) has shed light on the part that the Ideal L2 self and Learning Experience take in L2 learning; hence, it would be interesting to assess these L2MSS components in tandem with L2 pronunciation learning and teaching in future research.

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## Appendix A

I. Isolated words
   1. Watched /wætʃt/
   2. Changed /ʧeɪnʤd/
   3. Worked /wɜ:rkt/
   4. Clogged /klɒgd/
   5. Gasped /gæspt/
   6. Grabbed /græbd/
   7. Revved /revd/
   8. Laughed /læft/
   9. Passed /pæst/
   10. Used /ju:zd/

II. Phrases
   1. Green forests /gri:n fɔ:rɪsts/
   2. Steep slope /sti:p sləʊp/
   3. Ragged socks /rægɪd sɒks/
   4. Monthly planned /mɒnθlɪ plænd/
   5. Extra space /ekstrə speɪs/
   6. Lost souls /lɒst səʊls/
   7. Steven Smith /sti:vən smɪθ/
   8. Strike first /straɪk fɜ:rst/
   9. Spoken Swedish /spəʊkən swi:dɪʃ/
   10. Comfortable warmth /kɒmftəbəl wɔ:rmθ/

III. Sentences
   1. Louis likes black socks /lu:ɪs laɪks blæk sɒks/
   2. Stanley walked around the sixth Ave /stænlɪ wɔ:kt əraʊnd ðə sɪksθ eɪv/
   3. He often asks for books /hi: ɒftən æsks fər bʊks/
   4. She laughed at her scareful friend /ʃi: læft ət hər skeərfəl frend/
   5. Homeless people begged in the street /həʊmləs pi:pəl begd ɪn ðə stri:t/
   6. The driver revved at the last round /ðə draɪvə revd ət ðə læst raʊnd/
   7. Flora opened a couple of envelopes /flɔ:rə əʊpənd ə kʌpəl əv envələʊps/
   8. The streets were rammed /ðə stri:ts wər ræmd/
   9. Stephanie used a screwdriver /stefənɪ ju:zd ə skru:draɪvə/
   10. The story lacked many details /ðə stɔ:rɪ lækt menɪ di:teɪlz/

## Appendix B

INSTRUCTIONS: read out loud the words, phrases and sentences in each item.

I. Isolated words
1. Established /ɪstæblɪʃt/
2. Emerged /ɪmɝːdʒd/
3. Asked /æskt/
4. Called /kɔːld/
5. Helped /helpt/
6. Robbed /rɒbd/
7. Struggled /strʌgəld/
8. Ruled /ruːld/
9. Announced /ənaʊnst/
10. Seized /siːzd/

II. Phrases
1. United States /juːnaɪtɪd steɪts/
2. Bloody struggle /blʌdɪ strʌgəl/
3. Strong colonists /strɒŋ kɒlənɪsts/
4. Mexican industrialists /meksɪkən ɪndʌstrɪəlɪsts/
5. Seventh president /sevenθ prezɪdənt/
6. Declared himself /diːkleərd hɪmself/
7. Stormed into /stɔːrmd ɪntə/
8. Lived lives /lɪvd laɪvz/
9. Smart peasants /smɑːrt pezənts/
10. Small skirmishes /smɔːl skɜːrmɪʃɪz/

III. Sentences
1. The soldiers were not equipped or trained /ðə sɒldɪərz wər nɒt ekwɪpt ər treɪnd/
2. The British colonists in America rebelled /ðə brɪtɪʃ kɒlənɪsts ɪn əmerɪkə rɪbeld/
3. They mobilized their ragged armies /ðeɪ məʊbəlaɪzd ðər rægɪd ɑːrmɪs/
4. He stamped out the opposition /hiː stæmpt aʊt ðɪ ɒpəzɪʃən/
5. The colonists settled in Massachusetts and New Hampshire /ðə kɒlənɪsts setəld ɪn mæsəʧʊsɪts ənd njuː hæmpsaɪər/
6. The Bolsheviks marched and fired /ðə bɒlʃəvɪks mɑːrʧt ənd faɪərd/
7. He introduced his elitist and snobbish friends /hiː ɪntrədjuːst hɪz snɒbɪʃ ənd ɪliːtɪst frendz/
8. The government officials have welcomed six guests /ðə gʌvərnmənt əfɪʃəlz həv welkʌmd sɪks gests/
9. The nobles lived lives of luxury /ðə nəʊbəlz lɪvd laɪvz əv lʌkʃərɪ/
10. The French Government was in constant turmoil (ðə frenʧ gʌvərnmənt wəz ɪn kɒnstənt tɜːrmɔɪl/

