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## I. INTRODUCTION

**Actuality of the theme.** After becoming a sovereign state the Republic of Uzbekistan has worked out its own model of development, taking into account the specific social and political traditions in the country. One of the most important conditions for the development of any country is a well-functioning education system. As the education system ensures the formation of a highly developed that must be able to live in a highly, with social and personal activity, ability to function independently in the public and political life. It is obvious fact that in every year in many parts of the world a considerable number of peoples find themselves called upon to teach English to those whose mother tongue is not English. So, the knowledge of English has become essential in more and more fields of life, and it has become increasingly important for all parts of the worldwide population.

Current education in Uzbekistan, its content and structure aimed not only at translation of ideas and meanings, experience gained by humanity, but at development of intellectual, creative abilities of every person, skills of thinking and practical, professional activity, ability to work using obtained information. They should be ready, at the international standards level, to integrate into production and technological processes, provide effective work of modern equipment and qualified personnel. It is important to formulate, in accordance with state education standard of knowledge, skills and abilities.

Nowadays in our republic a great attention is being paid to broadcasting of the English language. Activities on creating necessary conditions for youth in receiving modern education is being consistently continued. As the head of our country noted, **“We mobilize all the strength and capacities of our state and society to ensure that our young people have an independent thinking, high intellectuality and spiritually developed capability, and who are invincible**

**among their peers in the world<sup>1</sup>.**” “The Uzbekistan’s Development Strategy for 2017 – 2021” which is to be implemented in 5 stages, each of which provides for approval of a separate annual State program in accordance with a declared name of the year, can be an example for the attempts to develop the society. The republic could only have sustained development and modernity if the people have the knowledge and expertise gained by having the opportunity to education at all levels right from junior school to higher education level. It is emphasized in the branch 4.4 “Development of education and science” in the Priority areas of development of the social sphere **“Achieving major improvement in quality of general secondary education, facilitating in – depth study of foreign languages, computer science, and other important and popular disciplines, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology<sup>2</sup>.”**Activities carried out in our country on improving all links in the sphere of education and upbringing – the system of preschool, school, secondary special and higher education, construction of new and reconstruction of existing educational institutions will give its results in formation of young generation as harmoniously developed individuals.

Nowadays one of the most difficult problems for English learners is learning pronunciation. It is commonly the biggest obstacle to overcome when trying to achieve fluency. It is not only important to study grammar and vocabulary but it is also essential to acquire a correct pronunciation. Moreover, knowing grammar and vocabulary is useless if someone is unable to pronounce them correctly.

Pronunciation is the first thing that speakers notice during a conversation, and, speakers who make pronunciation mistakes are less likely to be understood than those who make grammatical mistakes. Even a single mispronounced word can keep you from an effective communication with another speaker. It is obvious, then, that pronunciation is important and cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> Sh. M. Mirziyoyev . The speech of the President in Tashkent conference on June 15, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Sh. M. Mirziyoyev. “On Uzbekistan’s Development strategy”. Tashkent, 2017.

underestimated and it must be one of the most important priorities when learning English. English teachers must give the same time and attention to pronunciation as they do to pronunciation and vocabulary.

“Teaching pronunciation in primary and secondary schools” is one of the most topical subjects in modern methods of teaching English. Nowadays the problem of increasing the efficiency of teaching English which is one of the main disciplines in the school, college, lyceums` curriculums and in the programmes of the institutes and universities is one of the urgent in methods of teaching English as a foreign language. Pronunciation is one of the main language skills and learning it is very important in teaching foreign languages, especially English, which is considered the most popular language, and is widely used as a means of communication. The choice of the given theme is conditioned by increasing of the role of pronunciation in teaching English. This research paper deals with the problems of teaching pronunciation in primary and secondary schools and gives alternative solutions to tackle with these issues. In Uzbekistan, in my opinion, not enough attention is being paid to teach pronunciation for school pupils. As compared to other countries, in our country the degree of pronunciation is lower and pupils language proficiency is considered to be unsatisfactory. English language teachers should pay adequate attention to encourage young learners to improve their pronunciation skills by using different methods and approaches. Pronunciation and clear understanding of English speech are two skills which complement each other. It means that, if learners know how to pronounce the words and phrases correctly, with proper intonation, their level of speech understanding is also increased. Thus, pronunciation training is a very important part of mastering any foreign language, including English.

**The degree of the inquiry of the theme.** The methodological basis of the given research work became the works, statements and theories of the famous linguists and methodologists such as, Jahan, Morley, Griffiths, Sabol, Datko, Dalton, Jenkins, Gilbert, Sharkey, Krashen, Jones, Richards and others. Their main

focus was to improve learners' enunciation skills by introducing different methodologies.

**The aim of the paper** is to analyze the activities for teaching pronunciation in primary and secondary schools.

**The objectives of the paper are the following:**

- To support the views of teaching pronunciation in communicative approach;
- To conduct observation and questionnaire in order to show the importance of teaching pronunciation;
- To compare the lessons where the phonetic exercises are used and are not used.

**The method used in this paper is:**

- Experimental design.

**Instruments:**

- questionnaire
- observation

**The object of the research is** activities of teaching pronunciation such as, phonetic, pronunciation and listening activities.

**The subject of the research is** the additional materials and supplementary activities.

**Novelty of the work is seen in the followings:**

- The paper creates and collects the materials in order to teach pronunciation;
- It supports the views of teaching pronunciation in communicative approach;
- It conducts observation and questionnaire in order to show the significance of teaching pronunciation;
- It compares the lessons, where the exercises are used, are not used.

**Thesis** is to substantiate implementing the phonetic materials into the syllabus of primary and secondary school pupils.

**Research questions of the work:**

1. How teaching pronunciation is efficient in primary and secondary schools ?
2. How is it possible to supply the "Fly High" textbook with the supplementary materials for teaching pronunciation ?

## **Hypothesis:**

1. Teaching pronunciation requires special consideration. Pupils learn pronunciation from the beginning of their learning foreign languages. Designing activities for teaching pronunciation furthers pupils' better acquiring the language.

2. There are not enough materials in teaching pronunciation in the textbooks, suggested for teaching in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, designing supplementary materials is of great challenge in teaching children of primary and secondary schools.

**Theoretical significance of the work** is in the study of the investigations of many prominent Indian, English and Uzbek scholars, linguists and other methodologists devoted to the issues of teaching foreign languages and especially to the questions of teaching pronunciation. The given work continues and completes the materials of the previous works, theories and statements. Developing pronunciation through classroom activities is a recognized theoretical model in English language teaching today. Many applied linguists regard it as one of the most effective approaches to English language teaching (ELT). In Uzbekistan, the main focus of language teaching method is to help the learners/students/pupils to learn a language so that they can use it to communicate meaningfully in any real life situation. The methods assume that the learners of English language will be able to communicate socially on an everyday basis with native or expert English language speakers.

**Practical significance of the work** lies in the fact, that its materials, results, practical suggestions and recommendations can be applied at the English lessons at the schools and in the subject "Methods of teaching English" at the higher educational establishments by all the English teachers, students and magistrates in learning pronunciation. The practical value of pronunciation is great because it can help them deliver the message to native speakers in a fluent way. That is why the school syllabus reads: "Pronunciation is a mighty means of teaching a foreign language".

**The structure of the research work.** This work consists of Introduction, Literature review, Research Methodology, Data Collection, Data Analysis, Results and Findings, Discussion, Conclusion and Bibliography. Total amount of my diploma work is 62 pages.

**The Introduction** of the work to clarify research background, explain the importance, purpose, to define theoretical and practical significances of the investigation.

**Literature review** is a review of the theoretical background of traditional and modern approaches/ methods in teaching pronunciation to learners.

**Research Methodology** analyzes and gives recommendations on the methodology used in the sphere, analyze the results of the research through relevant statistics. Drawn some conclusions and suggestions for teaching and research and given used list of references.

**Conclusion** summarizes the taken conclusions and recommendations on present work during the investigation we summed and worked out some useful tips and recommendations for teaching that are doing their researches.



## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **What is Pronunciation?**

Pronunciation is basically known as the production of sounds that we use to create meaning. Similarly, Ur<sup>3</sup> stated that, the idea of pronunciation can be described as a combination of the sounds of the language as well as stress, rhythm and intonation.

### **Why Pronunciation is Important?**

In her article, Jahan mentioned about the importance of pronunciation in case of communication. According to her, students of Sylhet division had no scope to learn English as a second language for non-availability of English medium schools for a long time. Inappropriate pronunciation of English will make people misunderstand the speaker easily, whereas, proper pronunciation will encourage them to communicate with the speaker willingly.

Jahan also added that, teaching Pronunciation is the most complicated but a significant aspect of ESL/EFL teaching at the same time. According to her, it is quite impossible for ESL learners to achieve a perfect native like accent. The communication process will be successful if the pronunciation of the learners can easily be understood by the efficient speakers of English. Moreover, Hancock said that, pronunciation is essential for speaking and listening.

According to Morley, till the 1960s teaching and learning pronunciation was regarded as pointless non-communicative drill and exercise strategies. Likewise, Gilbert also stated that, in spite of carrying an essential link to communication through listening and speaking, pronunciation is being overlooked in the syllabus, materials as well as in the classroom activities. case of learning second/foreign language because it directly affects learners'

communicative competence and performance. Nevertheless, teaching EFL pronunciation is neglected in the syllabus, material and classroom, especially in Bangladesh.

Alam claims that, most of the teachers do not give any effective tasks for pronunciation practice during the class period. It is quite impossible to make one's pronunciation, intonation and stress perfect by only theoretical knowledge because the achievement of a desired standard needs a lot of practice. Besides, Maniruzzaman stated that, pronunciation is an inevitable fact in case of listening and speaking as reception and production of information highly influenced by intelligible pronunciation. Similarly, maintains that pronunciation is inseparably tied with listening and speaking. However, pronunciation is hardly given enough importance while teaching and learning English at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Bangladesh.

Wei argues that, some teachers have poor knowledge about the different strategies of teaching pronunciation and that is why they do not find it interesting. This reason often makes the students lag behind in better pronunciation and in achieving effective communicative competence. On the other hand, Dalton describes it as the Cinderella area of the English language because according to him, the teachers and learners might think that it will be under grasp without any effort.

### **Place of teaching pronunciation**

English pronunciation is very difficult for foreign learners and it is due to the fact that spelling and pronunciation are two different matters. On the top of it, speech sounds of English are unlikely to be identical to the speech sounds of the mother tongue of the learners. There might be differences in placement of word stress, quality and intensity of syllables, speech rhythm, intonation, etc. It is quite common to assimilate English sounds to the mother tongue sounds and to apply other suprasegmental features of the native language to pronunciation of English. According to Gilakjani those who start learning English after their school

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<sup>3</sup> Adult Migrant English Program Research. "What is pronunciation" 2002

years have greater difficulties in acquiring intelligible pronunciation and the degree of difficulty increases with age. However, Králová claims that learners of any age are able to create additional phonetic categories for new language sounds which do not correspond to the mother tongue sounds. The fact is that there are learners of English at all ages and that teaching pronunciation should not be concerning only children but also adults.

Role of teaching pronunciation in schools is very unfavorable next to teaching grammar or vocabulary. This is a problem of English teaching in many countries. Experienced teachers are not keen to teach pronunciation and they claim that there is not clear guidance in textbooks and that the isolated exercises do not bring the wanted effect<sup>4</sup>. Teachers often claim that there is not enough time for teaching pronunciation in their classes and they are more confident to teach grammar and vocabulary.<sup>5</sup>

Teachers also complain that they do not receive enough training in methodology of teaching pronunciation. For the fact how difficult the English pronunciation is, there is very little attention paid to teaching and developing it. Haycraft states that foreign teachers of English ignore teaching pronunciation because they themselves do not have enough confidence. However, teaching pronunciation is inevitable in ELT and it needs to be integrated right from the beginning, taught regularly and included in to daily classroom procedures. However, in teaching English pronunciation, such assimilation should be avoided and learners need to be taught correct segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation.

