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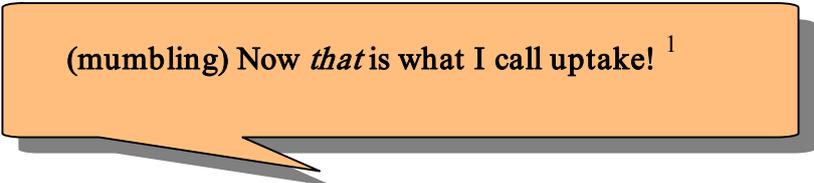
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Instruction to Enhance Oral Proficiency?



yes, Instruction to Enhance Oral Proficiency



(mumbling) Now *that* is what I call uptake! <sup>1</sup>

## Instruction to Enhance Oral Proficiency:

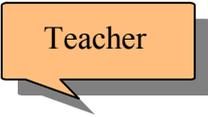
A Meta-Analysis of Studies about the Effects of Instruction on the Acquisition  
of Oral Fluency and Phonological Accuracy

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<sup>1</sup> key to symbols:



Student



Teacher

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction on Fluency and Phonological Accuracy**

### **1.1 Introduction: Fluency and Phono-what?**

Because a massive number of people all over the world are learning a second or foreign language today, the need for proper instruction in all areas of language learning is growing. Many studies have already been conducted in areas such as grammar and vocabulary acquisition, but the number of studies in and investigations of the types and effects of instruction of pronunciation and fluency is very scarce. Because instruction is a very broad subject, let us narrow the definition down to that of Housen en Pierrard (2005): “any systematic attempt to enable or facilitate language acquisition by manipulating mechanisms and/or conditions of learning” (2). The phenomenon of instruction will be considered more closely in the section called “Instructed Second Language Acquisition” below.

Considering globalisation, internationalisation and immigration processes there is a great need for proper learning and teaching of second of foreign language fluency and pronunciation skills. On the one hand the ease and efficiency in economical and political dialogue, for example, can be increased by means of L2 pronunciation and fluency skills. Being able to speak each others’ language properly improves the sense of belonging to another culture and without dependence on an interpreter conversations develop more naturally. Motivation of L2 learners could also be improved by means of pronunciation and fluency instruction. Being able to speak the target language fluently and naturally could give learners self-confidence and learning pleasure. There is, however, also an aspect of necessity of instruction: according to Derwing and Munro (2005) a lack of speaking skills may eventually lead to miscommunication or language-based discrimination. Since this thesis deals with fluency and pronunciation instruction let us consider more closely the areas of interest. What is meant by fluency and what are the definitions of phonology and pronunciation? What kind of theoretical frameworks exist to explain difficulties in acquire features within these language areas and how are they explained?

#### **1.1.1 L2 Fluency**

Fluency can refer to both L1 speaking skills in a reading-aloud context and L2 performance in a spontaneous setting, of which the latter is most relevant for this paper. Fluency “concerns the learner’s capability to produce language in real time without undue pausing or hesitation” (Skehan 1996: 22), or in other words “oral fluency refers to those

aspects of oral performance having to do with the fluidity or ‘smoothness’ of language use” (Segalowitz and Freed, 2004: 175). It covers a wide area of speech aspects like breathing, voice, pitch, pronunciation of segmental and suprasegmental features, vocabulary size and efficacy and for that reason is a highly complex activity. According to Segalowitz and Freed (2004) L2 fluency is influenced by temporal and hesitational phenomena. These phenomena consist of cognitive variables such as speed and efficiency of lexical access in the one hand and speed and efficiency of attention control on the other (176). There are various ways of measuring fluency in research situations: you can measure speech rate, length of run, pause length, silence, false starts, repetitions and reformulations. Because of the great amount of variables and complexity of the phenomena of oral fluency researchers have not published explanatory models of L2 oral fluency, this in contrast with phonology and pronunciation as we will see below

### 1.1.2 L2 Phonology and Pronunciation

While phonology is mainly concerned with segmental features (vowels and consonants) of a language, pronunciation also comprises suprasegmental features such as stress patterns and intonation. Pronunciation, therefore is broader than phonology only. It is the more practical of the two phenomena. Much research has been conducted into second language phonology since the second half of the last century. Initially, According to Eckman (2004), a great number of studies was conducted within the context of the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*. Predictions by Lado (1957), Stockwell and Bowen (1965) and findings by Suter (1979), Ioup (1984) and Flege (1986-87) suggested a large influence of L1 phonology on L2 phonological development. Eckman, however, states that “although L1 influence had a role to play in explaining L2 pronunciation errors, the influence of the L1 could explain only a portion of the errors” (517).

*Learner language* or *Interlanguage*, a concept developed independently, but simultaneously by Corder (1971), Nemser (1971) and Selinker (1972) provided another ground for L2 errors, namely, that learners make their own construction of mental grammar independent of both the L1 and L2. Evidence in favour of this explanation was provided by Eckman (1981a,b), Altenberg and Vago (1983) and Eckman (1984).

The concept of *Markedness*, developed means of Trubetzkoy’s (1939) and Jakobson’s (1941) ideas in the Prague School of Linguistics, was used in the *Markedness Differential Hypothesis* by Eckman (1977) and the *Structural Conformity Hypothesis* by Eckman (1991). Marked structures are structures that stand out because they occur less often than basic,

simple and more natural, unmarked linguistic representation. According to the MDH and SCH marked structures are more difficult to acquire than unmarked. Major and Kim's (1996) *Similarity Difference Rate Hypothesis* also incorporates markedness; according to this theory dissimilar sounds are acquired more quickly than similar structures and markedness is a mediating factor.

According to Major's *Ontogeny Model* (Major 1986, 1987), later developed into the *Ontogeny Phylogeny Model* (Major, 2001), L2 learners substitute L2 sounds with L1 sounds, but this transfer decreases when the learner progresses or when the speaking situation becomes more formal. He also claims that interlanguage "is [...] a composite system consisting of three parts: the L1, L2 and universals" (Eckman 534).

Another very important factor in the amount of foreign accent mentioned by Eckman (2004) is *variability*. There are variables among speakers like motivation and aptitude, and factors that surpass the speakers' own abilities. These include social variables (style for example), speaking context (type of task and situational formality) and linguistic factors (linguistic and grammatical context) (538-40).

Eckman (2004) concludes his article with a description of the *Optimality Theory* (Prince & Smolensky, 1993). According to this theory language consists of constraints that are ranked and can conflict with any L2 that consists of another ranking of constraints. When an utterance conforms to the constraints that have the highest ranking, it is considered grammatical due to an optimization procedure. This of course also counts for pronunciation features. OT provides an explanation for L2 patterns that can neither be attributed to the L1 nor the L2.

## 1.2 Instructed Second Language Acquisition

In this section a short overview of theories concerning second language acquisition will be provided. There has been a long period of debate concerning the effect of instruction in SLA versus uninstructed SLA. In the 1980's Krashen proposed his view on instruction in which he proposed that instruction only enhances learned conscious knowledge whereas acquisition only takes place in uninstructed naturalistic L2 SLA setting, deprived of intervention from classrooms, instructors or textbooks. Another way of putting it is by means of the implicit vs. explicit knowledge distinction. According to Krashen (1982) instruction only results in explicit knowledge which does not interfere with implicit knowledge. This view is also known as the non-interface hypothesis.

Gass and Selinker (2001), however, provided counterevidence for Krashen's claims by stating that instructed learners can be fluent speakers of an L2 (202-6). The meta-analyses of SLA studies conducted by Norris and Ortega (2000) and Ellis (2002) furthermore showed that instruction positively affects the end-state of acquisition because instructed learners achieve higher proficiency levels. They also provided evidence that the route of acquisition is influenced by instruction because it speeds up the learning process on the one hand and on the other enables learners to focus on areas of difficulty. These findings correspond to Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis where noticing of linguistic features is an essential part of learners' intake of those features. The concepts of 'consciousness-raising' and 'selective-attention' are very important in this theoretical framework. In terms of knowledge transfer we could range these findings on the side of the weak-interface hypothesis, which claims that explicit knowledge could stimulate intake by drawing attention to essential information and eventually enhance acquisition of implicit knowledge. A third variant is the strong interface hypothesis which "considers explicit, declarative knowledge to be [directly] convertible to implicit, procedural knowledge through practice" (de Graaff, 1997; 250).

There are still many unanswered questions concerning the effect and effectiveness of instruction in SL/FL acquisition; however, since there is evidence for the fact that instruction can directly or indirectly promote different types of knowledge, explicit or implicit, teachers should provide learners with instruction using rich TL input, opportunities for processing of this language input and a stimulation of TL output. As we will see in the inventory, there are many methodologies that try to cope with these aspects, all in different ways. There are studies that utilise fairly traditional kinds of instruction on the one hand, very much like Focus on Forms, where instruction revolves around the target feature alone. Focus on Form, on the other hand, is another method applied in several studies. Here attention is drawn to the target feature indirectly. There are also studies conducted in Task-based language classrooms, where the language focus is part of a larger task. We will now briefly deal with the instruction of fluency and pronunciation.

### **1.2.1 Oral Fluency Instruction**

In the above we have seen that oral fluency is a skill that covers several areas of L2 features. Its instruction, therefore, needs to focus on features such as sufficiency of vocabulary, attention control and avoidance of hesitation. By several researchers the acquisition of oral fluency is shown to improve in a foreign language context. Brecht et al. (1995) measured an increased oral proficiency with advanced students of Russian studying

abroad for one semester. Freed (1995) observed similar findings in her study in which she compared English native speakers studying French in language learning classrooms at home with a group that studied French in France. Other examples of successful fluency acquisition in a study abroad context can be found in Freed, Segalowitz & Dewey (2004) Lafford (1995) and Magnan (1986). The reason for this success is that study abroad enables students to have more opportunities to participate in activities using the target language, both within and outside class. They have greater access to native speakers and are more exposed to the target language. This could motivate them to use the target language more intensively and improve their L2 speaking skills at great speed.

However, students may also be intimidated by the amount, delivery rate and complexity of language use of native speakers resulting in anxiety. Instruction at home, therefore, can also have its advantages because the teacher can adjust his/her language to 'learner talk' to motivate students. Moreover, the fact that there is much empirical evidence for a greater effectiveness of study abroad context compared with instruction in an at home context does not prove at home instruction ineffective. Studying a second or foreign language in the TL context is impossible for many SL/FL learners for financial reasons and as was stated earlier this chapter, Gass and Selinker (2001) found evidence for increased fluency in the language of subjects that received instruction.

### **1.2.2 Phonology and Pronunciation Instruction**

The number of studies dealing with second language learning is vast. Much research has also been conducted in the area of L2 perception and production of phonological features. Most results of studies about the effect of training on perceptual and production abilities show that training can have a significant effect. Training in this context mostly consists of numerous sessions of identification tasks and discrimination tasks of minimal pairs. Rochet (1995), for example, found evidence that the perceptual skills of L2 learners affect the production of L2 phonology, herewith providing evidence for a perceptual basis for foreign accents. He showed that auditory training leads to improved production of voicing contrasts by Mandarin Chinese learners of French. Similar results were found by Bradlow et al. (1996) who investigated the effect of perceptual training on the production of /ɪ/ and // contrast by Japanese learners of English and Hardison (2003) who achieved similar effects with Japanese and Korean learners of English.

