

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS

VANESSA PAZ

**AN INVESTIGATION ON TEACHING PRONUNCIATION TO ELDERLY
LEARNERS**

Porto Alegre

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Orientador: Prof. Dr. Ubiratã Kickhöfel Alves

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how English pronunciation has been taught to learners aged more than forty years old, in order to verify if there is any difference in teaching pronunciation to young and older students. The participants were four teachers and eleven students from 14 to 59 years old from Cachoeirinha, Rio Grande do Sul. The data for this study were obtained through written questionnaires, answered by all the students and teachers involved. The questions from these forms concern the students' and teachers' views about teaching pronunciation, the techniques used and the biggest difficulties from the learners. Two of the teachers had their classes recorded in video, so their answers could be contrasted to their acting. The methodology employed aims to reach the following specific goals of the study: (a) verify if teachers see any difference concerning teaching pronunciation to older and young learners; (b) verify if any specific technique is used by the teachers to teach pronunciation to older learners; (c) examine the importance given by students to pronunciation teaching; (d) investigate the most common difficulties for older learners' concerning pronunciation; (e) check if the teachers' answers about pronunciation teaching are congruent to their acting in the classroom. This study showed that most teachers do not distinguish older and young learners when teaching pronunciation, and that few pronunciation problems related to ageing specifically are identified by the teachers. The analysis of the empirical material also showed that the two teachers who had their classes recorded presented opposite behavior: while one of them acted completely coherently with her answers provided in the written questionnaire, the other acted differently from what had been stated in his questionnaire. The present study is important not only for mooting issues related to teaching phonetic-phonologic aspects, but also for proposing a reflection on the necessity of different practices due to the individual learners' characteristics.

Keywords: Pronunciation Teaching, Older Learners, EFL Teaching.

RESUMO

O presente estudo investiga como tem sido desenvolvido o ensino de pronúncia da língua inglesa para aprendizes maiores de quarenta anos, de modo a investigar se há diferenças no ensino para aprendizes mais ou menos jovens. Participaram deste trabalho quatro professores e onze alunos de idades variadas de duas escolas de idiomas de Cachoeirinha, no Rio Grande do Sul. Os dados necessários para a investigação foram obtidos através de questionários escritos respondidos por todos os professores e alunos participantes. As perguntas dos questionários versam sobre a visão que os professores e alunos têm do ensino de pronúncia, as técnicas utilizadas para tal e as maiores dificuldades encontradas. Dois dos professores tiveram suas aulas gravadas em vídeo para que suas práticas pudessem ser contrastadas com suas respostas. A metodologia utilizada visa a atingir os objetivos específicos desta pesquisa, os quais consistem em verificar: (a) se os professores veem diferença entre ensinar pronúncia para jovens e para mais velhos; (b) se os professores fazem uso de alguma técnica específica para ensinar pronúncia a essa faixa etária; (c) a importância do ensino de pronúncia para os estudantes; (d) as dificuldades mais comuns nos alunos mais velhos; (e) se as respostas dos professores são consonantes com sua prática em sala de aula. Através deste estudo, verifiquei que a maioria dos professores não faz grande distinção entre os alunos de maior ou menor idade ao ensinar pronúncia, e que poucos problemas são identificados pelos professores como relativos, especificamente, à idade dos alunos. Analisando o material empírico foi possível constatar, no caso dos dois professores cujas aulas foram gravadas, que, enquanto um deles foi totalmente coerente em sua prática com as respostas do questionário, o outro apresentou comportamento inverso. O desenvolvimento do presente estudo se faz importante por trazer à discussão não somente questões referentes ao ensino do aspecto fonético-fonológico, mas, também, por propor a reflexão acerca da necessidade de práticas diferenciadas em função das características individuais dos aprendizes.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de Pronúncia, Alunos Mais Velhos, Ensino de LE

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1 INTRODUCTION

With the increasing life expectancy and the modern active profile of elderly people, many research studies concerning their interests have been carried out (see, for example, MORANDI, 2002; PIRES, 2005; SCOPINHO, 2009). Among these interests is the learning of a new language, which appears as a leisure activity. Elderly people have been looking for knowledge in order to socialize, to keep updated, to travel and to have fun (SCOPINHO, 2009). Studies about elderly ESL and EFL acquisition and teaching for this age group have emerged among academics, but specific research studies about pronunciation peculiarities and instruction for elderly students are still scarce.

Given the statement above, this study aims to verify how pronunciation instruction has been done for middle-aged and elderly¹ students. In the present study, by contrasting written forms and classroom video recordings, I was able to identify how teachers have acted concerning my target age group and to check if there is any difference between the treatment given to older and young learners in terms of pronunciation teaching. The collected data also allowed me to identify some pronunciation problems related to ageing, which are supported by the Theoretical Background in Chapter 2.