## Appendix C

INSTRUCCIONES: marca con una **x** la alternativa con la cual te sientas más identificado/da considerando que **1 significa totalmente <u>desacuerdo</u>** y **4 totalmente <u>de acuerdo.</u>**

| Criterios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Me puedo imaginar viviendo en el extranjero y teniendo una conversación en inglés | | | | |
| 2. Aprender inglés es importante porque las personas a mi alrededor esperan que lo haga | | | | |
| 3. Me gusta el ambiente de mis clases de inglés en general | | | | |
| 4. Me puedo imaginar a MÍ mismo/a hablando inglés como si fuese nativo-hablante (inglés-estadounidense-australiano) | | | | |
| 5. Sin aprender inglés será difícil viajar a países de habla inglesa | | | | |
| 6. Realmente disfruto mucho aprender inglés | | | | |
| 7. En todo momento que pienso en mi carrera futura, me imagino usando el inglés | | | | |
| 8. Si no aprendo inglés, esto tendrá un efecto negativo en mi vida | | | | |
| 9. Pienso que mis clases de inglés son aburridas | | | | |
| 10. Preferiría pasar más tiempo en clases de inglés que otras asignaturas | | | | |
| 11. Estudiar inglés es importante para mi porque otras personas me respetarán si es que hablo el idioma | | | | |
| 12. Me puedo imaginar a MÍ mismo/a estudiando una carrera en una universidad donde todas las asignaturas sean enseñadas en inglés (tal vez en el extranjero en el futuro) | | | | |
| 13. Disfruto las actividades de mis clases de inglés más que las de las otras asignaturas | | | | |
| 14. Tengo que estudiar inglés porque no quiero tener malas notas en la asignatura | | | | |
| 15. Me puedo imaginar a mi mismo/a viviendo en el extranjero y usando el inglés efectivamente para comunicarme con los locales y personas de otras nacionalidades. | | | | |
| 16. Mis profesores de inglés tienen estilos de enseñanza interesantes | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Estudio inglés porque quiero ser considerado un buen estudiante | | | | |
| 18. Me puedo imaginar a mi mismo/a escribiendo emails en inglés fluidamente | | | | |
| 19. Para ser honesto/a, tengo poco interés en mis clases de inglés | | | | |
| 20. Estudiar inglés es importante para mi porque así tendré un trabajo bien pagado | | | | |
| 21. Las cosas que quiero hacer en el futuro requieren que use el inglés | | | | |
| 22. Encuentro que los libros de inglés que utilizamos son realmente útiles | | | | |
| 23. Algunas personas importantes en mi vida sienten que es importante que yo aprenda inglés | | | | |
| 24. Me puedo imaginar teniendo muchos amigos que hablen inglés | | | | |
| 25. Me preocupa que otros compañeros de clase hablen mejor inglés que yo | | | | |
| 26. Sin aprender inglés será muy difícil para mí utilizar el internet o un computador efectivamente | | | | |
| 27. Si mis sueños se hacen realidad, usaré el inglés efectivamente en el futuro | | | | |
| 28. Ser capaz de hablar inglés mejorará mi estatus social | | | | |
| 29. A veces me preocupa que los otros compañeros de mi clase se rían de mí cuando hablo en inglés | | | | |
| 30. Me puedo imaginar usando el inglés fluidamente como mi profesor, deportista, cantante o actor/actriz favorito/a. | | | | |

1, 4, 7, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30 Ideal L2 self
2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 28 Ought-to L2 self
3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 29 Learning experience

## Appendix D

Appendix A: Technical specifications for the pre-test and post-test.

Hughes (2003) argues that there are procedures that need to be taken into consideration when developing tests. The present assessment is a diagnostic pre-test. Below are the specifications for developing the assessment.

1. Testing Problem

There is a need of an achievement test to be administered as a pretest to determine students' current knowledge of the content to be studied during the research intervention. The present assessment is an achievement test because its purpose is to "establish how successful individual students, groups of students, or the courses themselves have been in achieving objectives" (Hughes, 2003, p. 13). The objective proposed for this unit of the course is to use the past simple tense to report a business event.

2. Specifications for the test

a) Content:

- Grammar: Past simple tense of regular verbs and past tense of be.
- Vocabulary: business related verbs. Business events.
- Email structure.

b) Structure, timing, medium/channel, and techniques: The test considers 40 minutes for answering. It includes three different sections:

1. A multiple-choice section to draw on students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. It consists of ten items.

2. Ten items in which students unscramble questions in the past simple. Questions must be related to a recent business event.

3. A gap filling item to draw on students' ability to complete an email report of a recent business event. Students are given the beginning or the ending of a sentence as a prompt.

c) Vocabulary range:

| verbs | | Business events |
|---|---|---|
| Arrive<br>Attend<br>Be<br>Discuss<br>Email<br>Finish<br>Look<br>Present | Phone<br>Start<br>Stay<br>Travel<br>Visit<br>Work<br>There is/are | Meetings<br>Conference<br>Talks<br>Presentations<br>Business trips<br>Training course<br>Trade fairs |

d). Medium/Channel: Pencil and paper.

e) Scoring Procedures: Each section shows the score given to each item. The final score of the test is also written on the test. The test has a key to be used when scoring each item.