### **Factors influencing learning pronunciation**

According to Králová a foreign language competence (including pronunciation competence) cannot be limited to the contrastive analysis of two language systems. An individual's pronunciation competence depends on relations to the language systems (phonic interference) and extralingual

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<sup>4</sup> Griffiths, B. Integrating pronunciation into classroom activities. British Council. Teaching English. 2011

environment<sup>6</sup>. Extralingual factors include the type of language contact (direct, mediated, occasional, permanent), the form of contact (natural, artificial), the type of bilingualism (individual, group) and the type of bilingualism (learnt one of the languages as an adult, learnt both languages as a child, learnt both languages as a child, one being suppressed).

Gilakjani names the following factors affecting pronunciation in a foreign language. Native accent influences pronunciation in a foreign language. The older the learner gets, the stronger is the effect of native accent. Stress, intonation and rhythm effect intelligibility more than errors in single sounds. Exposure and motivation for learning the foreign language also determine learners' development of pronunciation. Personal or professional motivation for learning English can result in desire for native-like pronunciation.

Some learners are more adept at requiring correct pronunciation than others. Pronunciation Attitude Inventory measures learners' relation to the target language pronunciation. Students who are more concerned about their target language pronunciation usually gain better pronunciation. Motivation, positive attitudes, exposure to the target language, and openness to the target culture influence the success in foreign language proficiency and pronunciation.

According to Pennington pronunciation is viewed as a component of linguistics rather than conversational fluency. Teachers regard pronunciation very little importance in conversational classes and they view it as the least useful out of language skills and therefore sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend time on other areas of language<sup>7</sup>. There is a question whether explicit instruction can help in learning foreign pronunciation. It was found out that phonetic instruction to adult learners of English can largely improve their allophonic articulation.

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<sup>5</sup> Datko, J. An Inspection of High School EFL Teachers' Views on Their Confidence in Teaching Correct English Pronunciation. 2013

<sup>6</sup> Sabol, J. K teorii jazykovej interferencie. In: Jazykovedny casopis.1975, Vol. 44, No. 1.– P. 87-91.

<sup>7</sup> Loewen, S., Reinders, H. Key concepts in second language acquisition. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. 2011.

Age is a strong determining factor influencing foreign language pronunciation. It is closely connected to the theory of Critical Period Hypothesis which states that children between 2 and 13 can achieve native-like proficiency in acquiring a foreign language, especially pronunciation. According to this theory, older learners of a foreign language can rarely achieve native-like fluency and pronunciation. According to Králová ability to create separate categories for foreign language sounds similar to the sounds of the mother tongue is decreasing from the age of six years.

According to Avery and Ehrlich sound patterns of the mother tongue are transferred into the foreign language. When the sound is absent in the native sound inventory, the learners might not be able to pronounce the sounds. Combining sounds rules in native language might be different to the target language. Stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of the native language might be transferred to the target language. All these factors might cause problems for learners because the rules are language specific and can vary from one language to another.

### **Pronunciation teaching**

When talking about teaching methods and approaches attention must be drawn to the most influential ones throughout the twentieth century. Through grammar-translation method and reading based approach for which the pronunciation was irrelevant, direct method, focused on imitation of a model in other words drill, to the arrival of notional-functional approach focused on communicative purposes of the target language, which pushed mechanical drills to the margins. When learning pronunciation we use different strategies in order to achieve comprehensible pronunciation. According to Dalton and Seidlhofer there are two approaches aimed at pronunciation teaching- the bottom-up approach and top-down approach. Bottom-up approach means that learners start with learning how to pronounce individual phonemes and then

they work their way to intonation.<sup>8</sup> Generally speaking, when teaching the segments of pronunciation the suprasegmental features will take care of themselves. Anderson and Lynch claim that we perceive speech by building up an interpretation in a series of separate stages, beginning by the lowest units and gradually working up to the larger units such as the utterance, from which we then derive our interpretation of the speaker's meaning. Based on the findings mentioned above, this approach is very similar to a structural approach used for teaching grammar and lexis. As far as the top-down approach is concerned, at the beginning the attention is paid to patterns of intonation and then if required individual sounds are taken into focal point. In other words, once the prosodic features of pronunciation are in place, the necessary segmental discriminations will follow of their own accord. According to Pinker, top-down process, which largely corresponds with communicative aspects of language teaching, uses knowledge and expectancies to guess, predict, or fill in the perceived event or message.<sup>9</sup> Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin offer another elaboration of two general approaches concerning pronunciation teaching e.g. intuitive-imitative approach and analytic-linguistic approach. Intuitive-imitative approach conveys the learner's ability to listen and imitate the rhythms and sounds of the target language without the intervention of any explicit information. Analytic-linguistic approach, on the other hand, utilizes information and tools such as phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions, chart of vocal apparatus, contrastive information, and other aids to supplement listening, imitation, and production. It explicitly informs the learner of and focuses attention on the sounds and rhythms of the target language. Obviously, the approaches presented above can be combined in any way, but it is vital to set which approach or a combination of approaches is the most suitable for our language purposes.

When teaching pronunciation teachers need to bear in mind that pronunciation in comparison with the other aspects of learning will be always

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<sup>8</sup> Dalton, Christiane and Barbara Seidlhofer. *Pronunciation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Jenkins, Jenifer. *The Phonology of English as an International Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

marked with personal attitudes towards the target language, learner's abilities and so on; therefore there can never be a one-to-one relationship between what is taught and what is learnt. Because of above mentioned facts, we should pay certain attention to teach ability–learnability presenting aspects of pronunciation that are teachable e.g. individual sounds and segments, and others such as intonation that are bound to certain circumstances and therefore extremely problematic to teach. Roach states that the complexity of the total set of sequential and prosodic components of intonation and of paralinguistic features makes it a very difficult to teach. ... The attitudinal use of intonation is something that is best acquired through talking with and listening to English speakers.

### **Teacher's role**

Teachers as models of pronunciation carry a huge responsibility in their classrooms, they influence their learners either in a positive or negative way and their main goal is to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere. On the other hand, their practical proficiency is not sufficient since if the teacher can only exemplify pronunciation by his or her own speech performance, the learners are left to work out what is significant for themselves. Learners of a second language will not readily discern crucial phonological distinctions<sup>10</sup>.

On one hand, there are so called gifted learners that are able to pick up the pronunciation of the target language only by being exposed to it, but on the contrary many students, if not majority, need as explicit explanations as possible to be able to acquire and imitate difficult sounds when speaking. Generally speaking they need a teacher who would draw their attention to how sounds should be pronounced and guide them in order to achieve intelligible pronunciation. Kenworthy offers several ways of teachers' roles in pronunciation learning process:

- *Helping learners hear*

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<sup>10</sup> Dalton, Christiane and Barbara Seidlhofer. Pronunciation. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

*f* The role of teachers is to help their students to perceive sounds that are often misperceive because of the false similarity in learners' mother tongue. Teachers need to check whether their learners are hearing sounds according to the appropriate categories and help them to develop new categories if necessary<sup>11</sup>.

- ***Helping learners make sounds***

In this situation teachers have to explain and guide their students how to imitate and pronounce new sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue.

- ***Providing feedback***

Teachers need to give their students accurate and constructive feedback about how they are doing, since they are not able to judge whether their pronunciation is comprehensible or not. Not providing students with feedback could mean that students make wrong assumptions about pronunciation.

- ***Pointing out what's going on***

As speaking is unconsciously controlled, students can miss important features of conversation, and therefore teachers should always highlight the key features.

- ***Establishing priorities***

Learners themselves are aware that their pronunciation is in some ways different in comparison with native speakers, but what they are unaware of is whether it is relevant or not. Here teachers guide them which features they should focus on and which not.

- ***Devising activities***

When choosing the most suitable activities that offer the best opportunities for practice teachers need to also take into consideration students learning styles as the effectors of their progress.

- ***Assessing progress***

Assessing progress is not an easy task for any teacher but providing students with information about their progress is essential for further motivation.

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<sup>11</sup> Kenworthy, Joanne. Teaching English Pronunciation. Harlow: Longman, 1990.



## **Learner`s role**

The primarily learners' roles are not only to pay attention to what they are doing in the classes or to be active participants of the learning process but also they need to be able to observe their progress. In other words, what all learners need to do is respond to the teacher otherwise no progress or slight improvement will become evident. Therefore, there is no doubt that ultimately success in pronunciation will depend on how much effort the learner puts into it and whether the student is willing to take responsibility for his or her own learning. Learners' willingness to be responsible for their own learning and to take action goes hand in hand with factors influencing learners' pronunciation learning. These factors will be tackled in the following subchapter.

## **Factors influencing pronunciation learning**

During pronunciation lessons teachers need to pay attention to factors that can have influence on a learning process of their students. It is usually the native language that is taken into consideration and others are overlooked.

### **Age factor**

It is believed that prepubescent children learning second language with adequate exposure to the target language can attain near native-like pronunciation. Kenworthy supports this assumption by claiming that if a person doesn't begin to learn a second language until adulthood, they will never have a native-like accent even though other aspects of their language such as syntax or vocabulary may be indistinguishable from those of native speakers.

Penfield, Roberts and Lenneberg agree with this by stating that there is a period (occurring around puberty) after which brain lateralization, or the assigning of certain functions to the different hemispheres of the brain, is completed.<sup>12</sup> Based on the findings we can say that it is important to start teaching pronunciation at the very beginning of second language learning since children can attain near native-like pronunciation with ease. The ease with which children

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<sup>12</sup> Celce-Murcia, Marianne, Brinton and Goodwin. Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for teachers of English to speakers of other Languages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

acquire pronunciation can be explained by the critical period, which is biologically determined period of life during which maximal conditions for language acquisition exist. Scovel and Krashen claim that it is nearly impossible for learners, who start learning foreign language after this critical period, to achieve natural pronunciation since the brain loses its. This means that during the critical period a second language is acquired naturally and more easily since the brain is more flexible. The fact that the critical period lasts till puberty explains why adolescents and adults find pronunciation learning so problematic and need explanations how to produce different sounds in order to be able to pronounce them. Kenworthy outlines several researches concerning age related limits. In the first survey Oyama concludes that the younger the person learning a target language is the more native-like he/she will sound. In other words, it is very unlikely for adult learners to attain comprehensible pronunciation. In the second study aimed at the age factor, researchers found out that if people start before the age of 11 their accent is rare, when they begin learning between 11 and 15 their accent is uncommon, but if they start after they are 15 their accent is virtually universal.

However, the third research, carried by Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, concluded that older British English speakers learning Dutch in Holland were better than younger speakers in the initial part of the research since they quickly mastered syntactic and morphological structures of the target language, but by 4 or 5 months the difference vanished and after a year the younger learners began to excel.

The finding suggested by Hoefnagel-Höhle can be supported by Florez's findings. She claims that adults find pronunciation more difficult than children do and that they will probably not achieve native-like pronunciation. Yet experiences with language learning and the ability to self monitor, which come with the age, can offset these limitations to some degree.

### **The role of the mother tongue**

It is widely recognized that the role of the mother tongue influences acquisition of the foreign language. Unlike children learning second language, adult learners have already accustomed their speech in terms of the sound system of their mother tongue. This means that learners' native language shares some of the sound characteristics with the target language, which means that learners will probably have problems with pronunciation of those phonemes that are similar to those occurring in their mother tongue. Kenworthy states that these characteristics are often obvious enough to make a person's origins identifiable by untrained as well as trained people. Florez adds that interference or negative transfer from the first language is likely to cause errors in aspiration, intonation, and rhythm in the target language, which is true for Czech learners of English since their tendency to transfer the rule of first syllable prominence into English which violates their intelligibility. Celce-Murcia and Goodwin support the premises by claiming that the second language filters through the learner's first language facilitating acquisition when the target pronunciation features are similar and interfering with acquisition when the features are dissimilar or non-existent<sup>13</sup>.

Gilbert outlines several problems caused by the influence of the mother tongue. First, the inability to sound out letters, which occurs at the beginning stage of learning a new language, makes the learners impossible to pronounce sounds correctly. Another problem experienced by learners is wrong production of final consonants. In many languages sounding final consonants are restricted and therefore, non-native speakers can have intelligibility problems. Lastly, it is so called choppy speech, which is separating words with silence.

As it was already mentioned above, teachers need to be aware of the phonology of their learners' mother tongue in order to help their students to attain comprehensible pronunciation.