I decided to carry out an investigation about older students' pronunciation due to my experience as an English Teacher. Having taught from very young children up to seniors, I realized that ageing played an important role at language acquisition, mainly concerning pronunciation and speed of learning. Some frequent pronunciation errors seen among elderly students also intrigued me, so I decided to go deeper in this matter. My first idea was to carry out a broader research study which investigated the most common errors² and the biggest difficulties seniors show when acquiring English pronunciation. However, due to the size that this enterprise would entail and the time it would take, in addition to the difficulty to find a large amount of participant senior students, I decided to conduct a study on how the teaching of pronunciation has been administered to this age group, including students aged forty and on. With this in mind, I intend to contribute not

¹ For this study, the term "older learners" will be used to refer to both middle-aged and elderly learners.

² In this study, we consider as "errors" those productions that affect intelligibility. No distinction is made between the terms "error" and "mistake".

only to the discussion on pronunciation teaching, but also to the debate on the teaching of more experienced learners and their needs. The present study is, thus, based on two main backgrounds: the relationship between language acquisition and age and the teaching to older learners, focusing on pronunciation. Departing from my general objective, which is to verify how pronunciation instruction has been conducted among older students, I intend to reach five specific goals:

1. Verify if teachers see any difference concerning teaching pronunciation to older and young learners;
2. Verify if any specific technique is used by the teachers to teach pronunciation for older learners;
3. Examine the importance given by students to pronunciation teaching;
4. Investigate the most common difficulties for older learners concerning pronunciation;
5. Check if the teachers' answers about pronunciation teaching in the written questionnaires are congruent to their teaching procedures in the classroom.

In line with these objectives, this study aims to answer the following Research Questions:

1. Do teachers see any difference in teaching pronunciation to older and to younger learners?
2. Do teachers use any specific techniques to teach pronunciation to older learners?
3. Do the students interviewed consider the importance of pronunciation teaching?
4. What are the most common pronunciation difficulties faced by older learners, according to the answers provided by the teachers and students in the questionnaires? Is there a difference between the answers provided by both groups?
5. Are the teachers' answers to the written forms in accordance with their acting in their classroom, as verified in the video recordings?

This study presents five chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Background, Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion and, finally, Conclusions. In the present

chapter, the objectives of the study and its Research Questions have been established. The next chapter settles the pertinent theoretical basis for the analysis to be carried out in the study. The third chapter, which describes the Method, identifies the participants and the instruments used in the data collection process. The fourth chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data, and the last chapter, in which the Research Questions are answered, establishes the conclusions I came to in this research. The References, Appendix and Attachments are at the end of this work.

My intention with this study is to provide more data concerning teaching pronunciation to older students, since I consider it is a very important part of second and foreign language acquisition. Moreover, few studies have been done concerning the topic of the present research. Therefore, I hope this study may contribute to building knowledge on teaching elderly students, specially regarding the teaching of phonetic-phonological aspects.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter is divided in two main Sections. The first one presents theories concerning language acquisition and age. It is divided in three subsections. The first subsection discusses the motivation of elderly learners in learning English as a foreign language. The second subsection presents the Critical Period Hypothesis, and the third subsection discusses the biological influences of age on learning a new language, focusing on the acquisition of English pronunciation. The second Section focuses on pronunciation teaching and is subdivided in English teaching according to the student's age, the reasons for teaching pronunciation, pronunciation teaching techniques and corrective feedback.

2.1 Language Acquisition and Age

This Section considers the peculiarities of elderly learners in learning a new language system. It covers their motivation, the Critical Period Hypothesis and biological influences of ageing on learning pronunciation. This theoretical discussion supports the answers for the first and fourth Research Questions, which deal with the differences on acquiring pronunciation between elderly and young learners.

2.1.1 Motivation

Motivation is, according to WILLIAMS & BURDEN, (1997, *apud* PIRES, 2005) a “cognitive and emotional awakening which generates a conscious decision to act and which initiates a period of intellectual and physical effort in order to achieve a

previously established goal³”. It can be divided into three stages: (1) reasons to act, (2) decision to do it and (3) persistence. Seniors often are prominent in this last stage.

The authors also divide motivation for learning into two other categories: intrinsic and extrinsic, and both work together sometimes. When the will for learning comes from an external motive, such as a school test or a job promotion, we have extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, when the process of learning itself provides pleasure and interest to the learner, we have intrinsic motivation.