It appears that training affects the pronunciation of a foreign language. Although the outcomes of these experiments are positive and provide evidence for the teachability of

pronunciation in L2 learning, they share one handicap. These studies are conducted in laboratories and therefore do not necessarily provide evidence for similar effects in classroom settings. Furthermore, the type of instruction used is what Derwing, Munro and Wiebe (1998) label segment-based, meaning that “they only focus on the perception and production of individual phones”(395), for example the training of the /ɪ/ and // contrast only. The methods are also extremely time consuming (45 perceptual training sessions in 3-4 weeks in the case of Bradlow et al. (1996)). Although the training sessions used in laboratories fit the definition of instruction by Housen en Pierrard (2005) - they are systematic and manipulate mechanism and/or conditions of learning - both the effectiveness and the applicability of the approaches in the relevant studies in SL classroom education is highly questionable. There is too much systematisation and manipulation going on in laboratory studies to translate the instruction and tests directly to classroom situation. Wang and Munro (2004) further state that “there is a significant gap between some of the key research findings of laboratory studies from the past two decades and techniques that have actually been put into practice” (540). Classroom experiments are much less frequently concerned with pronunciation. A few examples of studies investigating the effects of classroom instruction on the production of non-native sounds are provided by McCandless and Winitz (1986), Elliott (1995) and Elliott (1997). In the study by Wang and Munro (2004) mentioned above, several methods of laboratorial research were adapted into a Computer Assisted Language Learning program in which the students had a degree of control over their development instead of being subjected to rigid research schema’s. The effects were positive; there were effects in the perception of vowel contrasts. Although they justly conclude that perceptual representations correspond with L2 speech productions, they did not investigate the actual effects.

### **1.3 The Link between Oral Fluency and Phonological Accuracy**

In the paragraphs above, oral fluency and phonological accuracy or pronunciation have been treated as two different aspects of a language. In a way they are indeed different aspects, because of the fact that a lack of attentional capacity often results in negative influences of fluency on accuracy and the other way round. For example, many SL/FL learners are able to speak the TL fluently without simultaneously being phonologically accurate. This is also referred to as the *Joseph Conrad effect.*, Joseph Conrad could fluently speak grammatically perfect. His pronunciation of English, however, always remained heavily accented. It is also possible to be phonologically accurate without being able to speak

the TL fluently. When learners focus on accuracy, either phonological or grammatical, this often affects fluency negatively.

There is, however, a very clear link between these two subjects: both contribute to the oral proficiency of an SL/FL learner. In an article on task-based instruction Skehan (1996) poses that the main goal of language learning is “becoming more native-like in one’s performance” (46). According to him, three main areas are important in achieving this goal: accuracy, complexity and fluency.

[A]ccuracy is concerned with a learner’s capacity to handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity s/he has currently attained. Complexity, and its attendant process, restructuring, relates to the stage and elaboration of the underlying interlanguage system. Fluency, finally, concerns the learner’s capacity to mobilize an interlanguage system to communicate meanings in general. (46)

Skehan (1996) clearly shows the way in which these three main areas interrelate in that accuracy is achieved by the restructuring of complex TL features and that fluency is a result of a decent development of the interlanguage system by means of accuracy. In this paper, however the definitions are more fine-grained. Namely, we deal with phonological accuracy, in other words, the capacity to handle a certain level of phonologically complex TL features. Fluency is defined as the ability of the learner to mobilise phonological accuracy of the interlanguage.

#### **1.4 Goal of this Thesis**

In the current investigation I want to focus on the effect and effectiveness of (formal) classroom instruction considering the acquisition fluency on the one hand and the correct usage of an L2 phonological system on the other. Effect can be specified as a direct impact of the instruction on the learning process and outcomes. Effectiveness is the relevance of instruction to the learning process (De Graaff and Housen, in preparation). The studies mentioned above in 1.2.2, for example, do have an effect, but their relevance for the L2 learning process is questionable.

In chapter 2 I will analyse several studies conducted in classroom settings with a focus on fluency and pronunciation instruction. Several questions will be answered and they are divided over three main areas of concern: *instruction, assessment and outcomes*.

In the first main area, *instruction*, the first question is a descriptive one: what are the features under instructional focus? This focus can consist of improvement of certain vowels, consonants, suprasegmentals or fluency skill. The second question is: What different types of instruction are applied in the relevant studies? Lastly I analyse the rationale for the type of instruction. The second issue of importance is the *assessment* of the study. Firstly, I analyse the way in which the instruction is tested. Secondly, I investigate whether this type of assessment tells us anything about the improvement of speaking abilities in a natural or classroom setting. The third main area of importance revolves around the *outcomes* of the study. The first question in this area is: does the instruction result in improvement of L2 speaking skills? The second question is: can the conclusions of different researchers be generalised for foreign or second language learning classrooms? In the end of chapter 2 we will briefly summarise the answers on all these questions to provide an overview on this comprehensive chapter.

In chapter 3 we look at the practical implications of the investigated studies. The first question dealt with is what kind of practical implications for classroom education are either given by the authors themselves or can be derived from their studies. The second question we need to answer is whether the methods of instruction applied in the studies are on the one hand relevant for SL/FL classroom settings or not, and on the other hand whether they are applicable in SL/FL classroom settings or not.

In the fourth and last chapter an evaluation of the recommendations in the relevant studies is provided. The first question in this article is: What kind of recommendations for further research do researchers put forward? The second question is whether there are relevant areas untouched by the studies that need to be investigated. Lastly, a proposal for practical research in my 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the educational master will be posed. This proposal will be embedded in this thesis in that it embrothers on an underexposed or insufficiently answered problem.

## **Chapter 2: Research into Classroom-Based Oral Fluency & Phonological Accuracy Instruction**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter starts with a rationale for instruction of both SL/FL fluency and pronunciation, then addresses questions about type of instruction in both areas and ends with an analysis of several studies. This last part consists of an inventory of 8 studies and their outcomes. First an inventory of fluency studies will be provided and analysed and secondly a similar inventory and analysis will be made of relevant pronunciation studies. In this chapter we will try to answer the questions mentioned in the introduction for all the studies under review in a systematic way. Considering the instruction of several studies we look at the features under focus, then we investigate what kind of instruction is applied and lastly we try to verify the rationales for the approaches. The second section of main questions revolves around the assessments in the studies; how is the effect of instruction assessed and what does that tell us about the potential generalisation of the acquired feature or does the test have serious limitations? Lastly we look at the outcomes of the experiments. We analyse whether instruction leads to improvement in the areas of SL/FL fluency and pronunciation and whether these improvements perhaps be generalised from classroom setting to natural contexts or not. We conclude by a comparison of all outcomes of the experiments and verify whether the conclusions of the relevant authors correspond with one another or not and we try to come to a combined conclusion about the effects and effectiveness of SL/FL fluency and pronunciation instruction.

### **2.2 Fluency and Pronunciation Instruction, Why and How?**

As is already stated in the introduction, a great number of people is learning a second or foreign language by means of instruction. In an article concerned with English as a second language, henceforward ESL, Derwing and Munro (2005) claim that “[g]iven the current levels of immigration [...] the potential for miscommunication and even language-based discrimination has increased” (380). From this point of view the instruction of fluency and pronunciation becomes a very important issue in language learning. Concerning pronunciation there are several examples of studies in the reception of accented speech. Some of them with positive effects: because the output of the NNS is accented output, the NS output is modified to improve communication (Gass and Varonis, 1984). There are, however, also

negative effects of accented speech, such as NS-NNS and NNS-NNS communicative breakdown or even negative social evaluation and discrimination (Lippi-Green, 1997; Munro, 2003). Hahn (2004) conducted a study into comprehension of foreign accent and found that a manipulated suprasegmental feature, primary stress in this case, significantly affected comprehensibility.

It is therefore clear that the instruction of both fluency and pronunciation deserves attention in the SL/FL curricula. Language learners need to improve their intelligibility to prevent the problems mentioned above as much as possible. Furthermore, there are numerous studies that briefly mention the importance of motivational aspects of learning second language phonology. Students acknowledge the importance of a good pronunciation and being able to speak an L2 accurately makes students self-confident in their language abilities (Hardison and Sonchaeng, 2005). The importance of acquiring decent phonology and fluency skills is therefore very important. There is, however, not much empirical research conducted in the area of instruction of these linguistic features.

The instruction of fluency is an area that is rather untouched by research. Speaking a language fluently involves a control of many linguistic aspects, such as grammatical accuracy, vocabulary size, the relevant sound system and of course the content of the conversation. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint the most effective focus of instruction to improve SL/FL oral fluency. Fluency is, probably more than any other linguistic skills, a linguistic aspect where practice is indispensable, additional to systematic instruction. According to Hinkel (2006), in the 1990s, many researchers claimed that “exposure to and interaction in an L2 enables learners to attain L2 speaking fluency” (115). This is, however, not necessarily a form of instruction and furthermore there was evidence that while fluency improved, morphosyntactic and lexical knowledge lacked behind (Lightbrown and Spada, 1990; Schmidt, 1993; Swain, 1991).

In more recent research, the acquisition of fluency receives a more central place. An integration of fluency into communicative and task-based approaches to teaching is possible and effective. According to Ellis (2003) narratives and descriptions can be effective in fluency-focussed teaching. The problem of the “competing cognitive demands of fluency, accuracy and linguistic complexity” (Hinkel, 2006) may well be solved by the opportunities of task repetition and planning in the TBL framework. Immersion into the target language is, therefore, not necessary for the acquisition of SL/FL fluency.

Although the need and motivation for pronunciation instruction is clear, teachers are uncertain about its practice. Derwing and Munro (2005) mention studies in Canada, Britain

and Australia in which teachers claim to be ill-prepared to instruct phonological features of the English language. They further claim that “most materials have been designed without a basis in pronunciation research findings [and do not allow teachers] appropriate matching to students’ requirements” (389). For an example of this see the review of Gorsuch (2001) below. There is thus a great lack of knowledge on the one hand, supported by empirical evidence and materials on the other that fit individuals or are at least designed to be dealt with selectively.

Some researchers, however, offer suggestions for the practice of pronunciation instruction. Chela-Flores (2001), for example, proposes an integrative approach of pronunciation in a communicative classroom setting. She claims that adjusting the pronunciation focus to the needs found in the aural and oral activities in the language course will give the students a better understanding of the salience of pronunciation instruction. Instruction should be provided, just as vocabulary and grammar, in meaningful chunks. The problem is, however, that she does not assess whether her theory works in practice. Although her criticism on pronunciation methodology is solid and although she does provide useful practical information, she fails to give empirical evidence to prove her methodology is practicable.

An experiment that shows a different aspect is conducted by Altenberg (2005) and deals with the relationship between metalinguistic knowledge, perception and production of initial consonant clusters. In this experiment Altenberg (2005) found evidence for a dissociation between learner’s L2 metalinguistic knowledge and their performance in production task. The participants did establish perceptual categories, albeit no native like categories, thus they were not sufficient for correct production. The mistakes made in the perception task, further, could not be attributed to L1 transfer, providing evidence for universal principles such as markedness, the universal CV syllable type, and sonority. Because of the lack of L1 transfer in perception, the production errors must also be attributed to other factors like motoric output constraints, based on permissible syllables in the L1. In this study Altenberg (2005) proves that there is no strong correlation between learners’ metalinguistic knowledge and perception on the one hand and their production on the other. She further shows that production is not related to length of residence in the United States or level of proficiency. She clearly shows the importance of L2 pronunciation instruction by means of output as a factor to improve the production of marked and dissimilar second language sounds.

Although many suggestions have been made in the above of how and how not to teach fluency and pronunciation in to individuals and groups it might be useful to assess whether instruction is useful at all in SL/FL classroom settings. In the next sections section we will provide relevant criteria to select these studies dealing with the effect of oral fluency and pronunciation instruction in classroom education and analyse the relevant studies.

### **2.3 Selecting and Analysing Relevant Oral Fluency, Phonological Accuracy Studies**

Fluency studies are marginal within second language teaching research. Although the importance of fluency skills in L2 acquisition is acknowledged by a great number of researchers there is little empirical evidence for the effects of instructing fluency for SL/FL learners. Studies conducted in the area of phonological instruction are also scarce and are further mainly conducted in laboratories and deal with very specific features of L2 phonology. This is asserted by Derwing and Munro (2005) who write about a “marginalisation of pronunciation within applied linguistics” (381). They state that there is a twofold problem: on the one hand there is little published research on the instruction of pronunciation and on the other hand methodologies that do exist hardly ever refer to the research that does exist as the empirical basis. Of the latter problem we have seen some examples above. In review studies, like that of Norris and Ortega (2000) and Ellis (2002) there are barely any entries of studies with a focus on fluency, pronunciation or phonology.