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<sup>13</sup> Sharkey, Rosemary. "Facilitating Communicative Competence for Adult Non-native English Speakers". Minnesota: Hamline University, 2003. 30 June 2011. <[www.yasn.com](http://www.yasn.com)>.

## **Motivation**

Motivation appears to be a very influential factor as some of the non-native speakers are more concerned about their pronunciation than others. Their desire to attain good pronunciation, usually influenced by their sense of responsibility, helps them to achieve comprehensible pronunciation. Celce-Murcia and Goodwin agree with the statement by saying that if the learner's motivation to improve is strong and if the investment of time and effort is genuine, there will be perceived improvement.

As far as motivation is concerned, outlines several motivational factors that make learners work on their pronunciation:

- *Learners want to improve themselves*
- *Learners want to become a part of the target language community*
- *Learners need their speech to be intelligible to their children's teachers*
- *Learners want to improve their employment prospective*
- *Learners want to improve their everyday communication skills*

Lukmani and Shuman, on the other hand, categorized learners' motivation for intelligibility into integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is defined as a desire to identify or become a member of the target language community. Whereas, instrumental motivation is described as a matter of immediate desire, since the speakers are only orientated towards attaining intelligible pronunciation for their specific purposes. Therefore, integrative motivation seems to be more powerful and long lasting in comparison with instrumental motivation, since its main goal is not the interest in the target language society.

Overall, motivation as a very important influential factor cannot be generalized since every learner has different views, but indentifying learners' motivations helps teachers to create a supportive classroom atmosphere and develop learners' motivations.

## **Learner's attitude and sense of identity**

In language teaching process teachers cannot influence learners' age, motivation, nor they can have control over their attitude or sense of identity. At the beginning of the chapter a crucial question needs to be dealt with- whether a learner's sense of identity and his/her attitude towards the target language can increase or obstruct acquisition of comprehensible pronunciation.

Bolitho claims that although it is difficult for learners to find suitable balance between his/her mother tongue and the target language, since they have a kind of emotional and intellectual relationship with both languages, finding the suitable balance contributes to attaining comprehensible pronunciation. His theory is supported by Marques, who suggests that learners need to seek acculturation by which they adopt the new culture while maintaining the identity of the old one.<sup>14</sup> In other words, if learners stick to socializing primarily within their community and stay attached to their native culture their ability to acquire intelligible pronunciation is very limited.

According to Florez, learners who unconsciously or consciously apply ethnicity markers into the target language will never achieve native-like pronunciation since their speech will become resistant to changes which help speakers to be intelligible. Kenwothy comes to the same conclusion. She points out the existence of a group affirmation factor of native speakers, suggesting that personal commitment to a community, and a willingness to be identified with the members of that community, can be revealed through the way a person chooses to speak. The group affirmation factor can be transferred onto non-native speakers too, since their positive feelings towards the target language contribute to a development of comprehensible pronunciation. The ideas are supported by Schuman with his rejection transfer. His analysis reveals that if learners have a negative attitude towards the target language, their community views the target language negatively or they are homesick they

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<sup>14</sup> Sharkey, Rosemary. "Facilitating Communicative Competence for Adult Non-native English Speakers". Minnesota: Hamline University, 2003. 30 June 2011. <[www.yasn.com](http://www.yasn.com)>.

unconsciously create barriers that prevent them to acquire comprehensible pronunciation. Although these findings are aimed at immigrants, refugees or job seekers in English speaking countries, they can be applied on Czech learners of English too, mainly students of secondary schools. Since if learners do not like the target language for any reason, they subconsciously build up negative attitudes towards the language, as they are describe by Schuman, which subsequently prevent them not only to achieve comprehensible pronunciation but also to learn the language itself.

### **Other researches in teaching pronunciation**

The focus of the pronunciation training in this study followed Smith's<sup>15</sup> arguments that consciousness and awareness raising are important in second language acquisition though Krashen's<sup>16</sup> position was that pronunciation is acquired naturally. Furthermore clear instruction was important to the effectiveness of pronunciation training but this was contested by Suter<sup>17</sup> who was not able to find a positive effect from instruction. Acton reported in detail on a program of instruction focusing on the link between pronunciation, affect, personality and social context, which was designed to help learners whose pronunciation had fossilized. However, no empirical evidence of its success was offered.

Derwing, Munro and Wiebe found a positive outcome of instruction which focused on general speaking habits as opposed to a concentration on individual segments. Derwing, Munro and Wiebe also found that both instruction in segmental accuracy and instruction in general speaking habits and prosodic features, led to improved pronunciation. Morley<sup>18</sup> suggested that the focus on pronunciation teaching nowadays should be on designing “new-

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<sup>15</sup> Smith, R 'Consciousness and foreign language learning: A tutorial on the role of attention and awareness', in R. Schmidt (ed.), *Attention and awareness in foreign language teaching and learning*, Technical report no.9, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, pp. 1-64. 1994

<sup>16</sup> Krashen, SD 1982, *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*, Pergamon, Fairview Park.

<sup>17</sup> Suter, R, 'Predictors of pronunciation accuracy in second language learning', *Language Learning*, vol. 26, pp.233-53. 1976

<sup>18</sup> Morley, 'A multidimensional curriculum design for speech pronunciation instruction', in J. Morley (Ed.), *Pronunciation pedagogy and theory: New views, new directions*, Pantagraph, Bloomington, pp. 45-56. 1994

wave instructional programs”. Moreover, she stresses that these new instructional designs should take into account not only language forms and functions, but also issues of learner self-involvement and learner strategy training. Students who have become active partners in their own learning have developed the skills to monitor and modify their speech patterns. Teachers’ awareness of learning opportunities might create potential for a deeper understanding of language learning and language classroom interaction. Allwright<sup>19</sup> defines the learning opportunity as a more developmental unit of analysis and assesses for well planning in language learning.

Pronunciation practice is also important for the students who plan to study abroad or are currently living abroad. Increasing their pronunciation skills beforehand can build confidence and make them feel less reluctant to venture out to speak English. Students’ personal attitude and self-esteem are major factors in improving English pronunciation. It is not merely exposure that matters, but how the students respond to the opportunities of listening to English spoken by a native speaker or of speaking themselves.

Language learning strategies can help students to improve their language competencies. Canale and Swain<sup>20</sup>, whose article influenced a number of works about communication strategies in ESL/EFL teaching, recognised the importance of communication strategies as a key aspect of strategic competence. An important distinction exists, however, between communication and LLS. LLS are used generally for all strategies that ESL/EFL learners use in learning the target language and communication strategies are one type of LLS. Oxford<sup>21</sup> defined that LLS are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active and self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence.

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<sup>19</sup> Allwright, D, ‘From teaching points to learning opportunities and beyond’, TESOL Quarterly, vol.39, no. 1, pp. 9-32. 2005

<sup>20</sup> Canale, M & Swain, M, ‘Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing’, Applied Linguistics vol.1, no.1, pp.1-47. 1980

<sup>21</sup> Oxford, R b, ‘Styles, strategies, and aptitude: Connections of language Learning’, in T.S. Parry & C.W. Stansfield (eds.), Language aptitude reconsidered, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, , pp.67-125. 1990

Through the years, researchers interested in pronunciation learning have examined many variables in attempting to explain successful second language pronunciation ability. Studies have not been numerous, but have been productive. Research has shown that learners can see improvement in both segmental and supra-segmental areas of pronunciation. However, once learners have mastered the basic sounds of English and identified some of the supra-segmental differences between their L1 and English, it is time to help them learn some strategies so that they can study more effectively on their own. Oxford<sup>22</sup> explains that learning strategies are of great importance because they improve language performance, encourage learner autonomy, are teachable, and expand the role of the teacher in significant ways. Given the pronunciation instruction that promotes learner strategy awareness more basic knowledge about the relationship between learning strategies and pronunciation is needed<sup>23</sup>. Research into potentially important variables affecting pronunciation has been surprisingly absent from the literature<sup>24</sup>.

### **The importance of pronunciation learning and teaching on learner's improvement of Speaking Skills**

The most important part of learning a second language rests on pronunciation; thus speaking is so important in acquiring and using a language. Dan<sup>25</sup> claims that language competence covers many aspects. Phonetics both in theory and practice constitute the basis of speaking above all other aspects of language and pronunciation is the foundation of speaking. Good pronunciation may make the communication easier, more relaxed and more useful.

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<sup>22</sup> Oxford, R, Second language learning strategies: Current research and implications for practice, (Report No.R3) University, Center for Language Education and Research, Los Angeles: California, viewed 14 December 2002, retrieved from ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 278 273. 1986b <<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal>>

<sup>23</sup> Morley, J, 'Trippingly on the tongue: Putting serious speech/pronunciation instruction back in the TESOL equation', ESL Magazine, issue January/ February, pp. 20-23. 1998

<sup>24</sup> Peterson, S, 'Pronunciation learning strategies: A First Look', Research Report 2000, viewed 10 August 2005, retrieved from ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 450. 2000 <[http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content\\_storage\\_01/0000000b/80/25/1a/c0.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/1a/c0.pdf)>

<sup>25</sup> Dan, C, 'How can I improve my student's pronunciation?' Report submitted to China's Experimental Centre for Educational Action Research in Foreign Languages Teaching, June 2006, Guyuan, Ningxia. 2006



Within the field of language teaching, ideas on the value of teaching pronunciation are often at variance. Some believe that teachers can do little to influence the natural course of English phonological development with its often less than satisfactory results. Arguments against the explicit teaching of pronunciation rely on two basic assumptions about the acquisition of second language phonology<sup>26</sup>. Firstly it is virtually impossible for adults to acquire native like pronunciation in a foreign language. This is supported by Elliot, Guiora, Brannon, and Dull, Major, and Oyama pointing out that factors such as age, personality, cognitive style and native language phonology have been shown to influence learners' pronunciation. Secondly, the work of Krashen argues that pronunciation is an acquired skill and that focused instruction is at best useless and at worst detrimental.

Others believe that teaching can play an important role in helping learners develop ways of improving their pronunciation and shaping their attitude toward the importance of pronunciation<sup>27</sup>. The usefulness of teaching pronunciation is also a widely debated subject in the language teaching context. Fraser<sup>28</sup> concluded that most ESL teachers agree that explicit pronunciation teaching is an essential part of language courses and confidence with pronunciation allows learners to interact with native speakers, which are essential for all aspects of their linguistic development.

The field of development research indicates that teachers can make a noticeable difference if certain criteria, such as the teaching of suprasegmentals and the linking of pronunciation with listening practice, are fulfilled. Pronunciation instruction has tended to be linked to the instructional method being used. Pronunciation was almost irrelevant and

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<sup>26</sup> Jones, RH, 'Beyond listen and repeat: Pronunciation teaching materials and theories of second language acquisition', in JC Richards and WA Renandya, *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current 2002*

practice, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 12-16.

<sup>27</sup> Richards, J, & Renandya, W, *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*, Cambridge University Press, New York. 2002

<sup>28</sup> Fraser, H, 'ESL pronunciation teaching: Could it be more effective?,' *Australian Language Matters*, vol. 7, no.4, pp.7-8. 1999

therefore seldom taught in the grammar-translation method. With the emergence of more holistic, communicative methods and approaches to ESL instruction, pronunciation is addressed within the context of real communication<sup>29</sup>. It is effective pronunciation teaching that offers learners a genuine choice in how they express themselves. Carter and Nunan<sup>30</sup> describe the complexity of the process of second language acquisition as an organic rather than linear process and students need to start pronunciation lessons early and continue through high-level Academic English levels. In addition, pronunciation teaching methods should more fully address the issues of motivation and exposure by creating awareness of the importance of pronunciation and providing more exposure to input from native speakers<sup>31</sup>.

Pronunciation is the foundation of speaking. English, both written and spoken, has been accepted as the dominant means of communication for most of the world but some misunderstandings have been caused by inappropriate pronunciation<sup>32</sup>. Poor pronunciation can condemn learners to less social, academic and work advancement than they deserved. Good pronunciation may make the communication easier and more relaxed and thus more successful. Almost all learners rate pronunciation as a priority and an area in which they need more guidance<sup>33</sup>. Although the study of foreign accents has always been a fascination for some researchers, the teaching of pronunciation and oral skills in general in foreign and second language classrooms has often been low on the list of priorities.