As for the reasons to look for a new language, elderly learners can be a very specific group. While other age groups of students normally look for a second language in order to pursue a better job or for travelling, older learners, mainly seniors, often start studying just as a means of leisure. They often look for a new language in order to feel challenged. Their motivation can also be existential: they want to learn, have fun, interact, and, mainly, socialize.

Seniors are, however, stigmatized by prejudice and stereotypes, which can play a crucial role in their learning. Pires (2005) noticed such prejudice among her senior students’ speech, such as “teens learn much faster”, “I may learn it in ten years” or “my pronunciation is terrible”. This, nevertheless, does not seem to diminish their motivation. Motivation for learning is enough to guarantee that the learning process occur in the same way as at the age of 80 as at the age of 10. The only difference is the time it takes learners to internalize information, since children are obviously faster than adults (VILLANI, 2007 *apud* SCOPINHO, 2009).

Being aware of the students’ motivation is very important for the teacher to outline his class plans and methodology used. Understanding the role of motivation in the learning process may allow us to better understand the differences among students according to their age. The next Sections provide even more subsidies to the understanding of the elderly learners’ behavior in ESL and EFL acquisition, by dealing with neurological hypothesis as well as other biological influences.

³ All translations in the present study were made by me.

2.1.2 Critical period

The Critical Period is a hypothesis supported by Penfield and Roberts (1959), Lennenberg (1967) and Scovel (1969), in order to explain the different aspects of learning through age. It postulates that the brain, around puberty, suffers the process of “**lateralization**, or the assigning of certain functions to the different hemispheres of the brain” (CELCE-MURCIA, BRINTON and GOODWIN, 1996, pp.15). The period before lateralization is the **Critical Period**, in which we present maximal conditions for mastering language acquisition. There would also be a loss of brain plasticity after the critical period, which would preclude native-like pronunciation in second language after puberty (SCOVEL, 1969 and KRASHEN, 1973 apud CELCE-MURCIA, BRINTON AND GOODWIN, 1996). This lateralization, however, does not affect intelligibility, which should be the aim of pronunciation teaching, as discussed in the next Section.

The agreement on a Critical Period Hypothesis is, nevertheless, far from being unanimous among researchers. Flege (1981, *apud* CELCE-MURCIA, BRINTON and GOODWIN, 1996) cites the lack of empirical evidence on this Hypothesis, arguing that it cannot make an adult incapable to achieve nativelylike pronunciation. His theory is also defended in his 1999 article, where he shows that there is not a drastic change in nativelylike accent acquisition according to age of exposure. On the contrary, this ability shows a very regular decrease, which allows speculation about other biological influences that may affect language acquisition, such as psychomotor factors.

Some of these biological influences are discussed in the following Section, and provide further explanation to the behavior of elder learners in class, as well as some of their learning difficulties. It is important for the teacher to understand why these learners present their peculiarities so that he/she can be prepared to deal with them, as well as to take some stances which may facilitate their learning.

2.1.3 Biological Influences

The memory can be affected by the decrease of hearing acuity, lack of attention and low speed of information processing. Quoting Sé and Lasca (2005), Scopinho explains that, although elderly learners can present a lower performance in memory-related tasks compared to young learners, when dealing with procedures, judgments, knowledge on deeper issues and problem solving, their performance is higher than that one shown by the young students. Also, by quoting Cohen (1995), Scopinho even argues that, when challenged and well stimulated, the elders' memory can be increased up to a young adult level.

As for pronunciation, there are other biological factors involved. According to Marchesan (2004, pp. 2), speech, as “a muscular act expressing language”⁴, is “a complex process involving the neuromuscular system”, so it depends on the brain well functioning, as well as the teeth, breathing bones and muscles involved. For a good speech, every involved structure must be under perfect functioning. Among these, one of the problems affecting speech is the quantity and quality of saliva. When the saliva flow is too large, it leads to spitting while talking. In order to avoid this process, “there is an instinctive reduction in the space between the jaws during speech”. This reduction causes problems in speech. Elders, however, normally present the opposite problem: they have little saliva, so their tongue is constantly producing more movements than do young learners, in order to produce more saliva in the oral cavity. Such movements cause a constant peculiar sound while speaking, altering the appropriate pronunciation of words.

Scopinho (2009) explains that the articulatory movements are also essential for intelligible pronunciation. By ageing, due to loss of articulation dexterity, we start to articulate sounds in the wrong places of articulation, which can completely transform the emission of those sounds. Other facts related to the oral cavity which can influence elderly phoneme production are the decrease of skin elasticity, physical strength, motility, and loss of teeth, use of denture, as well as pharyngeal cartilage calcification and its loss of elasticity.