The current research focuses on the effect of the instruction of fluency, phonology and pronunciation of a second or foreign language. In order to make relevant claims for the practice of language education we need studies that answer (most of) the following criteria: in the first place the focus of the study should be on oral fluency in general, segmental features like the acquisition of certain vowel- or consonant sounds or suprasegmental features like intonation and stress of SL/FL pronunciation. The second main criterion is that the studies should be conducted in or directly applicable to a classroom setting because this is where most L2 learning takes place. Thirdly, the methodology used in the studies should be practicable in any SL/FL classroom setting. This is especially important because some studies conducted in study-abroad setting use very specific methods that are impossible to apply in an at-home setting. Lastly the instruction of the relevant features in the relevant studies should preferably, but not necessarily be integrated in a language course, making the specific instruction part of a bigger whole as in any SL/FL classroom setting.

The studies that answer to these criteria are few unfortunately, however, they do provide interesting data and implications for pronunciation instruction in second and foreign

language teaching. It is important to note that the aim of the analysis below is not to prove a specific kind of instruction more valuable or effective over another, it is meant to evaluate the effect and effectiveness of instruction in general and to translate this to the educational practice. The classroom studies in oral fluency acquisition that will be inventoried here are conducted by **Derwing et al. (1998)**, **Yuan and Ellis (2003)** and **Segalowitz and Freed (2004)**. In the area of phonological accuracy / pronunciation **Elliott (1997)**, **Derwing et al. (1998)**, **Gorsuch (2001)** **Mennin (2003)**, **Hardison (2003)** and **Díaz-Campos (2004)** conducted studies that can be directly related to the language teaching practice. Note that the study by Derwing et al (1998) is mentioned twice because of the fact that both instructional effects on fluency as well as pronunciation are investigated. These different aspects of the same study will therefore be dealt with separately.

### **2.3.1 Analysis of Relevant Oral Fluency Studies**

*Tracey M. Derwing et al. (1998): “Evidence in favour of a Broad Framework for Pronunciation Instruction”*

In this study Derwing et al. (1998) seeks to answer whether different types of instruction yield different effects on the comprehensibility, accuracy and fluency of ESL productions. Fluency, in this case, refers to “overall tempo and flow as opposed to a measure of general proficiency” (396). They compared three different types of instruction: One group received instruction with a global focus emphasising prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. The second group received instruction with a segmental focus with direct attention to forms (individual sounds) in question.

The instruction of both the global and segmental group consisted of skill-based (reading, writing, listening, speaking grammar) ESL Classes with a daily pronunciation component of 20 minutes. The control group received the same instruction except for the pronunciation component. The segmental group received this by means of language lab materials in conjunction with teacher-led exercises designed to improve the production of individual sounds: Identification and discrimination tasks as well as repetition tasks featuring individual sound contrasts. The global group instruction focused on speaking rate, intonation, rhythm, projection, word stress and sentence stress by means of materials like Jazz Chants (399) and group presentations.

The assessment consists of two experiments of which the first focuses on the influence of instruction on sentence production and the second deals with the effects on extemporaneously produced narratives. Both experiments consisted of a pre-test and post-test

with a gap of 11 weeks in between. In the sentence data, two statements from each participant were recorded and evaluated by 6 experience women ESL teachers. In the Narrative evaluation test two selected 45-second excerpts from the beginning of each student's extemporaneous description were evaluated by the same judges.

Derwing et al. (1998) found that in the sentence production task both the global and segmental group improved comprehensibility and that the segmental group also improved in accent. The narrative data showed all groups showed a trend towards increased fluency in the, however, only those students in the global group improved significantly. According to Derwing et al. (1998) this can directly be attributed to the focus of instruction because "a course focusing on individual sounds (as opposed to dealing with larger units of speech) would fail to enhance students' fluency" (407).

According to Derwing et al. (1998) the fact that the group receiving global pronunciation training did better in several areas does not mean that a segmental approach is ineffective. In the case of fluency, however, the results are very much in favour of a global focus, albeit that it is not very productive to focus on fluency alone in SL/FL teaching.

*Fangyuan Yuan and Rod Ellis (2003): "The Effects of Pre-Task Planning and On-Line Planning on Fluency, Complexity and Accuracy in L2 Monologic Oral Production"*

Yuan and Ellis (2003) report a study in which they investigate (1) what effects pre-task- and on-line planning (i.e. attending to formulations during speech planning and pre- and post production monitoring of speech acts) have on the (1) fluency, (2) complexity and (3) accuracy of L2 learners' production in an oral narrative task.

42 full-time students of the International Business Department of a Chinese University were divided into three groups of 14 students each: a pre-task planning group, an on-line planning group and a no planning control group (henceforward PTP, OLP and NP). All of these students received 6 hours of English of which 4 hours were devoted to reading and writing and 2 to listening and speaking. Additional to this they had a one-hour oral English class from a native speaker of English from Canada once every two weeks. Because the end goal of the course was being able to narrate a story the treatment practiced in this study fits the framework of Task-based instruction.

As an assessment of the effects of the three conditions, students were asked to narrate a story orally based on a picture. The rationales for this test are, firstly, that similar tasks have been used in other studies of planning. Secondly, oral narratives afford are not influenced by interactional variables and thirdly, because a narrative task is demanding (9). Students'

narratives were measured in terms of number of (1) syllables per minute and (2) number of meaningful syllables (without repetition, reformulation or replacement) per minute. This type of testing is very valuable for assessing what type of planning is beneficial for students' oral fluency, however, because there is no possibility for planning in real-time language use, it is difficult to make generalisations about the acquisition of fluency in spontaneous speech. Another problem is that there are no pre-test scores to compare the task results with, which makes it impossible to pinpoint possible oral fluency gains.

Concerning oral fluency, the results of the experiments are slightly in favour of the PTP condition. The speech rate scores for this group were higher than both the NP and OLP group, the latter of which was even outperformed by the former. There is thus evidence to suggest that the PTP group performed more fluently than the OLP group.

In a classroom situation it proves to be beneficial for students to make use of PTP to ensure greater fluency during presentations. However, because these results do not show evidence of fluency gains in spontaneous speech the use of PTP is restricted to activities that involve a certain amount of planning.

*Norman Segalowitz and Barbara F. Freed (2004). "Context, Contact and Cognition in Oral Fluency Acquisition, Learning Spanish in At Home and Study Abroad Contexts"*

In this paper, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) investigate (1) whether at home and study abroad learning contexts (henceforward AH and SA) differentially support gains in oral performance, (2) whether there is a difference in gains in cognitive processing abilities underlying L2 oral performance, whether there is a connection between initial oral and cognitive processing abilities and (3) oral performance gains and (4) out-of-class language contact activities (178).

The 40 participants of this study were divided into 2 groups: 18 students received AH instruction at the University of Colorado in the United States and 22 SA instruction at the Universidad de Alicante, Spain during 1 semester. The AH instruction consisted of only 1 Spanish language Class per week of which the exact content is unknown while the SA students received three courses per week, one focussing on grammar and syntax, one on reading and writing, and one on conversation. It is clear that the SA students had an advantage over the AH students because they received both more intense and more specific instruction and they profited from the L2 learning context. 13 of the SA students took additional classes on Spanish society and culture.

Students' lexical access and attention control were tested, however these tests are not very relevant for the current inventory so we will not go into detail about them. To test the students' Spanish oral fluency gains, two 2-minute sample recordings of both the pre- and post-test Oral Proficiency Interviews, conducted by certified testers of the ACTFL, were transcribed and analysed. These extracts were analysed on general oral performance measures: total number of words, duration, and longest turn and four oral fluency measures: speech rate, mean length of run without silent pauses of 400 ms or longer, mean length of run without filled pauses and longest fluent run. These tests are very adequate to assess whether students have acquired a certain amount of oral fluency because free speech is elicited in which the student has to do all the thinking and talking in stead of reading out pre-selected excerpts of texts or words. The tests are therefore very relevant for generalisations about the students' L2 speaking skills in spontaneous speech.

The results of the experiment show that only the SA students improved their oral performance. They improved significantly on (1) number of words in the longest turn, (2) speech rate in words per minute, (3) absence of filled pauses and (4) number of words in the longest fluent speech run (183). These results further show us that an SA learning context improves the oral fluency skills of L2 learners in spontaneous speech. However, because of the difference in instruction of the two groups it cannot be claimed that an AH learning context is less beneficial than its SA counterpart.

<i>Fluency Inventory Table</i>	<b>Dorwin et al. (1998)</b>	<b>Quian and Ellis (2003)</b>	<b>Seligowitz &amp; Freed (2004)</b>
<i>L2/FL</i>	English (SL)	English	Spanish L2
<i>Motivation</i>	Volunteers from a full-time ESL program	Students	Students
<i>Type of Instruction</i>	Form Focussed	Task-based	Study Abroad and At Home context
<i>Instruction</i>	Form Focussed	Task-based	Study Abroad and At Home context
<i>Type of Treatment</i>	Form Focussed	Task-based	Study Abroad and At Home context
<i>Perception/Activity</i>	Skill based (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar) ESL Classes.	Reading, writing, listening and speaking classes plus 1 hour oral English class	Yes grammar and syntax, reading and writing and conversation. AH: Unknown
<i>Production</i>	Inductive	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Inductive / Deductive</i>	Inductive	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Underlying theory</i>	Unknown	TBL framework	SA provides beneficial rich input and output
<i>Integrated/ Skill Spec.</i>	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated
<i>Controlled/ Unplanned</i>	Both	Controlled	Controlled
<i>Type of Learner</i>	Evaluation of Sentences (Exp 1) and 45-sec. spont. speech excerpts (Exp 2)	Narrative about picture	Oral Proficiency Interview
<i>Age</i>	18-44 years Mean age: 31.7 years	Between 18 and 20 years old	AH mean age 23.39 yrs. SA mean age 20.68 yrs.
<i>Frequency Duration &amp; Level</i>	20 hours per week for 12 weeks (20 min daily level)	6 hours each week: 4 writ. Undergraduate English and read, 2 list. and sp. Major students	1 Semester: AH 1 class per week, SA 3 courses per week.
<i>Intensity</i>	Intermediate proficiency level	plus 1 oral Eng. every 2 weeks	SA 3 courses per week.
<i>Homogeneity of Subject Group</i>	Not quite (for gr. and segm. group)	Yes	Yes

<b>Type of Target</b>			
<i>Target Features</i>	Comprehensibility, accuracy and fluency	Oral fluency, complexity and accuracy	Oral fluency, lexical access and attention control
<b>Design Factors</b>			
<i>Classroom, Laboratory, Naturalistic setting</i>	Classroom	Classroom, test in laboratory	Classroom
<i>Sample Size Recordings</i>	Exp1: Sentences Exp2: 45-second excerpts	3,5-5 minutes' narratives about picture	Pre-test: 4 minutes' extract. Post-test: 8 minutes' extract.
<i>Number of Subjects</i>	Exp1: 48 (36 results) Exp2: 48 (42 results)	42 divided equally over 3 groups	40: 18 AH students, 22 SA students
<i>Cross Sect. / Long.</i>	Cross Sectional	Cross sectional	Cross sectional
<i>Pre-test / Post-test</i>	Both	Both	Both: Oral Proficiency Interview
<i>Qualitative/ Quantitative</i>	Qualitative	Both	Qualitative
<i>Process- / Product oriented</i>	Both	Process oriented	Process oriented
<i>Oral / Written treatment</i>	Oral	Both	Both
<i>Oral / Written test</i>	Oral	Oral test	Oral test
<i>Controlled / Free prod. in treatment</i>	Exp. 1: controlled Exp. 2: free	Unknown	Free production
<i>Controlled / Free production in test</i>	Exp. 1: controlled Exp. 2: free	Free, but restricted production	Free production
<b>Results</b>			
<i>Improvement General</i>	Yes	PTP more fluent than OLP and NP group	Greater fluency gains SA Students
<i>Improvement Specific</i>	<i>Fluency</i> of all groups, but only global group significantly	Higher fluency scores and greater variety of vocabulary than other groups	(1) number of words in longest turn, (2) speech rate in words per minute, (3) absence of filled pauses and (4) number of words in longest fluent speech run.
<i>Improvement Context</i>	All groups in sentences, global group in narrative data	Picture Description	Spontaneous speech

### 2.3.2 Analysis of Relevant Studies in Phonological Accuracy

*A. Raymond Elliott (1997): "On the Teaching and Acquisition of Pronunciation within a Communicative Approach"*

In this article, Elliot (1997) presents the findings of a classroom experiment. It resembles a previous experiment conducted two years earlier in which he investigated field independence, attitude, and the success of formal instruction in Spanish pronunciation in a classroom situation. The study presented in the article investigated the effect of formal phonological instruction on pronunciation (1) of 19 Spanish sounds [a e i o u r r r b b d d g g p t k m ñ z] (2) in four different sections a) word repetition, b) sentence repetition, c) word

reading, or d) spontaneous production of the target language and (3) of natural phoneme classes and specific allophones.