Most of the literature on pronunciation deals with what and how to teach, while the learner remains a silent abstract in the classroom. Morley underlines

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<sup>29</sup> Celce-Murcia, M, Brinton, D, & Goodwin, J, Teaching pronunciation: Reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1996

<sup>30</sup> Carter, R & Nunan, D (eds), The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other language, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 2001

<sup>31</sup> Jones, RH, 'Beyond listen and repeat: Pronunciation teaching materials and theories of second language acquisition', in JC Richards and WA Renandya, Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 12-16. 2002

<sup>32</sup> Yong, C, 'How can I improve the pronunciation and intonation of the first year English majors to meet the demand of the new English curriculum?' Report submitted to China's Experimental centre for Educational action research in foreign languages teaching, June 25 th , 2004, Guyuan, Ningxia. 2004

that the prevalent focus on pronunciation teaching nowadays should be on designing new wave instructional programs. Moreover she stresses that these instructional designs should take into account not only language forms and functions, but also issues of learner self-involvement and learner strategy training. In other words, students who have developed the skills to monitor and modify their speech patterns if necessary should become active partners in their own learning. Yule, Hoffman and Damico assert that self-monitoring is critical for creating independent and competent learners and is a necessary part of the consciousness raising process. Finally, expansion activities are made for students to incorporate the language in their own use<sup>34</sup>.

Kriedler<sup>35</sup> states that correct and clear pronunciation are considerably important in language learning. Without them, learners may not be understood and may be poorly perceived by other English speakers. They need to have confidence in their ability to speak. Good pronunciation takes time to build up, as there are many factors involved. Learners need to hear a lot of English before they can develop a feel for the sounds of English. The learners become more confident and motivated in learning the language because of the teaching aids and materials such as tape recordings of native speakers, pictures of mouth and articulations used in the class along with the provision positive reinforcement.

Pronunciation is a very important factor in the speech process (spoken language) when the speaker achieves the goal to communicate effectively by being understood. The speech process is a process that involves several stages, beginning with the speaker's ideas and ending with the understanding of those ideas by the listener<sup>36</sup>.

Dauer states that the speaker thinks, decides what he or she is going to say and puts the ideas into words and sentences of a particular language. The

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<sup>33</sup> Willing, K, Learning styles in adult migrant education, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney.

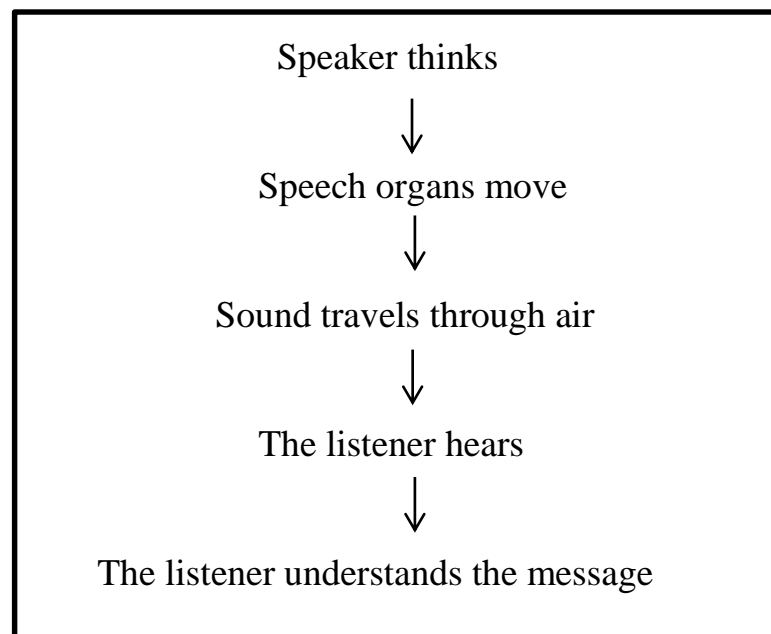
<sup>34</sup> Harmer, J, The practice of English language teaching, (3rd ed.), Pearson Education London. 2001

<sup>35</sup> Kriedler, CW , The pronunciation of English: A Course Book in phonology, Modern Phonological theory applied to English with exercises and answer key, Basil Blackwell, Oxford and New York. 1989

<sup>36</sup> Dauer, RM, Accurate English: A Complete course in pronunciation, Prentice Hall, Melbourne. 1993

speaker's brain then transforms the words and sentences into nerve impulses that it sends to the muscles in the speech organs. The speaker's speech organs move. The lungs push air up through the larynx and into the mouth and nose. The air is shaped by the tongue and lips and comes out of the speaker's mouth as sound waves. The sound travels through the air. Sometimes, the sound is changed into electrical signals, as in a telephone or tape recorder, and then is changed back into sound waves by an electronic speaker. The listener hears the sounds when the sound waves hit his or her ear. The ear changes the sound waves into nerve impulses and sends them to the brain. The listener understands the message. The listener's brain identifies specific speech sounds, interprets them as words and sentences of a particular language, and figures out their meaning. The importance of good pronunciation starts from the process of the speech organs move (pronunciation) which is related to the proficiency of the speakers until the sounds travels through the air.

### **Speech process (spoken language)**



Dauer asserts that at any point in this process, there could be a problem that results in the message intended by the speaker not being understood by the listener. Effective oral communication depends on accuracy in all stages. The articulation of particular sounds is included that the listener identifies some

speech sounds incorrectly or figures out a different meaning from the one intended by the speaker. Problems are listed as follows:

- The speaker does not know the right words or grammar to put his or her idea into language.
- The speaker cannot produce a particular sound.
- There is too much background noise or a bad telephone connection.
- The listener is hard of hearing.
- The listener identifies some speech sounds incorrectly or figures out a different meaning from the one intended by the speaker.

Research by Dauer has contributed some important data on factors that can influence the learning and teaching of pronunciation skills. Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, Gillette, Graham and Pennington discuss age and native language. They agree that adults find pronunciation more difficult than children do and that they probably will not achieve native-like pronunciation. Yet experiences with language learning and the ability to self-monitor, which come with age, can offset these limitations to some degree. These experiences include the amount and type of prior pronunciation instruction. Prior experiences with such pronunciation instruction may influence learners' success with current efforts. Learners at higher language proficiency levels may have developed habitual, systematic pronunciation errors that must be identified and addressed. The ability to recognize and internalize foreign sounds may be unequally developed in different learners. Learner attitude and motivation related to an individual's personality and learning goals can influence achievement in pronunciation. Attitude toward the target language, culture, and native speakers; degree of acculturation (including exposure to and use of the target language); personal identity issues; and motivation for learning can all support or impede pronunciation skills development.

### **Views of pronunciation training in the classroom**

In recent years, there has been a greater emphasis on teaching competent pronunciation, especially in ESL/EFL classrooms. This is due to the increasing realization that poor pronunciation can cause serious problems for learners, such as communication breakdowns, anxiety, stereotyping and discrimination<sup>37</sup>. Yet English pronunciation is neglected in classrooms throughout the world today, including Asia. One of the reasons that it is neglected or ignored is because not many English pronunciation teaching strategies or techniques are available to teachers in the classroom<sup>38</sup>. Lu<sup>39</sup> concluded that learners of ESL in Hong Kong have poor English pronunciation because they seem to lack a knowledge of English sounds. There is no practice in using phonetic symbols required in the curriculum. Moreover teachers of English pronunciation do not receive relevant professional training in the use of phonetic symbols. The reason is not unwillingness to teach pronunciation, but uncertainty as to how best to help learners' pronunciation is one of the most difficult areas for learners as well as teachers.

There are two opposing views on the teaching of pronunciation in the ESL classroom. One view holds that the purpose of teaching pronunciation is to eradicate all traces of a foreign accent through pronunciation drills. The other view holds that the teaching of pronunciation is futile after a certain age due to a decreasing ability among learners to develop native-like pronunciation in a second language. Avery and Ehrlich<sup>40</sup> assert that neither of those views is completely accurate. Factors that should be considered as having an effect on the acquisition of the sound system of a second language are biology, socio-culture, personality, and linguistics. These factors may prevent learners from attaining native-like pronunciation in a second language, so it is important

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<sup>37</sup> Morley, J , 'Trippingly on the tongue: Putting serious speech/pronunciation instruction back in the TESOL equation', ESL Magazine, issue January/ February, pp. 20-23. 1998

<sup>38</sup> Wei, M, 'A Literature review on strategies for teaching pronunciation', Journal of Experiment Child Psychology, viewed 4 August 2006,< 2006

<http://O-www.sciencedirect.com.library.vu.edu.au:80/science/journal/00220965.>>

<sup>39</sup> Lu, D, 'Phonetic symbols: A necessary stepping stone for ESL learners', English Teaching Forum, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 36-39. 2002

<sup>40</sup> Avery, P & Ehrlich, S, Teaching American English pronunciation, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

that teachers set realistic goals. Kachru and Kachru and Nelson<sup>41</sup> urges English language teaching practitioners to consider contextual realities before adopting pedagogic models of global English; language education should reflect how the language is used in that specific society. Jenkins suggests that concept of a learning model is still limited to the category of native varieties rather than embracing all different varieties of English to avoid possible confusion and inconsistency in their language learning.

Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, Gillette Graham and Pennington agree that the learner's first language influences the pronunciation of the target language and is a significant factor in accounting for foreign accents. So-called interference or negative transfer from the first language is likely to cause errors in aspiration, intonation, and rhythm in the target language and pronunciation of the basic formation of the vowel or consonant etc.

Fraser added that in the quest for effective teaching, it is worth diagnosing carefully the nature of the difficulties that may be encountered. There is a significant skill component for learners. Pronunciation is not just a cognitive 'knowing-that', it is also a physical 'knowing-how', similar to playing a sport or musical instrument. Learners need motivation and time to really practise pronunciation. It is worth spending class time discussing with learners their own ideas about what is involved in learning pronunciation. Lu claims that learners suggest they should practice speaking. Learners need help in overcoming both their expectation that pronunciation is a subject which can be learned by listening to a teacher, and the psychological and social barriers that make it difficult for them to practice effectively. In addition, there is also a significant cognitive component in pronunciation learning, which is much less often acknowledged. It is useful to think of learning to pronounce a new language as involving a kind of concept formation rather than as a purely physical skill.

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<sup>41</sup> Kachru, BB & Nelson, C 1996, World Englishes. In S. McKay and N. Hornberger (Eds.), Sociolinguistics and language teaching, pp. 71-101, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1992

The teachers must focus on two areas. Firstly, learners must be made aware of aspects of their pronunciation that result in other people being unable to understand them. Secondly, learners must be given the opportunity to practice aspects of the English sound system which are crucial for their own improvement. Firth<sup>42</sup> stated that learners' achievement of a near perfect standard may individually vary to the degree in motivation, sensitivity to accuracy, age and education factors which are beyond a teacher's control.

However, teachers should pay attention to the development of self-correction techniques and self-monitoring strategies. Self-correction is the ability to correct oneself when a pronunciation error has been pointed out by teachers or peers. It is critical that the teacher help to develop strategies which will allow the learner to self-correct and self-monitor by focusing on motivation (learners should understand why accuracy of oral production is important), explanations (description and demonstration appropriate to proficiency levels), practice (adequate opportunities to practice) and feedback (receive supportive and accurate feedback from teachers and learners in class).

The role of pronunciation in schools of language teaching has varied widely from having virtually no role in the grammar-translation method to being the main focus in the audio-lingual method where emphasis is on the traditional notions of pronunciation, minimal pairs, drills and short conversations<sup>43</sup>. Situational language teaching, developed in Britain, also mirrored the audio-lingual view of the pronunciation class. Morley states:

*The pronunciation class...was one that gave primary attention to phonemes and their meaningful contrasts, environmental allophonic variations, combinatory phonotactic rules, and pronunciation of the basic formation of vowel or consonant etc., along with...attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation.*

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<sup>42</sup> Firth, S, 'Developing self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies', in P. Avery & S. Ehrlich, Teaching American English Pronunciation, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1992

<sup>43</sup> Castillo, L, 'L2 Pronunciation Pedagogy: Where have you been? Where are we headed?', The Language Teacher vol.14, no. 10, pp. 3-7. 1990



During the late 1960s and the 1970s, questions were asked about the role of pronunciation in the ESL/EFL curriculum, whether the focus of the programs and the instructional methods were effective or not. Pronunciation programs were viewed as “meaningless non communicative drill-and-exercise gambits”. In many language programs, the teaching of pronunciation was pushed aside, as many studies concluded that little relationship exists between teaching pronunciation in the classroom and attained proficiency in pronunciation. The strongest factors found to affect pronunciation, i.e. native language and motivation, seemed to have little to do with classroom activities<sup>44</sup>.