The author also says that hearing acuity is also fundamental for pronunciation acquisition, and hearing loss is another common problem related to ageing. Hearing loss related to ageing is called *presbycusis* and starts around the age of 60. It is caused, mainly,

⁴ “ato motor que expressa linguagem”

by excessive noise, inappropriate food, use of medicines, daily stress, and genetic predisposition. Presbycusis affects mainly men, and is characterized by the difficulty of hearing consonants and of distinguishing high frequency sounds, such as female voices, telephone rings and other bells, mainly in noisy environment. In order to overcome presbycusis, teachers are advised to maintain a quiet learning environment, as well as to keep close to the affected students while speaking, in order to guarantee that they see the teacher's lip movements.

This Section explained other biological influences of ageing in learning other than the critical period hypothesis, with a special emphasis on the learning of pronunciation. As older learners present some problems which can be considered to be disadvantages comparing to young learners, elderly learners and mixed classes must be very carefully planned and executed. It is important, therefore, that teachers be aware of all the aspects discussed in this Section. Section 2.2.1 will focus on the teaching to elderly learners, providing some pieces of advice for teaching this group of students, bearing in mind their biological issues.

2.2 Teaching

This Section focuses on the teaching of EFL and ESL, mainly the teaching of pronunciation aspects. Firstly, I cover the peculiarities of English teaching according to different students' ages. Then, I discuss the reasons for teaching pronunciation, and, finally, I present some presentation and corrective feedback techniques for the teaching of pronunciation. This Section provides theoretical support to the first, the second, and the third Research Questions, since it will allow me to classify the pronunciation teaching techniques used by the teachers investigated, as well as to contrast the students' expectations on pronunciation teaching with the reasons for teaching that.

2.2.1 Teaching English according to age

It is known that teaching children is very different from teaching adults due to their different language acquisition stages. Morandi (2002) highlights some practical differences in learning between these groups. Firstly, psychosocial differences must be highlighted: adults may be shy or present a stronger identity in their first language (L1), which may disturb their socialization. Children, however, have socialization as an objective. Moreover, socialization is the result of language acquisition itself for the child. The second difference is cognitive, as explained in the previous Section of the present study. Finally, we should consider input processing, which is less complex among children and the neurological factors discussed in Section 2.1.3.

This Section, however, focuses on teaching English to elderly learners, since they are the heart of the present study. The following presents discoveries on the field that may help teachers when preparing classes for elderly students. Although mostly focused on elderly learners, I believe that the advice given in this chapter may be useful for over-forty year old students as well, once they may already present some ageing characteristics.

As postulated by Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), and considering the discussion proposed in chapter 2.1 of the present study,

If adults are capable of acquiring a high degree of pronunciation accuracy in a second language but are more impeded in their acquisition of target language phonology by nonlinguistic factors than are children, then we need to build into courses for adults more fluency and confidence-building activities; we should also have our adult learners seriously examine their personal goals in the pronunciation class. (pp.16)

According to Scopinho (2009), recent research about senior language acquisition has highlighted important “aspects – affective, physical and socio-cognitive – to be considered in the teaching-learning relationship and in a foreign language acquisition process in this age group”⁵.

The author highlights some important procedures to be considered when teaching seniors, which can help teachers to design classes and achieve more effective learning.

1. Be aware of seniors’ physical, psychological and social development, as well as of the prejudices and stereotypes about them.

⁵ “aspectos – afetivos, físicos e sócio-cognitivos – a serem considerados na relação de ensino-aprendizagem e no processo de aquisição de uma língua estrangeira dessa faixa etária”.

2. Be aware of seniors' physical losses, such as low hearing and sight, in order to avoid negative feelings and decreasing of their self-esteem.
3. Keep giving positive and motivating feedback: incentive words diminish their insecurity feeling.
4. Consider their age when preparing activities: avoid tasks with limited timing. Seniors are often looking for perfection on doing them, so more time is needed.
5. Repeat the instructions several times, be clear and keep the objectives very well defined,
6. Speak loudly and slowly, and use a big and very pedagogical letter when writing on the board.
7. Avoid competition. Cooperation is more appropriate to this age group.
8. Make sure that everyone in the group gets involved when interacting.
9. Slowly introduce 'new' techniques, such as active participation and autonomy. They come from a very conservative teaching model, where the teacher was the center of the knowledge.
10. Be aware that senior's experience is very important to them. They frequently have some story to tell which is related to the topic of study, and they very much like sharing it.
11. Be aware of their interests. They often take classes just for pleasure. If the pleasure is gone, the student will quit.