In this study the students received 10-15 minutes of formal instruction and practice of Spanish pronunciation for 21 class periods. In these 10-15 minutes model words containing the allophone under study were presented. Then the students had to describe the articulatory features of the sound and draw and compare facial diagrams of it and lastly they had to practice the sound. The idea behind this approach was that a multimodal methodology accounts for individual learning style variation.

The assessment consisted of 4 parts corresponding with the second point of investigation described above. Firstly the students had to mimic pronunciation of the target features at discrete word level. Secondly the accuracy of their mimicking of pronunciation at word level was measured. Thirdly they were asked to produce isolated written words and lastly they were asked to describe of or two pictures for 1,5 minutes. Lastly, the subjects had to complete a generalisation exercise which can tell us something about the improvement of speaking abilities in a natural setting.

The results of the study are positive: Elliott (1997) found (1) an overall improvement of pronunciation, (2) pronunciation improvement for sections a, b and c of test and (3) improvement of liquids, stop phonemes, intervocalic flap, stop allophones and the back vowels. Both similar and dissimilar sounds were well acquired.

This experiment shows us that pronunciation practice in classroom is not only effective, but also doable (10-15 minutes per lesson). Elliott (1997) concludes that incorporation of exercises with focus on sounds difficult to pronounce can improve the native and non-native speaker's pronunciation. Lastly he states that "[t]eaching pronunciation early on may increase students concern for developing native/native-like pronunciation, lower their affective filters, and help students to feel less anxious about speaking" (104).

*Tracey M. Derwing et al. (1998): "Evidence in favour of a Broad Framework for Pronunciation Instruction"*

In this study Derwing et al. (1998) seeks to answer whether different types of instruction yield different effects on the comprehensibility, accuracy and fluency of ESL productions. They compared three different types of instruction: One group received instruction with a global focus emphasising prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. The second group received instruction with a segmental focus with direct attention to forms (individual sounds) in question. The instruction of both the global and segmental group

consisted of skill-based (reading, writing, listening, speaking grammar) ESL Classes with a daily pronunciation component of 20 minutes. The control group received the same instruction except for the pronunciation component. The segmental group received this by means of language lab materials in conjunction with teacher-led exercises designed to improve the production of individual sounds: Identification and discrimination tasks as well as repetition tasks featuring individual sound contrasts. The global group instruction focused on speaking rate, intonation, rhythm, projection, word stress and sentence stress by means of materials like Jazz Chants (399) and group presentations.

The assessment consists of two experiments of which the first focuses on the influence of instruction on production of pre-selected sentences and the second deals with the effects on extemporaneously produced narratives. Both experiments consisted of a pre-test and post-test with a gap of 11 weeks in between. In the sentence data, two statements from each participant were recorded and evaluated by 6 experience women ESL teachers. In the Narrative evaluation test two selected 45-second excerpts from the beginning of each student's extemporaneous description were evaluated by the same judges. Because these test requires the use of more or less spontaneous speech it could provide predictions about improvement in speaking abilities in an uncontrolled setting.

Derwing et al. (1998) found that Both the Global and Segmental group improved in main effect of comprehensibility. The segmental group, however, improved more in accent in the sentence production task. The narrative data showed that the global group exhibited significant improvement in comprehensibility and fluency. There was, however, no evidence that the training had any effect on the accent scores. Although the group that received global pronunciation training did better in several areas this does not mean that a segmental approach is ineffective.

*Greta J. Gorsuch (2001) : "Testing Textbook theories and Tests: the Case of Suprasegmentals in Pronunciation Textbook"*

In her article Gorsuch (2001) reports a study in which *Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in North American English* by Gilbert (1993), a pronunciation textbook and the additional test are investigated. She tries to answer the following questions: (1) Can Gilbert's assertion that explicit production focused training in English suprasegmentals will improve EFL/ESL students' speech clarity *and* listening comprehension be confirmed? (2) Are the suprasegmental subtests on the 'Clear Speech' listening and speaking achievement tests reliable and valid? (3) To what extent can we trust that students'

performances on the suprasegmental subtests on the 'Clear Speech' speaking achievement tests are generalizable to students' suprasegmental abilities as developed in 'Clear Speech'.

The students had English lessons 75 minutes every week with a total of 38 hours throughout the academic year. The activities the students had to complete are not specified in the article. Gorsuch (2001) does state that 'Clear Speech' emphasises speaking over listening and that "[p]air work formed the backbone of the activities" (125). Activities focus on suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation like word stress patterns, content and structure words, pitch patterns used for emphasis, emphasizing structure words, pitch direction of questions and thought groups (125).

The assessment consisted of the completion of the 'Clear Speech' speaking- and listening test as a pre-tests before they received any instruction, and a repetition of this test after instruction as a post-tests to evaluate both the effect of the course and the reliability of the tests. The speaking test was a dialogue that students read aloud onto a tape for the teacher to rate according to a prefab scheme. The listening test was a 60-item test with seven subtests like a "syllable number-" and "word stress" listening subtest. The students had to make both tests twice, first as a pre-test and later as a post-test device. In the following paragraph, however, we will see that the tests were severely inadequate in assessing the students' acquisition of suprasegmental features.

The results of the post-test showed that the students' productions did not improve as a result of the training. Their perceptual abilities, however, did improve significantly for most of the suprasegmental aspects. Research question 1, therefore can be only be partially answered with an affirmative. However, because the subtests and content of the textbook did not match (research question 2 and 3), the results of the tests do not provide a clear picture of the acquisition of suprasegmentals and do not provide the students the opportunity to "demonstrate their skills adequately" (131). According to Gorsuch (2001) we cannot say that students did not generalise their knowledge, in stead she claims that "multiple tasks are needed to demonstrate generalizability" (134).

*Paul Mennin (2003): "Rehearsed Oral L2 Output and Reactive Focus on Form"*

This paper deals with a classroom experiment in which students were encouraged to focus on their oral output by means of a reactive focus on form task. Mennin (2003) investigates firstly whether a transcription task directs the students attention towards language forms they use during their rehearsal of a presentation and secondly whether the students profit from this rehearsal in that they improve their spoken output in the final presentation.

The treatment was part of a course for the whole academic year, consisting of approximately 25 classes of 90 minutes. The treatment consisted of three parts: First, the students had to record a private presentation rehearsal on tape two weeks before the final presentation. Then they had to transcribe a five-minute segment of this recording, which had to be an (1) exact transcription including errors and (2) it had to be typed with double spacing for the ease corrections. Lastly, these transcriptions were then corrected by teacher. There was, thus, no form of explicit instruction, however the corrections of the teacher focussed on language errors which resembles incidental focus on form.

Two weeks later, the final presentations were assessed by Mennin (2003). Because Mennin (2003) gave feedback on the students' transcriptions, he was able to assess whether there was any effect of his type of 'instruction'. The assessment is also a good way of testing whether students improved their speaking abilities in a more or less natural setting. Because presentations are hardly ever read out literally, they require a certain amount of improvisation, students could incorporate the feedback of the teacher while speaking natural occurring speech.

The results of this type of approach are positive: students focus on their errors in the transcription task and improved these errors. Among other errors, pronunciation errors were improved in the final presentation. For example student M's attempted pronunciation of the words 'seat' in the presentation rehearsal changed from [ʃi:] to almost target-like [si:] in the final presentation and she even correct herself once pronouncing [si] in 'Singapore' during the final presentation. We can therefore conclude that the approach of Mennin (2003) results in improvement of L2 speaking skills.

*Debra Hardison (2003): "Acquisition of Second-Language Speech: Effects of Visual Cues, Context, and Talker Variability"*

The effects of visual cues, context and talker variability in the acquisition of perceptual categories of /ɹ/ and // are studied in this paper for Japanese (1<sup>st</sup> experiment) and Korean (2<sup>nd</sup> experiment) ESL learners. The research mainly focuses on perception, but also links the perceptual acquisition to production abilities of the subjects. The investigation focuses on the following aspects: (1) The influence of [the] two phonological systems [, Japanese and Korean] on the development of perceptual accuracy. (2) The effects of adjacent vowel and word position for these sounds. (3) The contribution of visual information from a talker's face. (4) The direct comparison of multiple- versus single-talker training for the

Koreans. And most relevant for this thesis, (5) The relationship between perceptual training and production improvement in terms of the influence of both word position and vowel (496).

The subjects received 15 perceptual training sessions of 30 minutes for 3 weeks by means of a two-alternative forced choice task with minimal pairs contrasting /ɪ/ and /i/. There were several different groups during the training sessions: In Experiment 1 there was an Audio Visual and an Audio-only training group and in Experiment 2 the AV and A-only groups were divided into two groups: one group receiving training with a single speaker and the other with multiple speakers. The idea behind this was that multiple-talkers make it easier for students to generalise their perceptual skills: when a learner receives input from only one source he/she will get accustomed to one speaker and will face difficulty with other speakers, with another voice or accent. Additional to the AV and A-only group, there was a V-only control group.

To assess the potential improvement of production as a result of the perceptual training, subject recordings were made of a randomized sequence of 100 words contrasting /ɪ/ and /i/ in different phonetic environments prior to the perception pre-test and post-test. The participants were shown cards on which a test word was printed, then the card was turned over and the students were asked to produce the word. To avoid imitation they received no acoustic prompt. In experiment 1 groups of 5 native speakers of English judged 8 participants on a 7 point scale and in experiment 2 different judges were recruited. Because the focus of this experiment is so specific (/ɪ/,/i/ contrast only) the test of the acquisition of this feature does not tell us anything about generalisations to L2 speaking skills in a natural setting.

Hardison found (1) effects of L1 phonological systems and (2) interaction of both vowel and word position on the perception and production of /ɪ/ and /i/. She further found that (3) visual information contributed significantly to perception in the most challenging phonetic environments for both Japanese and Korean learners. There was proof of (4) generalisation of training novel stimuli spoken by a familiar and an unfamiliar talker, however, with greater accuracy for the familiar talker. The results most relevant for this review are (5) firstly that the study replicated the transfer of perceptual training to significant production improvement in the absence of explicit production instruction. Secondly, the variability in production accuracy as a function of context decreased with training.

Hardison's (2003) study shows evidence that uptake can take place without any form of output. Although the students receiving AV training did imitate the lip movements of the speaker on the screen, known as the McGurk effect, they did not actively produce the relevant words and sounds during the training sessions.

*Manuel Díaz-Campos (2004): “Context of Learning in the Acquisition of Spanish Second Language Phonology”*

In this paper, Díaz-Campos investigates whether there is an effect of context of learning (Study Abroad, versus At Home) in attaining native like pronunciation of consonantal segments in Spanish by native speakers of English. The consonantal features under focus here were word-initial stops [p t k], intervocalic fricatives [ð j ʎ], word final laterals [l], and palatal nasal [ɲ]. He further looks at whether other variables like years of formal instruction, time of recording, self-reported use of Spanish outside the classroom and language proficiency mediate in the outcomes.