Suter and Suter and Purcell concluded that pronunciation practice in class had little effect on the learner’s pronunciation skills. The attainment of accurate pronunciation in a second language is a matter substantially beyond the control of educators. They qualified their findings by stating that variables of formal training and the quality of the training in pronunciation could affect the results, as would the area of pronunciation that had been emphasized, that is ‘segmentals’ (individual sounds of language) or ‘suprasegmentals’ (the ‘musical patterns’ of English, melody, pitch patterns, rhythm, and timing patterns<sup>45</sup>. Pennington stated that there was “no firm basis for asserting categorically that pronunciation is not teachable or that it is not worth spending time on...”. Pennington<sup>46</sup> questioned the validity of Suter and Purcell’s findings as the factors of formal pronunciation training and the quality of the teaching could affect any research results. Also, Stern<sup>47</sup> stated that “There is no convincing empirical evidence which could help us sort out the various positions on the merits of pronunciation trainings”.

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<sup>44</sup> Suter, R & Purcell, E, ‘Predictors of pronunciation accuracy: A reexamination, *Language Learning*, vol.30, issue 2, pp.271-287. 1980

<sup>45</sup> Gilbert, J, *Clear Speech. Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in American English. Teacher’s manual and answer key*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1984b

<sup>46</sup> Pennington, M, ‘Reflecting on teaching and learning: A development focus for the second language classroom’, in J Flowerdew, M Brock, S Hsia (eds.), *Perspectives on Second Language Teacher Education*, City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, Kowloon, pp.47-65. 1992

<sup>47</sup> Stern, HH, *Issues and options in language teaching*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1992

If the above views represent a split in the teaching of pronunciation, what can the teacher do to improve their students' pronunciation if improvement can be obtained? Jones, Rusman, and Evans found that students with prior exposure to phonological rules and principles, although they do not always produce more accurate pronunciation, seem to be better equipped to assess their own speech and to be more aware of their particular problems.

Changing outlooks on language learning and teaching have influenced a move from teacher-centred to learner-centred classrooms. Within the field of education over the last few decades a gradual but significant shift has taken place, resulting in less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater stress on learners and learning. This change has been reflected in various ways in language education and applied linguistics, ranging from the Northeast Conference paper entitled 'Shifting the Instructional Focus to the Learner an annual Learners' Conference' held in conjunction with the TESL Canada convention since 1991, 'Key works on the learner-centered curriculum'<sup>48</sup> and 'Learner-centeredness as Language Education'.

Concurrently, there was a shift from specific linguistic competencies to broader communicative competencies as goals for teachers and students. Morley states the need for the integration of pronunciation with oral communication, with more emphasis from segmentals to suprasegmentals, more emphasis on individual learner needs, and meaningful task-based practice and introducing peer correction and group interaction<sup>49</sup>. Research has shown that teaching phonemes is not enough for intelligibility in communication<sup>50</sup>.

With the emphasis on meaningful communication and Morley's premise, that "intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence", teachers should include pronunciation in their courses and expect

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<sup>48</sup> Nunan, D, *The learner-centred curriculum*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Nunan, D 1995, 'Closing the gap between learning and instruction', *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 29, no.1, pp.133-158. 1988

<sup>49</sup> Castillo, L, 'L2 Pronunciation Pedagogy: Where have you been? Where are we headed?', *The Language Teacher* vol.14, no. 10, pp. 3-7. 1990

<sup>50</sup> Cohen, AD, *Strategies in learning and using a second language*, Addison Wesley Longman, New York. 1998

students to do well in them. Without adequate pronunciation skills, the learners' ability to communicate is severely limited. Morley believes that not attending to a student's need is an abrogation of professional responsibility.

Other research gives support to Morley's belief of the need for professional responsibility when a given non-native speaker's pronunciation falls below the level at which he or she will be able to communicate orally no matter how good his or her control of English grammar and vocabulary might be<sup>51</sup>. Gilbert<sup>52</sup> believes the skills of listening comprehension and pronunciation are interdependent so that if speakers cannot hear English well and cannot be understood easily, they are cut off from conversation with native speakers. Nooteboom<sup>53</sup> also has suggested that speech production is affected by speech perception; the hearer has become an important factor in communication discourse. This illustrates the need to integrate pronunciation with communicative activities to give the students situations to develop their pronunciation by listening and speaking. The current research and the current trend reversal in the thinking of pronunciation shows there is a consensus that a learner's pronunciation in a foreign language needs to be taught in conjunction with communicative practices for the learner to be able to communicate effectively with native speakers.

### **Pronunciation learning and the target of comfortable intelligibility**

Morley states that the goal of pronunciation should be changed from the attainment of perfect pronunciation to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, communicability, increased self-confidence, the development of speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom. Abercrombie defines comfortable intelligibility as pronunciation which can be understood with little or no conscious effort on the part

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<sup>51</sup> Celce-Murcia, M, 'Teaching pronunciation as communication', in J Morley (ed.) Current perspectives on pronunciation, TESOL, Washington D.C, pp.5-12. 1987

<sup>52</sup> Gilbert, J, Clear speech. Pronunciation and listening comprehension in American English. Student's manual and answer key, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1984a

<sup>53</sup> Nooteboom, S, 'Is Speech Production controlled by Speech Perception?', In VD Broecke et al. (ed.), Sound structure, studies for Antonie Cohen, Foris, Dordrecht, pp. 183-94. 1983

of listener. Morley also states that the overall aim is for the learner to develop spoken English that is easy to understand, serves the learner's individual needs, and allows a positive image as a speaker of a foreign language. In addition, the learner needs to develop awareness and monitoring skills that will allow learning opportunities outside the classroom environment. It is obvious that creating a stronger link between pronunciation and communication can help increase learners' motivation by bringing pronunciation to a level of intelligibility and encouraging learners' awareness of its potential as a tool for making their language not only easier to understand but more effective.

Pronunciation is clearly a central factor in learners' success in making themselves understood<sup>54</sup>. Morley<sup>55</sup> also states that intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence that teachers should include in courses and expect learners to do well. The ability to employ stress, intonation, and articulation in ways that support comprehension is a skill that for learners from many language backgrounds will only come slowly. Elson urges that learners need to be encouraged to immerse themselves in the target language and to persist in spite of the difficulties that are part of the language-learning process. The experience of unintelligibility or incomprehension grows larger because of sensitivity to 'correctness' or the need to communicate successfully in the target language. The speaker's self image and sense of accomplishment is closely bound to understanding and being understood. The result can be a high degree of frustration for the speaker or listener who might see each moment of incomprehension as a personal fault and responsibility. Klyhn<sup>56</sup> observes that learners should be made aware that every message they utter needs to be understood.

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<sup>54</sup> Elson, N, 'Unintelligibility and the ESL learner,' in P. Avery & S. Ehrlich, Teaching American English pronunciation, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1992

<sup>55</sup> Morley, J, 'The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages', TESOL Quarterly, vol. 25, no.1, pp. 51-74. 1991

<sup>56</sup> Klyhn, J, 'International English: Communication is the name of the game,' TESOL Newsletter, vol.20, no.2, pp.1-6. 1986

Cook defined pronunciation as the production of English sounds. Pronunciation is learnt by repeating sounds and correcting them when produced inaccurately. When learners start learning pronunciation they make new habits and overcome the difficulties resulting from the first language. According to Yates<sup>57</sup>, pronunciation is the production of sounds that is used for making meaning. Pronunciation is the production of a sound system which doesn't interfere with communication either from the speakers' or the listeners' viewpoint<sup>58</sup>. Pronunciation is the way of uttering a word in an accepted manner<sup>59</sup>. Furthermore, Richard and Schmidt defined pronunciation as the method of producing certain sounds.

According to James<sup>60</sup>, acceptable pronunciation can be understood based on the following basic levels. In level 1, what the speaker is saying is not understandable to people. The speaker uses the wrong sounds when producing English words or uses the wrong prosodic features when producing English sentences. According to Hinofotis and Bailey, there is a beginning level for pronunciation. If the pronunciation of a speaker falls below this level, he/she will be not be able to communicate without paying attention to his/her knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In level 2, what the speaker is saying can be understandable to people but the speaker's pronunciation is not acceptable to listen to because he/she has a strange and heavy accent.

Morley<sup>61</sup> said that when a speaker's pronunciation is heavily accented it can affect the speaker's understanding. In level 3, people understand the speaker and the speaker's English is acceptable to listen to. Scovel<sup>62</sup> called it comfortable intelligibility and it should be the aim of English pronunciation. Therefore, the

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<sup>57</sup> Yates, L., & Zielinski, B. Give It a Go: Teaching Pronunciation to Adults. Sydney, Australia: AMEPRC. Available: [http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/resources/classroom\\_resources/give\\_it\\_a\\_go](http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/resources/classroom_resources/give_it_a_go) 2009

<sup>58</sup> Paulston, C. B., & Burder, M. N. (1976). Teaching English as a Second Language. Techniques and Procedures. Cambridge: Winthrop Publishers, Inc.

<sup>59</sup> Otlowski, M. Pronunciation: What Are the Expectations? The Internet TESL Journal. 5(1). Retrieved From June 26, 2016, from: <http://www.iteslj.org/Article/Otlowski/pronunciation.html>. 1998

<sup>60</sup> James, R. B. Teaching Pronunciation Gets a Bad R.A.P: A Framework for Teaching Pronunciation. Hankuk: University of Foreign Studies. 2010

<sup>61</sup> Morley, J. A Multidimensional Curriculum Design for Speech-pronunciation Instruction. In J. Morley (Ed.), Pronunciation Theory and Pedagogy: New Views, New Directions (64-91). Alexandria, VA: TESOL. 1994.

important question is this: what shapes acceptable pronunciation? A speaker has acceptable pronunciation when other people can understand him/her and the speaker's English is of great value to listen to.

According to James<sup>63</sup>, the aim of learning pronunciation for some learners is the native-like accent. This can probably be a primary objective but it cannot be the ideal goal of teachers who intend to improve their learners' pronunciation. Morley expressed that an accent that is too different from a known standard can become confusing; therefore, it is suggested that learners' accents become close to a standard variety. If a speaker has a heavy English accent, this may cause negative judgments about his/her personality and competence. If learners need not to pronounce like native speakers of English and at the same time they need to have an accent that is near to a known standard, then what English models can a teacher use with his/her students?

James answered the above question and stated that there are different kinds of models that can be found for teaching and learning English pronunciation. One can turn on his/her TV and find channels such as CNN International, BBC, or Sky News. These channels help one hear many different people from Germany, France, and the other non-English-speaking countries. All of these channels have acceptable pronunciation and this will facilitate the process of persons' understanding. According to Yates and Zielinski<sup>64</sup>, much attention to English pronunciation indicates that pronunciation has a key role in learning English. If teachers don't present the general rules and principles toward comprehensible pronunciation to their EFL learners, nobody will certainly do it. This is the responsibility of EFL teachers to do this by teaching the new sounds, words, sentences, and phrases and arranging appropriate materials for understandable

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<sup>62</sup> Scovel, T. *A Time to Speak: A Psycholinguistic Inquiry into the Critical Period for Human Speech*. New York: Newbury House. 1988

<sup>63</sup> James, R. B.. *Teaching Pronunciation Gets a Bad R.A.P: A Framework for Teaching Pronunciation*. Hankuk: University of Foreign Studies. 2010

<sup>64</sup> Yates, L., & Zielinski, B. *Give It a Go: Teaching Pronunciation to Adults*. Sydney, Australia: AMEPRC. Available: [http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/resources/classroom\\_resources/give\\_it\\_a\\_go](http://www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/resources/classroom_resources/give_it_a_go). 2009.

pronunciation in their EFL classes. EFL teachers should explore new ways of indicating, practicing, and giving feedback on English pronunciation that are actually appropriate for learners to learn English pronunciation easily and effectively.

According to Hismanoglu<sup>65</sup>, pronunciation instruction is very important for oral communication. It is also a significant part of communicative competence. Although the role of English pronunciation is important in English language, many teachers do not pay enough attention to this important skill. The problems of pronunciation instruction have been demonstrated by some researchers. Morley (1991) said that it is necessary for teachers to teach English pronunciation in ESL and EFL classes although many teachers do not pay attention to it in their instruction.

Pourhosein Gilakjani<sup>66</sup> expressed that English pronunciation is one of the least favorite areas for teachers to teach in their classes. Morley<sup>67</sup> also said that intelligible pronunciation is a necessary part of communicative competence and without having perfect pronunciation skills learners would not be able to communicate effectively. Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu declared that many teachers try to teach grammar, vocabulary, and the four language skills for their learners without incorporating English pronunciation into their curriculum.

According to Harmer<sup>68</sup>, a lot of teachers do not pay enough attention to English pronunciation. There are different reasons for this negligence. Many learners state that they do not need to learn pronunciation and learning pronunciation is a waste of time. They state that just communication in English is enough and when they are understood, nothing else is important.

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<sup>65</sup> Hismanoglu, M. ).Current Perspectives on Pronunciation Learning and Teaching. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 2(1), 101-110. 2006

<sup>66</sup> Pourhosein Gilakjani, A. A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' English Pronunciation Learning and the Strategies for Instruction. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(3), 119-128. 2012

<sup>67</sup> Morley, J. The Pronunciation Component in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(1), 51-74. 1991.

<sup>68</sup> Harmer, J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman. 2001.

Harmer emphasized that the main aim of teaching and learning in any language is to enable students to communicate in the target language and if this is the case, communication is an important term to explain.

Communication means to understand and be understood. Many learners think that because they can talk to their teachers and other students so they can easily communicate in English. But they make a big mistake. There are a lot of reasons for their mistakes. Firstly, teachers can understand their students much more easily than an average person because their ears are used to 'bad English.' Secondly, other students are the speakers of the same language have the same pronunciation patterns and make the same mistakes so it is easy for them to understand each other. Thirdly, the classroom is not a real situation and it just takes place at school and students do not have an opportunity to talk to native speakers .

Many teachers are not aware of the importance of pronunciation. Teachers pay enough attention to grammar and vocabulary in learning a foreign language and they help learners become skillful in listening and reading. Secondly, the majority of teachers think that pronunciation study is too difficult and monotonous for learners.

According to Harmer, the lack of high quality, suitable teaching and learning materials, and the lack of time to practice pronunciation are the major reasons that cause teachers not to pay enough attention to English pronunciation.

Teachers think that they have too much to do and pronunciation instruction just wastes their time. Some teachers believe that their students can learn correct pronunciation without particular pronunciation instruction.

Kenworthy<sup>69</sup> said that there are some factors for the learning of acceptable pronunciation by some students without depending on their teachers. They are learners' phonetic abilities, integrative motivation, and achievement motivation. There are just some students who know the value of good pronunciation. This is the responsibility of teachers to persuade their learners to study pronunciation



severely and help them learn to pronounce English sounds correctly. Teachers should tell their students that their very first English lesson is pronunciation. If students do not practice good pronunciation at the beginning of their learning process, they may learn wrongly. Therefore, words should be learnt regarding to their pronunciation. Otherwise, this may damage learners' overall success.

Harmer expressed that the first thing that native speakers notice during a conversation is pronunciation. Grammar and vocabulary are important elements of language and they can be useless if the speakers cannot pronounce those elements or words accurately. Native speakers can understand people, despite their grammatical errors, if they use accurate pronunciation. Communicative efficiency can be guaranteed by correct pronunciation. Pronunciation is an essential part of communication and without correct pronunciation nobody can say that he/she knows the English language perfectly.

Harmer also emphasized that through pronunciation instruction, students not only learn different sounds and sound features but also improve their speaking skill. Concentrating on sounds causes learners aware of where words should be stressed and they give them more information about spoken English and help them get the goal of comprehension and intelligibility.

According to Kenworthy, some teachers state that pronunciation instruction cannot be useful because only a few learners will be able to get native-like pronunciation. We should know that native-like pronunciation may be an ideal goal only for some learners and not for all learners. Intelligibility is a logical aim for the majority of learners. Harmer stated that learners can rarely achieve 'perfect' pronunciation. Some of them do not like to pronounce like native speakers and they like to retain their foreign accent because it is a part of their identity. Native-like pronunciation may be an inappropriate goal for most learners. Understandable pronunciation should be one of the basic aims of language learners. Pronunciation instruction has some realistic aims that need to be emphasized in order to develop communicative competence.

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<sup>69</sup> Kenworthy, J. Teaching English Pronunciation. Longman, Harlow. 1987. P.25

According to Wrembel, these aims are 1) functional intelligibility-developing spoken English that is easy to understand for listeners; 2) functional communicability-developing spoken language that meets communicative needs; 3) increased self-confidence-developing a positive self-image; and 4) speech-monitoring abilities and speech-modification strategies-that will allow students to develop intelligibility, communicability and confidence outside the classroom.

According to Butler-Pascoe and Wibur, the goals of teaching pronunciation are to develop English that is easy to understand and not confusing to the listener, develop English that meets persons' needs and that results in communicative competence, help learners feel more comfortable in using English, develop a positive self-awareness as non-native speakers in oral communication, develop speech consciousness, personal speech monitoring skills and speech adjustment strategies that help learners develop in and out of the class.

Morley expressed that teachers do not teach but facilitate learners' learning pronunciation. The role of teachers is like a coach, a speech coach, and a pronunciation coach. The pronunciation coach has the critical role of checking and guiding modifications of spoken English at two levels (a) speech production, and (b) speech performance.

According to Morley, teachers perform pronunciation diagnostic analyses and select those aspects that can have a great effect on changing the speech of learners toward increased comprehensibility, assist learners in setting both long-range and short-term objectives, develop a lot of instructional modes and modules (e.g., whole-class instruction, small-group work, individual one-on-one tutorial sessions; prerecorded audio and/or video materials; work with new computer program speech analysis systems), structure in-class speaking and listening activities with invited native speakers and non-native speakers of English., provide models, cues, and suggestions for modifications of elements in the speech patterning for all learners, monitor learners' speech production and speech performance and evaluate pattern changes as a continuous part of the program, and persuade learners' speech awareness and realistic self-monitoring.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Methods.**

I used the experimental design in the research paper.

#### **Instruments**

In the survey instruments such as observation and questionnaire were utilized efficaciously

#### **Participants**

Participants in my research work consisted of ten English language teachers: seven female and three male teachers. The age range of the teachers was between 23 and 40. For classroom observation I chose 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> form pupils. The level of language proficiency of pupils was different according to their ages.

The main reason why I have chosen this research method is that I was inspired by the views of several linguists and scholars. For example, Christine states that teachers as models of pronunciation carry a huge responsibility in their classrooms, they influence their learners either in a positive or negative way and their main goal is to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere. On the other hand, their practical proficiency is not sufficient since if the teacher can only exemplify pronunciation by his or her own speech performance, the learners are left to work out what is significant for themselves. Christine suggests that

teachers play the most important role in teaching pronunciation to young learners who are studying English as a second language. For that reason I decided to carry out my research by analyzing activities which were used by teachers of school №49 which is located in Kushtepa district. As this school was my workplace I had enough time to do a thorough experiment. I held my research in a two-week period.

#### **IV. DATA COLLECTION**

##### **Observation**

Observation is not only a fundamental activity associated with action research but is also a requisite tool for scientific enquiry. Observation as a research technique has several advantages, among which is the fact that the study takes place in the natural environment of the participants, allowing them to act freely.

In my observation I scrutinized the lessons by teachers of foreign languages as M.Mo`minova, U.Pulatova, S.Mamatov and Z.Kushakov. The goal of my observation is to check the use of pronunciation methods and activities during the lessons. I want to identify how the pronunciation English Language is taught in primary and secondary classes.

The teachers knew that the classes were observed for research purposes, but the focus of the observations was revealed to them only after the period of observation, in order not to influence their teaching and behavior in class. They did not know whether the focus of the observation was on them or their pupils.

The choice of the record-keeping method of the observations was made between written accounts and video recordings. Audio recording was not seen as an option due to practical reasons – classrooms are too large and often have poor acoustics, teachers move about, and important information can be

drowned in other voices and general noise. The combination of recording and writing transcripts was ruled out because the study did not aim at a detailed analysis of what is said during the lessons. Video recording would have offered a good, re-playable visual and audio account when analyzing the data, but teachers and pupils, if not used to being video recorded, might have been affected by the presence of the video camera, and getting appropriate permissions for the video recordings from the schools, the teachers and the pupils or their parents if they were under-aged could have been problematic. Overall, it might have been more difficult to find teachers willing to participate. Written notes were considered adequate for the present purposes and were chosen as the method, though immediate decisions about what to record were required and the possibility of action replay was excluded. However, I preferred to observe their lessons with pen and paper rather than a video camera was estimated to have less of an effect on the teachers and the pupils.

Data gathering was carried out as focused observations. An observation form (see Appendix 1) was prepared beforehand and filled in during the lessons. The form consisted of a list of pronunciation teaching methods drawn from pronunciation teaching literature<sup>70</sup> and a textbook analysis of current EFL textbooks used in Uzbekistan<sup>71</sup>. In addition, the form included space for notes after each pronunciation teaching method in the list, which was used to describe the procedure in class if the method in question was used by the teacher.

**Table 2**  
**Background information about the observed teachers**

Teacher	Qualification	Experience	Age of pupils
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<sup>70</sup> Seidlhofer, B. Pronunciation. In Carter, R. and Nunan, D. (eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2001.

<sup>71</sup> Tergujeff, E. (2010). Pronunciation teaching materials in Finnish EFL textbooks. In Henderson, A. (ed.), *English Pronunciation: Issues and Practices (EPIP): Proceedings of the First International Conference*. June 3–5 2009, Université de Savoie, Chambéry, France. Université de Savoie, France: Laboratoire LLS. 189–205.

U.Pulatova	B.A	5 years	7-8
N.Muminova	B.A	2 years	9-10
S.Mamatov	B.A	4 years	14-16
Z.Kushakov	B.A	4 years	17-18

U.Pulatova, a professional primary school teacher, was observed for four 45-minute English lessons during a period of two weeks in spring 2019. Her education includes some studies of English, but she is not a formally qualified EFL subject teacher by Uzbek standards. She teaches English at the beginners` level, i.e. to basic education pupils aged 7 to 8, and has teaching experience of 2 years. The size of her teaching groups was 15 pupils on average. When asked about her choice of pronunciation teaching materials after the classroom observations, she stated that she uses exercises included in the course books, other materials such as cards and pictures, and materials she prepares herself. She also stated that during the classroom observation period, she taught the same amount of pronunciation compared to the usual.

N.Muminova, also a formally qualified EFL subject teacher, was observed for four 45-minute lessons during a period of two weeks in spring 2019. She teaches English in primary school, i.e. to pupils aged 9 to 10. The average size of her teaching groups was 25 pupils, and she has teaching experience of 5 years. In pronunciation teaching she uses exercises that are included in the course book and in specific pronunciation and oral skills textbooks. In addition, she prepares materials herself. She taught the regular amount of pronunciation during the period of classroom observations.

Z.Kushakov was observed for four 45-minute lessons during a period of two weeks in spring 2019. He holds a B.A. degree in English. He teaches English to pupils aged 17 to 18 at the basic education level. The size of his teaching groups was 14 pupils on average. He has 4 years of teaching experience. After the classroom observations, he said that she uses pronunciation exercises

included in the course books only. He stated that he taught less pronunciation during the observations than in general.