The 20 AH students studying were taking Spanish classes in the regular program at the University of Colorado for an unspecified period of time. The 26 SA-students were part of a 10-week program in Alicante, Spain. Unfortunately, because this research covers a broad section of variables, the type of instruction is not specified leaving us only with the difference of SA and AH instruction. The hypothesis was that study abroad in country where the target language is spoken provides students with more opportunities to practice their language skills.

Both in the pre-test and the post-test the two groups were asked to read out a text with 60 target words containing the sounds of the four relevant segments. Major (1987) states that in contrast with producing sounds and words in isolation, learners run slip back into L1 patterns in running speech (107). Although Díaz-Campos (2004) provides a good rationale for this type of testing, the results of this assessment do not necessarily predict a generalisation of the acquired knowledge to L2 speaking skills in a natural, spontaneous speech setting.

Díaz-Campos' (2004) results show that there is no great difference in the acquisition of consonantal features between SA and AH subjects. Both groups show gains in the correct pronunciation of these features. Surprisingly, however, the AH groups trend of improvement was stronger than that of the SA group. This clearly shows that the context of learning is not necessarily a facilitative factor in L2 phonology acquisition. There is further evidence that marked sounds such as the voiced fricatives [ð j ʎ] are less easily acquired than other features and that the palatal nasal [ɲ] is better acquired because it is a new sound which has no similar counterpart in the L1.

<i>Pronunciation Inventory Table</i>	Elliott (1997)	Derwing et al. (1998)	Gorsuch (2001)	Mennin (2003)	Hardison (2003)	Díaz-Campos (2004)
<b><i>Type of Instruction</i></b>						
Instruction	Communicative Approach	Form Focussed	Form Focussed	Task-based	Form Focussed	Study Abroad and At Home context
<i>Perception</i>	Yes	No	No	Unknown	Yes	Unknown
<i>Production</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown
<i>Inductive / Deductive</i>	Deductive	Inductive	Deductive	Inductive	Deductive	Unknown
<i>Underlying theory</i>	Multimodal methodology to account for individual learning style variation	Unknown	Pronunciation should be taught through production	Fonf theories and TBL framework	unknown	Rich input and output in L2 context impr. pronunciation
<b><i>Type of Learner</i></b>						
<i>Age</i>	Unknown	18-44 years, Mean age: 31,7 years	Mean age: 20 years	Unknown	Exp1: 18-25 years Exp2:	17-24 years Mean age: early 20s
<i>Level</i>	Undergraduate students at intermediate level Spanish course	Intermediate proficiency level	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year EFL students at beginner-high to intermediate-low level	1 <sup>st</sup> year University students	Intermediate proficiency level	University students: beg., interm. and adv.-low prof.level
<i>Homogeneity Subject Group</i>	Yes	Not quite	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>L1</i>	American English	French	Japanese	Japanese	Exp1: Japanese Exp2: Korean	American English
<i>L2/FL</i>	Spanish (FL)	English (SL)	English (FL)	English (FL)	Am. English (FL)	Spanish (FL)
<i>Motivation</i>	Students	Volunteers from a full-time ESL program	Students	Students	Immigrants	Students
<b><i>Type of Treatment</i></b>						
<i>Treatment / Activity</i>	(1) model word or phrases, (2) description or facial	Segmental: Identification, discrimination and	Unknown activities from the <i>Clear Speech</i> text and	(1) Recording of presentation, (2) transcribe and correct	Perceptual training only: forced choice audio-only or audio-	Unknown activities in both AH and SA classrooms

	diagr., (3) comparison descr. / transparency facial diagram and (4) pronunciation exercises	repetition tasks. Global: Jazz chants and group presentations	exercise books	5 minute segment and (3) correction of transcript by teacher	visual discrimination task with /x/ & // minimal pairs.	
<i>Integrated / Skill Spec.</i>	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated
<i>Controlled/ Unplanned</i>	Controlled	Both	Controlled	Unplanned	Controlled	Unknown
<i>Test / Assessment</i>	Evaluation of (1) word and (2) repetitions, (3) word reading, and (4) spontaneous speech	Evaluation of Sentences (Exp 1), 45-second spont. speech excerpts (Exp 2)	Evaluation of sentences and separate words read out	Evaluation of Final presentation	Evaluation of pronunciation of 100 /x/ & // contrasting words	Evaluation of pronunciation of 60 target words integrated in a text
<i>Frequency Duration &amp; Intensity</i>	10-15 minutes in 21 lessons	20 min. Integrated into 20 hours per week for 12 weeks	75 min. weekly. total of 38 hours per year	Integrated into 25 classes of 90 minutes	30 min. in every 15 sessions for 3 weeks	SA group: 10-week program. AH group: unknown
<i>Type of Target</i>						
<i>Target Feature</i>	[a e i o u r r r b b d d g ġ p t k m ñ z]	comprehensibility, accuracy and fluency (gl and segm. feat.)	Suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation.	No specific features	Am. English /x/ & //.	Spanish consonants [p t k ð j γ l ɲ]
<i>Markedness</i>	Yes: fricatives, ñ, trilled /r/	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes: both sounds	Yes: voiced fricatives
<i>Similar / New sounds</i>	Both:	Unknown	Both	Similar sound errors	Dissimilar	Both. Palatal Nasal Dissimilar
<i>Design Factors</i>						
<i>Classroom, Laboratory, Naturalistic</i>	Classroom	Classroom	Classroom	Classroom	Classroom-like: small groups in sound attenuated rooms	Classroom setting
<i>Sample Size Recordings</i>	(1) word repetitions, (2) sentence repetitions, (3) word reading, and (4)	Exp1: Sentences Exp2: 45-second excerpts	Sentences and separate words	Final presentation	100 /r/, // contrasting words	60 target words integrated in a text

	spontaneous speech					
<i>Number of Subjects</i>	66: 43 subjects and 23 control	Exp1: 48 (36 results) Exp2: 48 (42 results)	24	Unknown	Exp1: 16 Exp2: 8	46: 26 SA and 20 AH students
<i>Cross Sect. / Long.</i>	None	Cross Sectional	None	None	Exp1: None Exp2: Cross Sect.	Cross Sectional
<i>Pre-test / Posttest</i>	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both
<i>Qualitative/ Quantitative</i>	Both	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
<i>Process- / Product oriented</i>	Both	Both	Product oriented	Process oriented	Product oriented	Both
<i>Oral / Written treatment</i>	Both	Oral	Both	Both	Dependent from condition (AV, A-only)	Unknown
<i>Oral / Written test</i>	Oral	Oral	Both	Oral	Oral	Oral
<i>Controlled / Free production in treatment</i>	Both	Exp. 1: controlled Exp. 2: free	Controlled	Free	Controlled	Free
<i>Controlled / Free production in test</i>	Both	Exp. 1: controlled Exp. 2: free	Controlled	Free	Controlled	Controlled
<b>Results</b>						
<i>Improvement General</i>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Improvement Specific</i>	[rr p r d b t u k o ñ]	<i>Comprehensibility</i> of Gl. and Segm. group and <i>Accent</i> of Segm. group	Unknown	<i>Certain sounds</i> , [s] for example, and <i>unfamiliar words</i>	/ɹ/ & /l/ in <i>initial singleton</i> (exp1) and <i>intervoc. pos.</i> (exp2) <i>context with /ɑ aɪ/</i>	Both AH and SA <i>word initial</i> [p,t,k] <i>word final</i> [l] and <i>palatal nasal</i> [ɲ]
<i>Improvement Context</i>	Sounds, sentence repetition and word reading	Sentence production and narrative data (effect weaker)	Unknown	Presentation: formal speech context	Word reading	Sentence reading

## 2.4 Conclusion

In the inventory we have seen that despite the small number of studies there are numerous variables that differ. There are great differences in feature under focus, type of instruction, length of treatment and many other features that attribute to the success or failure of a certain approach among the eight different inventoried studies. We therefore face a difficult task to come to a conclusion about the effects of instruction. Because we are dealing with two different areas of language skills we will first sum up and conclude about the effects and effectiveness of oral fluency instruction and then we will formulate conclusions about the instruction of pronunciation features in classroom situations.

### 2.4.1 Oral Fluency

In the first chapter several sub-areas of the three main areas, that is, *instruction*, *assessment* and *outcomes*, of the studies were posed. This paragraph will provide conclusions following these sub-areas. Firstly, the focus of instruction differed between these studies. The target feature in all three studies was never fluency alone. Other aspects under focus were comprehensibility and accuracy (Derwing et al., 1998), complexity (Yuan and Ellis, 2003) and lexical access and attention control (Segalowitz and Freed, 2004). This shows us that instruction of fluency can be integrated into instruction on different areas of language learning. The second sub-area of instruction, type of instruction, was also different in all three studies. The different types were Form-focussed instruction, task-based instruction and unclassified instruction in a SA and AH setting. The last sub-area of instruction was the rationale for type of instruction, which was unclear in Derwing et al.'s (1998) study. Yuan and Ellis' (2003) approach leaned on the task-based theories and that of Segalowitz and Freed (2004) on the claim that SA provides rich input and output, which are beneficial for SL/FL learners.

The second main area of investigation, the assessments in the study, had two sub-questions. The first of these was a question about the whereabouts of the assessment. In all three studies the assessment consisted of the evaluation of speech excerpts, which were partially controlled in Derwing et al.'s (1998) study, but required spontaneous speech in the other half of the same study and in the other two studies. The second sub-question was whether or not the assessment could tell us anything about the improvement of speaking abilities in a natural setting. This question can be answered with an affirmative. Because the tests require students to use spontaneous speech the results can be generalised to the use of language in real-time language use.

The third main area of investigation dealt with the outcomes of the studies under focus. In this area we first investigated whether there were improvements of L2 speaking skills in natural or classroom setting. This question is answered affirmative for all studies, but not for all approaches. Derwing et al. (1998) found that a focus on global pronunciation features increases the oral fluency of SL/ FL learners significantly, both in sentence reading and in extemporaneous speech. Yuan and Ellis (2003). In Yuan and Ellis' (2003) study there were positive effects of pre-task planning on oral fluency during presentations. Also the study by Segalowitz and Freed (2004) show differential results. Study Abroad improves oral fluency more than a study at home context. The second sub-question revolves around the generalizability of the results. A critical point that needs to be made about the study by Segalowitz and Freed (2004) here is that the SA students received far more intense and specific instruction than their AH fellow students. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that AH learning is ineffective, which is asserted by the outcomes of the two other studies.

The results were positive about the effect of instruction on the acquisition of oral fluency. Because of the generalizability of the assessments, spontaneous speech, and outcomes of the study we can conclude that a focus on oral fluency during classroom instruction is fruitful.

#### **2.4.2 Phonological Accuracy**

In this concluding paragraph about the pronunciation studies we will again work according to the sub-areas mentioned above. Firstly in the area of instruction the focus of instruction is important. We have seen a broad variety of foci in the studies, ranging from very specific sounds, like the American English /ɹ/ (Hardison, 2003) or Spanish intervocalic flap (Elliott, 1997) to global or segmental features in general (Derwing et al., 1998). Secondly the type of instruction in the studies has to be considered. There proves to be a broad variety of instruction types applied in the studies. Hardison (2003) applied a fairly traditional and specific kind of instruction, whereas Elliott (1997) applied a more communicative approach. Mennin (2003) and Yuan and Ellis (2003), furthermore, conducted research into the effects of task- based approaches on pronunciation and fluency respectively. Most of the studies, however, are conducted in classrooms where there is form focussed instruction, in which the focus on pronunciation forms is integrated into a broader language course. The last sub area of instruction deals with the rationales of type of instruction. Elliott (1997) states that his communicative approach by means of a multimodal methodology accounts for individual

differences in learning style. Many researchers do not include a clear reason for the type of instruction applied; however, from their instruction the following rationales can be deduced: Gorsuch (2001) relies on the output hypothesis according to which production enhances acquisition. Mennin's (2003) instructional method is based on the TBL framework and the study by Díaz-Campos (2004) utilises instruction based on the belief that a rich input enhances SLA.