S.Mamatov was observed for four 45-minute lessons during a period of two weeks in spring 2019. She is a formally qualified EFL subject teacher, and teaches English at the basic education level and also in upper secondary school, i.e. to pupils aged 14 to 16. His teaching groups averaged 15 pupils. He has 5 years of teaching experience. When asked after the classroom observations, he indicated that he uses pronunciation exercises included in the course books, materials from other sources and his own materials. He estimated that he taught pronunciation the regular amount during the classroom observation period.

During the observation I checked all the teachers' lessons thoroughly: some of them made use of effective approaches and interesting activities which they created themselves. However, others only relied on the textbook itself and used traditional Grammar Translation method. After checking the activities which were utilized during the lessons I came to a conclusion that pronunciation related activities given in the textbook "Fly High" is inappropriate for pupils. This book lacks efficacious exercises (not having enough listening and pronunciation exercises) of teaching enunciation of English language. By contrast, the textbook "Kids English" is effective enough as it contains more pronunciation exercises and focuses more on vocabulary teaching by using phonetic approaches. This is, in my view, is the most beneficial way of improving pronunciation. According to my personal experience below I am going to give my own exercises and intriguing games as they are considered to be useful enough for improving the skill of pronunciation.

### **The activities and exercises for pupils of the 1-3 forms.**

#### **Listening and repeating.**

In this technique, a teacher or recorded native speaker are set as models for imitating sounds. It is one of the most traditional ways of teaching pronunciation, but it can be made more interesting with using CDs, interactive boards, internet activities, etc. Pupils could also record themselves and listen to

their own pronunciation. This technique is suitable for all ages from young learners to adults.

### **Minimal pair drills**

Words which have the same pronunciation except one phoneme are called minimal pairs (man/men, bright/bride, tin/thin, sin/sing, etc.). This technique helps learners to recognize differences between sounds and it helps them to articulate individual sounds. In practicing minimal pair drills, learners should first differentiate, then recognize the sounds and finally to imitate the minimal pairs with correct sounds. This technique should be also used with all age groups, but probably more suitable for young learners who have the elasticity of the brain to recognize and imitate sounds they hear. Adult learners might struggle with such activities without explicit explanation.

### **Ear training**

It is a very effective teaching technique, where learners focus their attention on hearing. In pronunciation there is a close relationship between speech perception and speech production.

Ear training is also a teaching technique in music. Traditionally, the ear training technique was connected to identification of individual sounds. However, it can be just as efficient in teaching suprasegmental features, such as word stress, rhythm or intonation. Recognition of individual phonemes can be done using minimal pair tests. Listening for a specific task can be used for both segmental and suprasegmental features. Ear training should be used with all age groups, but it is more efficient with young learners, who have the ability to hear different or new sounds, rhythm of the speech and intonation. Adults lose this ability and it can be frustrating for them not to be able to hear the differences in speech.

### **Tongue twisters**

Tongue twisters are purposefully created sentences or rhymes aiming at certain sounds which are difficult to pronounce. Tongue twisters are in all languages and are created for pronunciation training of the mother tongue. However they are very useful in foreign language learning too. They are useful for



all age groups, can bring a lot of fun to the class and learners usually enjoy saying them. To avoid frustration, they should be practiced once the required sound has been learnt.

### **Songs and rhymes**

Using songs and rhymes is considered to be a very effective way of teaching English. They are rhythmical, learners can dance, move or do TPR while singing. By singing or saying rhymes, learners practice pronunciation drills, rhythm or intonation. Songs and rhymes are especially useful and loved by young learners who love singing and do not like static exercises. They are very motivational too. Songs and rhymes can be used for all age groups, but older learners and adults can be more shy and reluctant to sing.

### **Recording learners' pronunciation**

This technique involves audio-recordings of learners' speech, free conversations, role plays, tongue twisters, reading, etc. It is a very useful technique, which is time consuming, as the follow up listening takes a lot of time. It is valuable though to get a feedback on own pronunciation. However, it is suitable for older learners who can hear and analyse their own mistakes.

### **Teaching sounds and explicit learning**

Explicit learning on the segmental level can be done by introducing sounds in new words and it is explained how these sounds are articulated. Learners can practice new sounds by drilling or other techniques. The next step is to recognize particular sounds in different words (hut, cat, cup, hat). Learners are introduced same spelling patterns with different sounds (paid, said/none, gone). Learners practice connecting words with sounds by grouping words according to e.g. same vowel sounds in them. Using crosswords focusing on sounds, rhyming crosswords, odd one out, putting similar sounds in the contrast are some other activities practicing particular sounds. These explicit teaching techniques are more suitable for older learners who have lower ability to imitate unknown sounds. But

by understanding how to articulate new sound and by practicing them with such activities, older learners can gain correct pronunciation.

### **Suprasegmentals and explicit learning**

Explicit learning can be on the level of suprasegmentals, where learners learn and practice word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, weak forms, intonation. Word stress can be practiced by counting syllables, highlighting stressed syllable, recognizing different stress patterns, grouping words according to a stress pattern, etc. Sentence stress and rhythm can be practiced by recognizing lexical (stressed words) and function words (in their weak form). Example sentences, jazz chants, rhymes, tongue twisters practicing rhythm can be drilled. Songs are also very good activity to practice suprasegmentals. Intonation is difficult to teach explicitly, as it is mostly produced at subconscious level. There are some rules to follow on what attitudes and emotions different tones can carry. Drama techniques and simulations are good techniques where intonation is especially important. Suprasegmentals taught explicitly are suitable mainly for adults.

There are many different techniques and activities which can be used for teaching and practicing pronunciation. Some of them are suitable for age groups and some are better for young learners and some for adults. This paper suggested most of the available teaching techniques for pronunciation with the focus on suitability for different age groups.

### **Questionnaire**

After the observation period the teachers were asked to fill in a short questionnaire (see Appendix 2) regarding teaching materials they use in their pronunciation teaching. Because of the relatively short observation period, the teachers were also asked to estimate how much they taught pronunciation during the observations compared to usual. The questionnaire in the current research provides with quantitative data.

In total, ten English language teachers who teach pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> forms of school №49 were involved to answer a questionnaire. The questionnaire was

originally written in English. The teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire consisting of two types of questions one is “Yes” or “No” questions and the other is multiple choice questions. Overall the questionnaire made up 6 questions. The purpose of using this method was to find out whether pronunciation teaching materials are being used effectively or not. Besides that, it also aimed to check the teachers opinion towards the activities given in the course books.

## **V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the findings of the study. In this section summary of all teaching methods used by the observed teachers is presented to give an overall picture of the range of methods. Listen and repeat exercises were mainly imitating word lists the teacher read from the course books. Similarly, reading aloud was often done from course books. These methods are not dealt with any further. An example of a pronunciation rule is provided within one of the sections. Furthermore, I will explore which teaching methods were not used and which areas of pronunciation were not taught by the observed teachers.

During the observed 14 EFL lessons, different pronunciation teaching activities were detected. These are presented in a teacher-specific manner in Table 3 below. Overall the activities were very traditional, including the time-honored listen and repeat tasks, reading aloud, giving rules and teachers correcting and pointing out how to pronounce. Some phonetic training and ear training were also found to be used by the observed teachers.

**Table 3. Summary of teaching methods**

<b>Teaching methods</b>	<b>Times used in teaching</b>				<b>Total</b>
	U.Pulatova	N.Muminova	S.Mamatov	Z.Kushakov	
Phonetic exercises	4	3	-	-	<b>7</b>

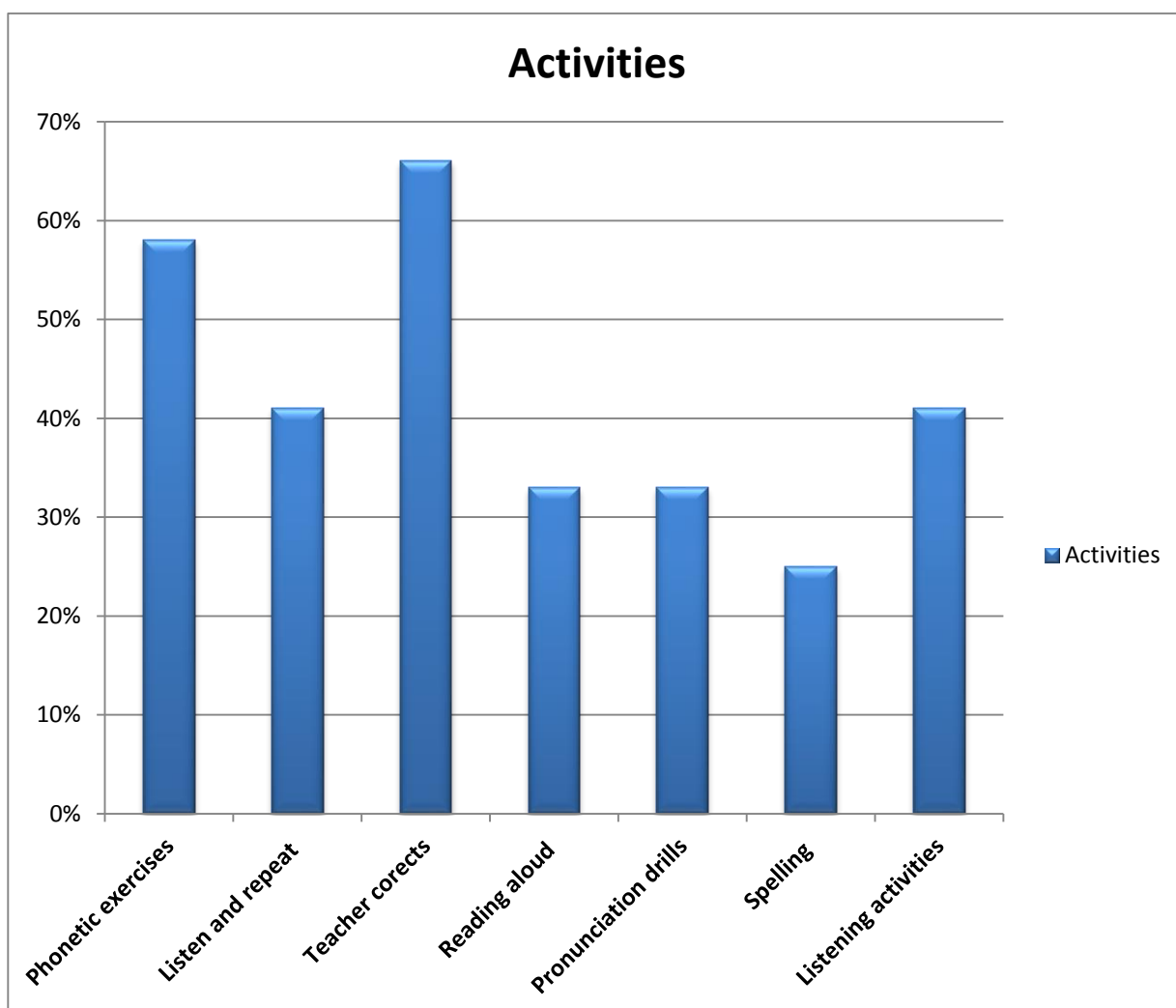
Listen and repeat	3	2	-	-	<b>5</b>
Teacher corrects	2	1	3	2	<b>8</b>
Read aloud	2	2	1	1	<b>4</b>
Pronunciation drills	3	1	-	-	<b>4</b>
Spelling	-	-	-	3	<b>3</b>
Listening activities	-	-	3	2	<b>5</b>

As predicted, the teachers showed great variation in their teaching methods. U.Pulatova, teaching beginners, was by far the most active in teaching pronunciation: she used pronunciation tasks in most of the categories that were found to be in use by the four teachers. Roughly half of all pronunciation tasks detected during the observations were found in U.Pulatova`s teaching. I observed her lessons thoroughly and with great attention as she was quite experienced although she was young. In her lessons I found out a lot of effective use of pronunciation activities. She mainly taught 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> forms and her encouragement to teach pronunciation to young learners can be of great importance. She utilized Communicative Language Teaching Approach in teaching pronunciation more than Grammar Translation method. For example, the most useful method of teaching is teaching with phonetic exercises which she did successfully and achieved her goal.