The second main issue dealt with the assessments in the studies. First we wanted to know how the effect of instruction was assessed. In most of the studies this is measured via assessments in stead of straightforward tests in which students are asked to produce the target features directly. Secondly, we wanted to know whether the assessment tells us anything about the improvement of speaking abilities in a natural setting or only in the context of a task. This is very hard to point down, because none of the studies conducted a delayed post-test. What we do know however is that when a test requires a certain amount of spontaneous speech, like the assessments in Elliott's (1997), Derwing et al.'s (1998) and Mennin's (2003) study, generalisations about speaking abilities in a natural setting can more easily be made. Thirdly the outcomes of the studies were analysed. Except for the instruction practiced in the study by Gorsuch (2001) type of instruction does not necessarily lead to great differences in effect on L2 pronunciation. All 5 other studies namely show improvement in pronunciation. The traditional type of instruction practised by Hardison (2003) proves to be beneficial for students facing difficulties categorising perceptual linguistic features. The more general form focussed types of instruction of Derwing et al. (1998) also proves to be effective. The communicative- and task-based approach by Elliott (1997) and Mennin (2003) respectively, in which the (incidental) focus on pronunciation forms is integrated into a broader language course, also have a positive effect on speaking the skills of the participants. By focussing on specific features improvement of pronunciation of these features is possible. Markedness of certain features, however, affects acquisition. This can be retrieved from the results of the study by Elliott (1997) and Díaz-Campos (2004), where more marked features are less accurately pronounced than other features. Díaz-Campos (2004) further shows that new sounds, like the [ɲ] for American learners of Spanish, are more easily acquired than similar sounds which corresponds with Flege's Equivalence Classification Hypothesis (1987).

The general conclusion of these 5 studies is that instruction does have a positive effect on the acquisition of SL/FL pronunciation patterns. The table, however, also shows us that the improvement is not necessarily present in all aspects of L2 speaking. Production of isolated sounds or words and sentence repetition (Elliott, 1997) improves as well as sentence reading

(Díaz-Campos, 2004) and planned formal speech (Mennin, 2003). However, improvements in spontaneous speech are more difficult to show, as can be seen from Elliott (1997).

## Chapter 3: Implications for SL/FL Classroom Practice

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the practical implications of the studies analysed in Chapter 2 are under focus. The aim of this chapter is to translate the research findings to educational practice. Some of the studies provide useful ‘tips’ for language teachers while others do not. It would be valuable to check for every single study the applicability of the applied methods in SL classroom settings, both in terms of required time and task- or instruction-complexity. These two criteria are very relevant because teachers will have to regard both of them in a classroom setting. The instruction has to take place within a limited amount of time and its complexity has to be suitable for a classroom setting. Further, the implications of the authors will be looked at in the light of their relevance and practicability in classroom settings

### 3.2 Relevance of the Studies for Classroom Practice

Because we are dealing with both fluency and pronunciation, which are separate albeit closely related facets of SL/FL learning, these aspects will be dealt with separately. Firstly I will consider the practical implications of the studies focussing on fluency and secondly the studies with a pronunciation focus will be treated. Because the findings for fluency and pronunciation differ in the study by Derwing et al. (1998) I treat the same study in both sections.

#### 3.2.1 Implications of Oral Fluency Studies

*Tracey M. Derwing et al. (1998): “Evidence in favour of a Broad Framework for Pronunciation Instruction”*

The study by Derwing et al. (1998) is very relevant for SL/FL classroom practice because of its effectiveness. Following their results we can state that a focus on global pronunciation features is most beneficial to improve learners’ fluency. Because the focus is on more general features of spoken language than a segmental focus, learners are more likely to improve their fluency. About the segmental group they even state that “it was not surprising that a course focussing on individual sounds [...] would fail to enhance students’ fluency (407). The study is further relevant because of the applicability of the used methods. Although this study was conducted in a very intensive language course of 20 hours per week, which is not representative for the average SL/FL classroom situation, the amount of time devoted to

pronunciation is not extremely much; 20 minutes of pronunciation focus per day proves to be effective. The complexity of the instruction and task does not raise any doubts about its applicability. Namely, the focus of instruction and task: the sentence reading and small presentations, are common in most SL/FL classroom settings.

According to Derwing et al. it is not the case that a segmental focus is useless as we will see in the pronunciation section below (407). However, in the case of fluency instruction there is strong evidence that it is to be preferred over a segmental focus. I therefore disagree with Derwing et al. (1998) when it comes down to improving students' fluency in a classroom situation. Although their implication is practicable and effective in other language learning areas, a global focus alone would be most beneficial.

*Fangyuan Yuan and Rod Ellis (2003): "The Effects of Pre-Task Planning and On-Line Planning on Fluency, Complexity and Accuracy in L2 Monologic Oral Production"*

The results of Yuan and Ellis' (2003) study are in favour of pre-task planning to improve students' fluency during tasks. The group engaging in pre-task planning, namely achieved higher fluency scores and more varied vocabulary than the other groups. The applicability for pre-task planning in classroom situations is good, albeit that it is often seen as time consuming by teachers (24). In Yuan and Ellis' (2003) study, however, the 6 hours each week, of which 2 were devoted to listening and speaking, plus 1 hour oral English class every two weeks are very well realisable in a classroom situation. Another objection to planning is the lack of 'situational authenticity' (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). Yuan and Ellis, however, state that "teachers need to prepare their learners to communicate by developing their general linguistic capacity to communicate" (24), in stead of letting the learners discover all independently. The complexity of the task is not problematic at all for implementation in a classroom situation.

The implications given by Yuan and Ellis (2003) are that, because of a limited capacity to attend fluency, lexical variety and grammatical accuracy at the same time, students would benefit most from both pre-task and on-line planning. There should be a 'balanced goal development' (Skehan, 1998): teachers need to ensure that learners' capacity to use the L2 is balanced with regard to the three key aspects of language – fluency, complexity and accuracy. Yuan and Ellis (2003) refer to Skehan's (1998) solution to manipulate time on task and supplement this with the suggestion of manipulating opportunities for both pre-task and on-line planning (24). This seems to be a relevant claim, however, whether this is practicable

remains to be seen because of the limited amount of time teachers have in a classroom situation.

*Norman Segalowitz and Barbara F. Freed (2004). "Context, Contact and Cognition in Oral Fluency Acquisition, Learning Spanish in At Home and Study Abroad Contexts"*

Segalowitz and Freed (2004) already mention that the time of instruction is an important factor in the difference in results between students studying at home and abroad. The effectiveness of a study abroad was much greater also because of the opportunities of out-of-class language contact (192). Because there was no specification of the instruction it is hard to assess its applicability in SL/FL classroom settings. As already mentioned, there were great differences of instruction time between the two groups resulting in significant differences of achievements, this implies that much instruction time is needed in an SL/FL classroom setting. The complexity of the task, however, was not very problematic for the students, although students might find it difficult to use spontaneous speech in class.

Segalowitz and Freed (2004) unfortunately do not provide any pedagogical implications. The results of the study abroad students, however, do provide evidence for the necessity of rich input and output in any SL/FL classroom setting.

### **3.2.2 Implications of Phonological Accuracy Studies**

*A. Raymond Elliott (1997): "On the Teaching and Acquisition of Pronunciation within a Communicative Approach"*

Elliott's (1997) experiment is very relevant for the language teaching practice because it shows us that the teaching of pronunciation is effective. Although there was no significant improvement for all the features taught, there was great overall improvement. This study further shows us that pronunciation practice in classroom is not only effective, but also doable :10-15 minutes per lesson. The complexity of the treatment is not problematic: The modelling-task, description task, comparison task and practise sessions are very practicable in a classroom setting.

Because the findings of Elliott's (1997) study show that teaching pronunciation to adults is beneficial in the acquisition of Spanish pronunciation he claims that formal phonological instruction is needed at the intermediate level in education. Elliott (1997) also states that "[t]eaching pronunciation early on may increase students concern for developing native/native-like pronunciation, lower their affective filters, and help students to feel less anxious about speaking" (104). This claim is very valuable for language teaching because it

shows the importance for students to focus on pronunciation. He concludes that incorporation of exercises focussing on sounds difficult to pronounce can improve the native and non-native speaker's pronunciation which is a practicable proposition.

*Tracey M. Derwing et al. (1998): "Evidence in favour of a Broad Framework for Pronunciation Instruction"*

The study by Derwing et al. (1998) provides evidence of effect of both global and segmental instruction focus, albeit that the effects were greater for the global group. This shows the importance of the incorporation of pronunciation aspects in language teaching practice. The study is further relevant because of the applicability of the used methods. Although this study was conducted in a very intensive language course of 20 hours per week, which is not representative for the average SL/FL classroom situation, the amount of time devoted to pronunciation is not extremely much, albeit more than in Elliot's (1997) study; 20 minutes of pronunciation focus per day proves to be effective. As mentioned earlier the focus of instruction and task are common in classroom settings and are thus well applicable.

According to Derwing et al. (1998) it is not necessary to abandon a segmental focus in pronunciation teaching despite of the fact that a global instruction focus seems to be more effective. Rather they argue that, because both the global and segmental group improved significantly in comprehensibility and accent on the sentences, attention to both global and segmental concerns benefits ESL students. For fluency this claim was shown to be not very relevant, however, for pronunciation Derwing et al. (1998) justly state that, for example, in the case of a communication breakdown caused by a mispronunciation, a student who has received segmental training might be able to focus on the mispronounced form in a self repetition (407). Further, global instruction seems to provide the learner with skills that can be applied in extemporaneous speech production, despite the need to allocate attention to several speech components (407). A focus on both global and segmental features is doable in a classroom situation for a teacher, provided he has enough knowledge of the relevant features.

*Greta J. Gorsuch (2001) : "Testing Textbook theories and Tests: the Case of Suprasegmentals in Pronunciation Textbook"*

The duration of instruction in Gorsuch's (2001) study, 75 minutes weekly with a total of 38 hours per year of is realisable in almost all SLA classroom setting. Unfortunately the complexity of the tasks is not specified by Gorsuch (2001). However, because "Clear Speech"

is a method developed for language learners, the applicability in a classroom setting will not be problematic.

Although the results of Gorsuch's (2001) study are very disappointing, the suggestions she makes for material designers are valuable for instructed SLA. The article by Gorsuch (2001) raises the question whether tests and tasks developed by method-designers allow students to demonstrate their knowledge achieved through the relevant method. This problem is serious, because in this case it might well be that students acquired much new knowledge. However, we cannot conclude that students failed to generalise their new knowledge. Namely, according to "generalizability theories [...] multiple tasks are needed to demonstrate generalizability, and [...] the tasks should be more closely aligned with the textbook in terms of vocabulary and procedure" (134). Gorsuch (2001) further states that to reach a greater generalizability coefficient a minimum of 12 tasks and two judges would be required. She suggests that students could produce three speech samples, for example short dialogues or poetry reading, which should be analysed by the judges according to four (or more) subtests on speaking test analysis form developed by a teacher. These suggestions are realisable and the type of testing is also applicable in a classroom setting where the teacher can, for example, ask students to tape-record a dialogue. The rating of tests and assessments, which is rather time consuming, could be done by language teachers themselves.

*Paul Mennin (2003): "Rehearsed Oral L2 Output and Reactive Focus on Form"*

Mennin's (2003) results are in favour of his approach in classroom settings. The focus on pronunciation was integrated into 90 min. of 25 classes, which is very well applicable. Unfortunately there is no information about what amount of time was devoted to pronunciation. The way in which the type of instruction is carried out is directly usable in a classroom setting. The rehearsal transcriptions do not provide the students with an overload of work because "rehearsals [are] something that students often [do] in their own time [...] so the transcription exercise was just an extension of this" (137).

Mennin (2003) gives no recommendations for language teaching, however, near the end of his article he does state that teacher feedback appears to be important in the task. Students tend to attend more to the corrections of the teacher than to their own corrections. The teacher, therefore, has an important role as an authority and source of information in the classroom. This is especially important for language teachers to realise, especially in classrooms where students have to work for themselves or in groups.

*Debra Hardison (2003): "Acquisition of Second-Language Speech: Effects of Visual Cues, Context, and Talker Variability"*

As we have already seen, Hardison's (2003) form of instruction, despite of its effectiveness, is rather difficult to translate to a classroom situation. The problem lies not so much in the amount of time required, 30 minutes in every 15 sessions for 3 weeks, however, it deals with very specific features and is given in a very specific way and therefore requires specific material. For beginner-level students this type of instruction is perhaps most needed, because they face many difficulties in the area of FL/SL perception and production, however, the specificity of the task on the one hand and design on the other would make classroom teaching and learning very monotonous.

Hardison (2003) claims that that "viewing the acquisition of L2 speech as a bimodal process has obvious pedagogical implications" (517), however, she does not go into detail about this. She probably refuses to do this because the discrepancy between her research instruction method and SL/FL teaching practice. An interesting finding, however, is that talker variability proves to enable students to generalise. Linked with the article by Mennin (2003) this could mean that the teacher should not be the only source of input and feedback in a classroom situation.

*Manuel Díaz-Campos (2004): "Context of Learning in the Acquisition of Spanish Second Language Phonology"*

The results obtained by the study of Díaz-Campos (2004) do not show great differences between Study Abroad and At Home students and are therefore not in favour of SA instruction, contradictory to his hypothesis. He concludes that among other factors that years of formal language instruction and level at which formal instruction began decides the quality of L2 pronunciation (270). Another factor is reported language-use of the target language outside the classroom (270). It was not necessarily so that SA students used Spanish more outside the classroom than their AH colleagues. Because both groups improved their pronunciation, instruction proves to be effective in both contexts. There are, unfortunately no indications of amount of instruction time the both groups received. It is therefore difficult to assess whether the instruction methods are applicable in any SL/FL classroom situation. The instruction is further also unspecified and therefore hard to analyse from this point of view.

Díaz-Campos (2004) does not provide any practical implications for language teachers, however, from the lack of differences between the AH and SA group we can derive that obtaining a better pronunciation is possible studying a foreign or second language at

home, deprived of its context. Diaz-Campos also asserts that these results suggests that “formal instruction can have an impact in attaining a native-like pronunciation after a long period of time” (268). As in the study on fluency by Segalowitz and Freed we can state that the teacher should encourage as much use of the target language as possible.

### 3.2.3 Inventory Table of Applicability and Implication

<i>Fluency</i>	Derwing et al. (1998)	Yuan and Ellis (2003)	Segalowitz and Freed (2004)	<i>Phonology/ Pronunciation</i>	Elliott (1997)	Derwing et al. (1998)	Gorsuch (2001)	Mennin (2003)	Hardison (2003)	Díaz-Campos (2004)
<i>Methodology</i>				<i>Methodology</i>						
<i>Effectiveness</i>	Global instruction	Pre-task planning	Study abroad	<i>Effectiveness</i>	Focus on difficult sounds	Both segmental and global	Unknown	Incidental Focus on form	Perceptual training	SA and AH instruction
<i>Applicability Time</i>	Good: 20 minutes per day	Good: 2,5 hours per week average	Unknown	<i>Applicability Time</i>	Good: 10-15 minutes per lesson	Good: 20 minutes per day	Good: 75 minutes weekly	Good: 90 minutes in 25 classes	Good 30 minutes daily	Unknown: no time specified
<i>Applicability Complexity</i>	Good	Good	Unknown	<i>Applicability Complexity</i>	Good	Good	Good	Great	Problematic	Unknown
<i>Implications</i>				<i>Implications</i>						
<i>Implications by writer</i>	Both Global and Segmental instruction	Both pre-task and on-line planning	No pedagogical implications	<i>Implications</i>	Focus on difficult sounds as early as possible	Both Global and Segmental instruction	No pedagogical implications	Teacher feedback important	No pedagogical implications	No pedagogical implications
<i>Further suggestions</i>			Strive for rich input and output to simulate SA context	<i>Further Suggestions</i>			Check the tests and assessments of methods	Give incidental feedback	Other sources of input than teacher alone	Strive for rich input and output to simulate SA context
<i>Relevant</i>	Yes, but global benefits fluency more	Yes very relevant	Yes	<i>Relevant</i>	Yes very relevant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Practicable</i>	Yes	Questionable, could be time consuming	Yes	<i>Practicable</i>	Yes	Yes	With colleagues, yes.	Yes	Yes, guest speakers, audio(-visual) materials	Yes

### 3.3 Conclusion

In the previous chapter we have seen that, except for the study by Gorsuch, all studies show positive effects on SL/FL fluency and pronunciation. When we look at the applicability in terms of time, also the majority of reviewed studies fit into most language learning classroom settings. None of the studies is very time-consuming in its fluency or pronunciation instruction focus. When we look at the applicability in terms of complexity of task, however, problems arise. Firstly, Hardison's (2003) study for example is much too specific and monotonous to use in a foreign language classroom. Secondly, The studies by Segalowitz and Freed (2004) and Díaz-Campos (2004) investigating the differences between AH and SA classroom settings are non-specific in their descriptions of the type of instruction applied which makes it hard to tell whether their methods are applicable in a classroom situation. Thirdly, the SA setting, furthermore, is not representative for most SL/FL language learning settings.

Four out of eight studies under focus here provide no specific implications for educational practice. This is strange considering that they are dealing with the effects of instruction, which is mostly practiced in classrooms. The implications in the other four studies are all relevant and practicable in classrooms. The following implications that can be distilled from the studies are relevant for educational practice focussing on fluency and pronunciation.

In the instruction of fluency teachers should focus on global pronunciation features of the relevant language (Derwing et al., 2003) or apply pre-task planning in class (Yuan and Ellis, 2003). Combined with implications that can be derived from the results of the different studies a general conclusion would be that teachers could (1) focus on global features, (2) apply different sorts of planning, (3) strive for rich TL input and (4) stimulate as much output as possible both within and out of the classroom to improve learners TL fluency. Especially the last implications are important. Because of earlier positive research findings of SA context effect on SL/FL fluency the teacher should so to speak imitate an SA situation in an AH context by means of rich input and by stimulating learners to communicate in the target language.

When instructing pronunciation teachers can easily focus on suprasegmentals (Derwing et al., 1998) or difficult sounds (Elliott, 1997). They can do this by means of planned focus on form, where there is an instructional focus on pre-selected forms (Elliott, 1997; Derwing et al., 1998; Hardison, 2003). Teachers, could, however, also instruct by means of incidental focus on form, where there is feedback or instruction when problems arise in the use of the TL (Mennin, 2003). In short, students would benefit from (1) pronunciation

instruction focussing on SL/FL individual sounds that are difficult to acquire, (2) pronunciation instruction with a focus on global features of the language, (3) incidental feedback by the teacher, (4) rich input by multiple speakers and (5) enough opportunities for output. Critical notes are made by Scarela and Oxford (1994) as well as Tarone (2005) who wonder what the goal of instruction of phonological accuracy should be. Scarela and Oxford (1994) claim that native-like pronunciation should not be the goal of pronunciation instruction, especially not for adult SL/FL learners, because they are “incapable of acquiring native-like pronunciation” (224). Instead the focus should be improvement of pronunciation in terms of intelligibility (224-5) The same claim is made by Tarone (494; 2005). They conclude that learners can achieve this goal by actively participating in their learning and that the teacher should apply a wealth of techniques which corresponds to the implications mentioned above.

A question that arises from the analyses of the studies is whether instruction focussing on pronunciation would also enable students to improve their fluency or not. Only the study by Derwing et al. (1998) shows that this is indeed the case. In this study, a pronunciation focus on global features of the language proves to be effective in achieving fluency A focus on segmental features, however, does not result in the same effect on oral fluency acquisition. In a similar way, instruction of SL/FL fluency could improve students’ pronunciation or phonological accuracy. However; empirical proof remains yet to be found. The following chapter will deal with this and other intriguing questions arising from this analysis.

## **Chapter 4: Further Research**

## 4.1 Introduction

In the last Chapter of this thesis we firstly look at the recommendations for further research made by the authors of the reviewed papers. We then verify whether the recommendations are practicable and sufficiently relevant for language education or not. We further look at areas that are untouched by these recommendations and provide recommendations for further research into these areas. Lastly a proposal for a practical research will be made.

## 4.2 Recommendations of Researchers

Many of the researchers provide relevant suggestions for further research. We will evaluate all of the suggestions made in the studies we have investigated so far. Firstly the fluency studies will be treated and secondly we look at the pronunciation studies. Although Derwing et al.'s (1998) study is present in both analyses we treat this study only once, because of the fact that the recommendations are both applicable to fluency and pronunciation studies. In the table at the end of this section all recommendations will be presented in a schematic way.

### 4.2.1 Recommendations for Further Fluency Studies

*Tracey M. Derwing et al. (1998): "Evidence in favour of a Broad Framework for Pronunciation Instruction"*

Derwing et al (1998) come up with three short recommendations for further research. They state that although their study is the first controlled investigation into the effects of ESL instruction, many areas still require exploration (408). First, they ask for research into the efficacy of pedagogical materials and combinations of approaches. Secondly the impact of instruction on learners of varying proficiency, levels and L1 needs to be explored and thirdly they suggest that effects of instruction should be rated blindly by 'disinterested-' or 'ordinary listeners' because they are the people whom ESL students should be comprehensible to (408).

Investigations of this type, especially the first, would be very relevant for language education practice, because, as Derwing et al. (1998) state, "much current practice rests on intuitions and anecdotal evidence supplied by ESL practitioners, without even a modicum of empirical support" 408). The second proposal is also relevant, however very difficult to put into practice, because there are many other factors affecting foreign language fluency, like motivation and aptitude which have to be included in such a study. The third recommendation

is very interesting for SL/FL classroom practice, by means of this type of ratings teachers would get a good insight into the fluency of their students.

*Fangyuan Yuan and Rod Ellis (2003): "The Effects of Pre-Task Planning and On-Line Planning on Fluency, Complexity and Accuracy in L2 Monologic Oral Production"*

The two suggestions for further research offered by Yuan and Ellis (2005) are the following: Firstly "[i]n future studies of planning it will be necessary to attend carefully to the conditions under which tasks are performed in order to control for or manipulate on-line planning" (25). Secondly they ask for an investigation into the effects of providing opportunity for both pre-task and on-line planning.

The practicability of these proposals is not necessarily problematic, albeit that the control of on-line planning is hard to realise, especially in classroom research, because of the great individual differences. Especially the second suggestion would be very relevant for the educational practice. Although Yuan and Ellis (2005) already stated that a teacher should provide opportunities for students to engage in both types of planning, they ask for empirical evidence of its effects.

*Norman Segalowitz and Barbara F. Freed (2004). "Context, Contact and Cognition in Oral Fluency Acquisition, Learning Spanish in At Home and Study Abroad Contexts"*

Segalowitz and Freed (2004) propose three subjects for further research. Firstly they want to know whether AH learning, because of its basic nature, is beneficial for students when they are facing more complex communicative situations. Secondly they are interested in the relation between attention control on the one hand and fluency on the other, because of the fact that speech rate correlated negatively with gains in attention control. By becoming more fluent, students had a lower tendency to speak faster so to speak which may be related to self-monitoring abilities. The third recommendation deals with the relation between initial oral and cognitive abilities, aptitude and starting age of SL/FL learning, on the one hand and language contact abilities on the other.

The practicability of these suggestions probably poses no problem, albeit that the second is much more complicated than the first and third and therefore more practicable in laboratories than in classroom situations to avoid effects of noise. These latter suggestions are also much more relevant for the educational practice. The first recommendation is especially relevant to test the effects of AH instruction into a foreign language context and the third

recommendation is interesting because it can make predictions about the success in acquisition for individuals studying abroad.