N.Muminova`s, teaching at intermediate level, was the complete opposite of U.Pulatova`s. She did not teach much pronunciation during the observed lessons, and when she did, she always used the same method: reading aloud. Her approach towards teaching pronunciation is out of date. As it is clear from the table that she utilized the mentioned exercises in the table in a limited way. It means that her 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> form pupils were taught in Grammar Translation method. Therefore, their skill of pronunciation did not see any increase. In her lessons she only utilized activities related to vocabulary and her pupils encountered several problems: mispronouncing words, spelling mistakes and etc.

The teacher of secondary school pupils, S.Mamatov, was slightly less active in pronunciation teaching. A closer look at especially S.Mamatov`s choice of methods demonstrates that the proficiency level and/or age of the pupils possibly affect teaching. Compared to the other teachers, S.Mamatov`s pronunciation teaching is responsible for the lowest number. He concentrates on listening activities and uses them frequently. The other teacher, Z.Kushakov is more practical. In his pronunciation teaching, he focuses more on spelling activities. Only U.Pulatova and M.Muminova used phonetic exercises effectively in their teaching – perhaps phonetic activities are seen as too childish for teenagers.

**Bar chart. Percentages of pronunciation teaching activities used by EFL teachers in a two-week period**

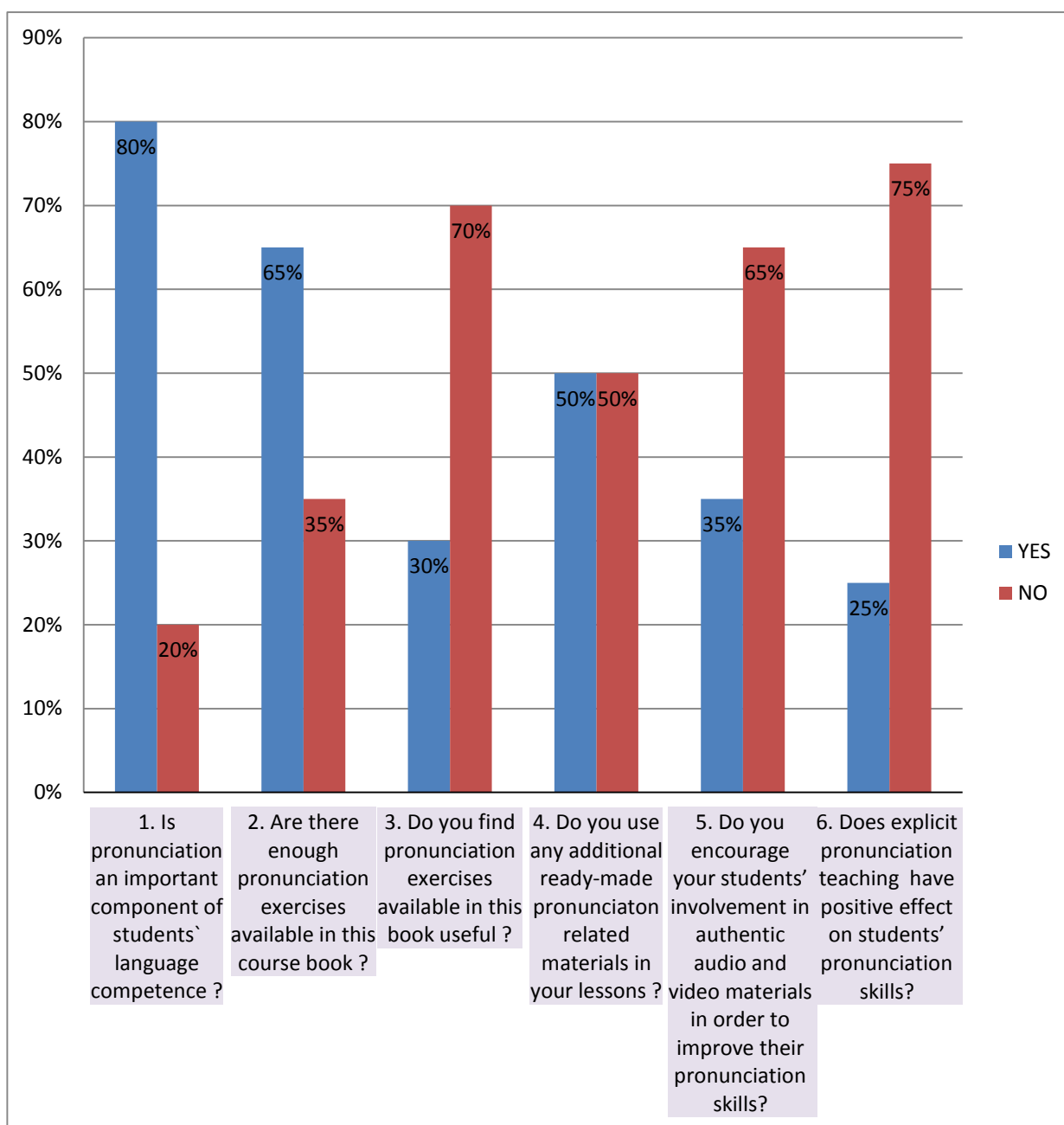


It is clear from the table that usage teacher corrects activities used in the teachers` lessons is responsible for the highest proportion and the second highest percentage with under 60% is related to phonetic exercises. listen and repeat, listening activities are accountable for the same trend (around 41%). However, pronunciation drills, spelling (over 30%) and reading aloud (25%) activities were rarely utilized by the EFL teachers.

### **Analyses of Questionnaires**

The results of the teachers` answers to the questionnaire are shown in the diagram below. This graphic shows teachers` responses teaching pronunciation.

**Bar chart 2 shows EFL teachers` opinions about pronunciation teaching**



It is obvious from the diagram that 80% of respondents agree that pronunciation skill is a crucial part of learning English, while 20% of teachers consider pronunciation as unimportant tool of studying a foreign language.

Regarding the availability of pronunciation exercises in the course books “Kids English” and “Fly high” 65% of teachers (they were mostly primary school teachers) answered as “Yes”, whereas 35% chose that there is an insufficiency of enunciation related activities in the course book (Fly High).

However, only around one-third of teachers consider that activities given in the course books are developed and they are beneficial for teaching pronunciation. Two-third of the respondents think that these activities are not useful enough for pupils.

At the same time, one interesting fact that teachers show the same proportion in the usage of additional ready-made materials in pronunciation teaching. Half of them utilize these materials in their lessons, whilst the other half do not distribute any additional handouts in their lessons.

Furthermore, as there is not enough condition for using high-tech only 35% of teachers answered “Yes” to the question whether they utilize authentic audio or video materials in their lessons to improve pupils` enunciation skills, while 65% approved that there is the lack of authentic materials to boost learners` pronunciation skills.

Finally, only one-fourth of teachers agree that explicit enunciation teaching has a positive impact on pupils` skill of pronunciation. By contrast,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents believe that focusing on only pronunciation teaching is not effective to learn a foreign language and they reckon that there should be integration of teaching methods and activities in teaching English language.

We can conclude from the responses of teachers to the questionnaire that their lessons are not effective enough to teach pronunciation skills for young learners. For this they blame uninteresting activities in the course books and not having enough opportunity for utilizing modern technologies.

## **V. CONCLUSION**



The aim of the present study was to shed light on the methods and focus areas of English pronunciation teaching in the context of Uzbek schools. Observing 12 EFL lessons revealed a range of ten different types of pronunciation teaching methods, including traditional phonetic exercises, teacher corrections, listening and repeat, pronunciation drills, reading aloud, use of spelling and others. The teachers used different methods to varying degrees, ranging from one teacher (U.Pulatova) using four to another teacher (S.Mamatov) using only one. Here it is worth noting that Z.Kushakov stated after the observations that she had taught pronunciation less than she typically does. Measured by overall frequency in the whole data, the traditional teacher corrects exercises was the most common pronunciation tasks used during the observations. However, this finding is due to the fact that the method seems to have been U.Pulatova`s personal favourite – other teachers used it only sparingly. Teacher correction pronunciation issues were also common methods measured by the overall frequency of occurrence, whereas using spelling, read aloud and pronunciation were less popular methods. None of the teaching methods were used by all the four teachers; imitation tasks and teacher correction were both used by three teachers. These two methods can be seen as the most popular ones in my data, as they were most common in terms of both frequency of occurrence and number of teachers using them.

Overall, the pronunciation teaching practices can be characterized as being teacher-led to a great extent. This does not correlate well with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which usually aims at promoting learner autonomy and being learner-centered. In many instances the teacher interfered with and corrected a pupil`s pronunciation, or gave them information about the pronunciation of a word. Communicative pronunciation tasks were hardly used in the observed lessons. Even though we are living the era of CLT, in fact, CLT and pronunciation teaching is a complicated combination, as stated by Seidlhofer: CLT directs the learners` attention to communication and away from form, but a certain formal aspect, such as pronunciation, can be difficult to

learn unless one pays attention to it. Pronunciation teaching given by these four teachers can also be characterized as somewhat pragmatic: the teachers seemed eager to correct their pupils' pronunciation, in particular if it raised the possibility of mispronunciation, thereby leading to communication breakdown. This gives the impression that the teachers emphasize intelligibility in their aims of pronunciation teaching. However, also in this the teachers operated at the level of segmentals, even though suprasegmental features of speech have been found to be more crucial for intelligibility than segmentals<sup>72</sup> and emphasis on suprasegmentals in pronunciation teaching has been suggested to be more effective than emphasis on segmentals.

This study addressed only a short period of English pronunciation teaching given by four teachers. The aim was not to make any generalizations about English pronunciation in Uzbekistan, nor about the teaching of the observed teachers. However, the data offered possibilities for a close examination of pronunciation teaching methods and the contents of English pronunciation teaching in the context of Uzbek schools, and resulted in the following main findings. First, the teaching methods, the most popular of which was teacher correction, were found to be teacher-centered. Second, affricates and sibilant sounds stood out as the main contents of the teaching. Third, the recommended emphasis on prosodic features in pronunciation teaching was not realized during the observed lessons. Finally, a pragmatic approach was found in instances in which the teachers corrected their pupils in order to avoid communication breakdown from mispronunciation. Despite the small sample of the present study, some of these findings may be typical for English pronunciation teaching in general.

Pronunciation should be viewed as more than correct production of individual sounds or words. It should be viewed as an important part of communication that is incorporated into classroom activities. Teachers can urge their learners to monitor their own pronunciation and practice their speaking skills

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<sup>72</sup> Pennington, M.C. & Richards, J.C. Pronunciation Revisited. TESOL Quarterly 20(2), P.207–225. 1986

as much as possible in and outside the classroom. Understandable pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence. With this in mind, teachers should set obtainable goals that are applicable and suitable for the communication needs of learners. Pronunciation instruction has to aim at intelligible pronunciation and teachers can actively encourage their learners' actual production, build pronunciation awareness and practice. Pronunciation instruction is very important because it is the main source of understanding. If learners cannot utter the correct version of a word then they are not able to communicate correctly. Pronunciation instruction helps learners to have a better understanding of native speakers and improves their ability to communicate easily and effectively.

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## **V. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1**

**Table 1. Observation tool of the research paper**

Date _____			
Class _____		Signature	
Teacher _____		_____	
Criteria for observation			
№		Yes	No
1	Teacher manages to teach pronunciation according to their learning style		
2	Pupils are engaged in learning process and willing to do the activities		
3	Pupils have some difficulties in learning pronunciation		
4	Teacher uses phonetic exercises effectively		
5	Pupils can easily acquire the skill of pronunciation		
6	Activities are intended to teach pronunciation		
7	The goal of the lesson is achieved		

**Appendix 2**  
**Questionnaire for the teachers**

№	Questions	Yes	No
1	Is pronunciation an important component of students' language competence?		
2	Are there enough pronunciation exercises available in this course book?		
3	Do you find the pronunciation exercises available in this course book useful?		
4	Do you use any additional ready-made materials for teaching pronunciation in your lessons?		
5	Do you encourage your students' involvement in authentic audio and video materials in order to improve their pronunciation skills?		
6	Does explicit pronunciation teaching (i.e., teaching activities specifically focusing on pronunciation) have positive effect on students' pronunciation skills?		

**You should tick  $\surd$  for the answer that you have chosen.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_