#### 4.2.2 Recommendations for Further Pronunciation Studies

*A. Raymond Elliott (1997): “On the Teaching and Acquisition of Pronunciation within a Communicative Approach”*

Since this study is only concerned with instruction in a communicative setting Elliott (1997) recommends firstly that further research needs to be conducted in relation to other methodologies. He, for example mentions that “future studies might benefit from examining the effect of formal instruction in pronunciation as it relates to audiolingual, cognitive-code, and proficiency based classrooms” (103).

These studies are well practicable by means of classroom studies. They would also be relevant, because there is a wide variety of methodologies which a SL/FL teacher could apply in class. There are of course more methodologies that would profit from a study investigating the effects of instruction, like a task based methodology to which we will come back later.

*Greta J. Gorsuch (2001) : “Testing Textbook theories and Tests: the Case of Suprasegmentals in Pronunciation Textbook”*

Gorsuch (2001) does not provide research suggestions that are directly related to pronunciation instruction, however, the one she gives is very relevant for linguistic research in general. She, namely, proposes that “all research should contain an adequate analysis of the subjects’ interaction with the measurement instruments used so that the readers can judge for themselves the limitations of the data” (134).

This suggestion is very well practicable, however, as we have seen in the study, it is not always the case. In other studies that were under review here we have also seen a lack of specificity of type and form instruction and type of tests that were used by the researchers (e.g. Segalowitz and Freed, 2004; Díaz-Campos, 2004). The relevance for SL/FL teachers is also great because they can analyse the strength and weaknesses of a study for their own classes.

*Paul Mennin (2003): “Rehearsed Oral L2 Output and Reactive Focus on Form”*

According to Mennin (2003) a long term study should be (and is being) conducted to assess whether his type of task, preparing a presentation, has a cumulative and permanent effect on interlanguage development.

This is a very practicable suggestion in language learning classroom and we look forward to Mennin's (2003) findings. It is further very relevant for language education because many teachers make use of task based curricula and it would be relevant to know how to integrate pronunciation instruction as effectively as possible.

*Debra Hardison (2003): "Acquisition of Second-Language Speech: Effects of Visual Cues, Context, and Talker Variability"*

For further research Hardison (2003) states that "further research is needed in areas such as the link between perception and production" (518). This is a very broad field of research, so specifies it with a hint in the direction of the question whether perceptual training is more effective or not with larger chunks than minimal pairs.

This suggestion is certainly practicable in a classroom situation and also very relevant, because in most classrooms there is no such thing as systematic perceptual training by means of minimal pairs. Many research has been conducted in laboratories into the effect of perceptual training, however, not much of this is directly relevant for SL/FL classroom situations and the abovementioned suggestion would therefore be very valuable.

*Manuel Díaz-Campos (2004): "Context of Learning in the Acquisition of Spanish Second Language Phonology"*

Because there was an inconsistency in the data about the reported use of Spanish outside the class in days and hours in relation to the results Díaz-Campos suggests that further research should address problems related to definitions of this variable. He further suggests that there should be an overview of effectiveness of the teaching of other segmental and suprasegmental features in an SA program.

Both the suggestions are practicable in classroom situations, albeit that the results of the second one are only applicable in an SA context. The result of the latter suggestion will also be valuable, however, they will be relevant only for SA classrooms.

### 4.2.3 Inventory Table of Recommendations for Further Research

<i>Fluency</i>	Derwing et al. (1998)	Yuan and Ellis (2003)	Segalowitz and Freed (2004)	<i>Phonology/ Pronunciation</i>	Elliott (1997)	Gorsuch (2001)	Mennin (2003)	Hardison (2003)	Díaz-Campos (2004)
<b><i>Recommendations</i></b>				<b><i>Recommendations</i></b>					
1	Efficacy of pedagogical materials and combinations of approaches	Attention to conditions of tasks to control on-line planning	Study of effects of AH learning in complex communicative situations	1	pronunciation instruction in other methodologies	analysis of the subjects' interaction with the measurement instruments	Long-term effects of task-based teaching	Effects of perceptual training with chunks on production	Problems related to definitions of variables like reported use of Spanish
2	Impact of instruction on learners of varying age & proficiency	Effects of both pre-task and on-line planning.	Exploration of relation attention control and fluency	2					Benefits of SA program for other segmental and suprasegmental aspects
3	Blind ratings by ordinary ESL listeners		Relation initial oral & cognitive abilities and language contact activities	3					
<b><i>Practicability and Relevance</i></b>				<b><i>Practicability and Relevance</i></b>					
<i>Practicable</i>	1 and 3	1 (difficult), 2	1,2 and 3	<i>Practicable</i>	1	1	1	1	1,2
<i>Relevant for Classroom Practice</i>	1,2 and 3	2	1 and 3	<i>Relevant for Classroom Practice</i>	1	1, not directly	1	1	2

### **4.3 Conclusion**

As we have seen, many research suggestions have been offered by the different researchers. Most of these studies could well be conducted in classroom settings and most of them bear relevance to classroom practice. Language learning benefits most from research focussing on effect of methodology and type of instruction. Recommendations like that of Elliott (1997), Derwing et al. (1998), Mennin (2003) and Yuan and Ellis(2003) are therefore very valuable. A question that is very important, but unfortunately remains unanswered in this thesis is what teaching methodology or type of instruction is most beneficial for SL/FL students. Because of the small amount of studies analysed in this thesis is it impossible to answer this question. In chapter 3 the question about reciprocal effect of fluency and pronunciation instruction on pronunciation and fluency skills arose. This is another intriguing question where this overview failed to give a satisfying answer to. Still another interesting aspect of oral fluency and phonological accuracy is the role of motivation. The acquisition of fluency and pronunciation could motivate students to learn a language, especially because they could build up the students self-confidence in their own speaking abilities. There is thus still a great need of research in the area of SL/FL fluency and pronunciation instruction.

### **4.4 Research Proposal for the Second Masters Year**

In the second year of the Educational Master program I get the opportunity to conduct my own research in the L2 classrooms I'll be teaching in. I would like to use this opportunity to conduct a study in the area of L2 oral fluency and phonological accuracy. An outline of the design of this study is sketched below.

In the previous sections of this chapter many suggestions for further research have already been made. Many of them are practicable and very relevant for the language teaching practice. We have also seen that there is little research conducted into the area of fluency and pronunciation instruction and that more research is needed to provide a clear picture about the effect and effectiveness of teaching L2 speaking skills. In my research, however, I would like to focus on the underlying principles of teaching L2 oral fluency and phonological accuracy. In chapter 1.1 we have seen several arguments to teach fluency and pronunciation skills to SL/FL learners. One of them was that "being able to speak each others' language properly, namely, improves the sense of sense of belonging to another culture and without dependence on an interpreter conversations develop more naturally" (4). I further claimed that "[m]otivation of L2 learners could also be improved by means of pronunciation and fluency instruction. Being able to speak the target language fluently and naturally can give learners

self-confidence and learning pleasure” (4). Contrastingly, Harlow and Muyskens (1994) state that students “worry about pronunciation a great deal because they feel insecure about how they sound to other people” (146). However, except for the study by Harlow and Muyskens (1994) that only concerns pronunciation, there is a lack of empirical evidence to endorse these claims.

An area that is untouched by most of the research conducted into SL/FL fluency and pronunciation instruction is the area of motivation. Not only is motivation important to learn a language, it also affects the effect and effectiveness of instruction. When a student is motivated, he or she will engage more enthusiastically in the activities employed in class and results will be better than those of unmotivated students. In the area of oral fluency and phonological proficiency motivation could also play a very important role. From the studies included in the inventory only Elliott (1997) briefly touches on the idea that instruction in the relevant areas motivates students to use the target language more extensively and more accurately in spontaneous speech. He states that “teachers and researchers have long recognized the importance of affect in language acquisition” (103). He further claims that “[t]eaching pronunciation early on may increase student concern for developing native/native-like pronunciation, lower their affective filters and help students to feel less anxious about speaking” (104). According to Elliott (1997) contact with native speakers will become easier, more intense and pass off more pleasantly for SL/FL learners when they have confidence in their speaking skills which in turn enhances students’ ultimate degree of acquisition (104). The focus of Elliott’s (1997) paper is on pronunciation but it could very well count for oral fluency instruction too.

Although Elliott’s (1997) claims are strong, his claims remain hypotheses, because he offers no empirical evidence. To test these hypotheses, however, I would like to conduct an empirical research to examine whether this is the case in the acquisition of the languages French, German, English and maybe Spanish in Dutch secondary schools. The main question would be: *Do students become more motivated to speak the target language by means of instruction and practice of oral fluency and pronunciation in class?*

The design of the study follows the pretest- post-test principles. At the start of the firsthalf year of teaching practice the students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about the effect and effectiveness of fluency and pronunciation instruction. By means of this questionnaire I want to get a clear picture about the students’ motivation to speak the TL, their view on their own speaking abilities and whether or not they believe instruction can facilitate these. A similar questionnaire will be filled out at the end of the half year teaching period to

assess whether their motivation to speak the TL has increased or not by means of focussing on these TL features.

To conduct this research, several methodological principles must be respected. In the first place the subjects are all lower- and upper secondary school students with an age ranging from 12 until 19 years. Secondly, the instruction will be incidental, focussing on global pronunciation features, contain rich TL input and stimulate TL output. In short, the instruction will follow the principles of effective L2 fluency and pronunciation instruction formulated in paragraph 3.3 above. Thirdly, instruction will be classroom-based to facilitate generalisations to other classroom settings.

Lastly, I would like to focus on several variables that could influence the results. In the first place, *type of learner* could effect motivation by means of age, L1 background, motivation to learn the TL in general, level of education and self reported level of proficiency. Secondly, the *type of instruction* is important. The students could, normally speaking, have very formal instruction with little attention to speaking in class or highly communicative instruction in which they are required to use the TL in class. They might prefer one type of instruction over the other, which will influence their opinion of fluency and pronunciation focus in class. By means of the results of the questionnaires I will try to provide a complete picture of the differences between the subjects concerning these variables.

I hope the findings of this research will give an insight into the motivation of students to acquire L2 speaking skills that are useful for SL/FL classroom practice and for future research conducted in the areas of SL/FL Oral Fluency and Phonological Accuracy.

## Chapter 5 Summary and Conclusion

The main question of this MA thesis is whether instruction is beneficial to the acquisition of oral fluency and phonological accuracy. Several studies conducted in the area of SL fluency and phonological accuracy are analysed. The relevant oral fluency studies are conducted by Derwing et al. (1998), Yuan and Ellis (2003) and Segalowitz and Freed (2004). In the area of phonological accuracy the studies by Elliott (1997), Derwing et al. (1998), Gorsuch (2001), Mennin (2003), Hardison (2003) and Díaz-Campos (2004) were selected.

The second chapter shows that there are many differences between the studies in terms of research design and instructional approach. All types of instruction applied in the studies, however, proved to enhance oral fluency and phonological accuracy in most of the cases, both in controlled tasks as well as in tasks that require spontaneous speech. We have seen that many different instructional approaches, ranging from fairly traditional to task-based, can result in improvement of speaking skills.

The third chapter deals with the relevance of the studies and implications for classroom practice of fluency and pronunciation instruction. For fluency instruction it proves to be important to (1) focus on global features, (2) apply different sorts of planning, (3) strive for rich TL input and (4) stimulate as much student output as possible. Instruction of phonological accuracy should (1) focus on individual 'marked' sounds, (2) be focussing on global pronunciation features, (3) preferably be incidental, (4) provide rich input and (5) stimulate student output.

In the fourth chapter, the research implications of the researchers are summarised and analysed. Many questions about the effect and effectiveness of fluency and pronunciation instruction remain unanswered, and currently language learning would benefit much from research focussing on effect of methodology and type of instruction in these areas. Lastly, a proposal for further research is included which embroiders on the theme of motivation and L2 oral fluency and phonological accuracy.

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