The teacher plays a central role in a senior's class, since most of these learners experienced a very conservative teaching when at school. By those times, students were supposed to speak just when asked for and the teacher was seen as the main source of knowledge in the classroom. Grammar-centered tasks, repetition and metalinguistic activities used to dominate the teaching methodology those students experienced. As currently more communicative approaches have been used, seniors may present resistance to more autonomous tasks. Due to this, Scopinho discourages radical communicative approaches. Instead, a communicative approach added to explicit and contextualized

grammar teaching could be more effective. A methodology involving critical thinking, curiosity and originality in an encouraging and positive atmosphere could also be profitable, as well as keeping a moment for sharing experiences.

To be aware of the peculiarities of his/her students is really important to the teacher. This Section can serve as a basis to identify possible classroom changes which could improve elderly learners' proficiency, as well as to explain some special difficulties they may show that young learners may not, as investigated in my forth Research Question.

2.2.2 Why to teach pronunciation.

Why to teach pronunciation? What is the role of this skill? What goals can be pursued? Alves (2009) argues that the ability to manipulate sounds is transferrable from a language to another, so the manipulation skills acquired in the first language can be used in a second or foreign language. "It means that an individual who is able to divide the words of his L1 into its component sounds will probably be able to do the same with L2 words, as long as he be aware of the differences between both sound systems". Therefore, raising phonological awareness is an advantage to the ESL and EFL learner. Moreover, there is a possibility that the student who shows such a degree of awareness is more sensitive to the formal aspects of a language, which may also guarantee an advantage upon other aspects of language, such as syntax, morphology, and so on. The author argues, however, that the students must notice the differences between the L1 and the L2 systems, as some sounds may not have a correspondent in the L1, such as the interdental fricative [θ] in English, which is often pronounced as [f] or [s] by Brazilian students. Such findings may demonstrate the importance of teaching pronunciation as a means of allowing the student to be more conscious of the sounds involved, and, consequently, be more successful in his oral communication.

Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996, pp. 8), based on Morley (1987), affirm that the goal of English learners, even those with a specially high need of intelligibility, cannot be to make them sound as native-speakers of English, since such a goal is unrealistic, except in a few cases. "A more modest and realistic goal is to enable

learners to surpass the threshold level so that their pronunciation will not detract from their ability to communicate”, so intelligibility must be the main goal of teaching pronunciation. Anyhow, a native-like pronunciation is not essential, especially if we consider the role of English as an international language. Besides, the pursuit of a so-called “native-like pronunciation” poses many other questions as far as our knowledge of Sociolinguistics is concerned. As we consider the high number of countries in which English is the first language or in which a local variety of English has been developed, not to mention dialectal differences inside the same country, the choice for a standard dialect would entail an unnecessary challenge. For all these reasons, Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) cite the studies by Kachru (1985, 1986), who advocates a more global, approach to pronunciation teaching, according to which intelligibility is the main focus.

Paula (2010) says that the importance of pronunciation, at least inside the Communicative Approach, is a polemic issue: “while some teachers of ESL believe that teaching pronunciation is an outdated and conservative practice, others already see teaching pronunciation as an essential aspect to guarantee the success of the students’ communication ability success” (pp.3). This study is in agreement with this so-called “conservative view”, since I believe that being aware of the sounds of the mother and the target languages increases the perception of the differences between the two language systems, allowing the student to reach a satisfactory level of intelligibility, which should be the main goal to be achieved in the classroom, as discussed above.

In order to teach something effectively, I believe a teacher must understand the reasons why that topic has to be taught. This is also connected to goals of the teacher concerning teaching. As these established goals influence the importance given to a subject, this Section covers my third research question, about the importance of pronunciation, which is also connected with the answers provided by the research participants in the forms (see next chapter).

2.2.3 Pronunciation teaching techniques

This Section presents an overview of pronunciation teaching techniques, from the **Direct Method** up to the currently dominant **Communicative Approach**. This overview

is based on Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), and intends to provide a better understanding of the techniques used by the teachers who participated in this study.

The **Direct Method** is one of the first teaching methodologies, and is based on “intuition and imitation; students imitate a model – the teacher or a recording – and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition” (pp. 3). This method was created after observations of children learning their first language. Following the Direct Method are the “**naturalistic methods**, including comprehension methods that devote a period of learning solely to listening before any speaking is allowed” (pp. 3). Among these methods are the Asher’s (1977) Total Physical Response and Krashen and Terrel’s (1983) Natural Approach. They are based on the idea that listening solely allows students to internalize the target sound system, so, when they finally speak, “their pronunciation is supposedly quite good enough” (pp.3).

The 1890’s came with the **Reform Movement** and its International Phonetic Association, responsible for the creation of the **International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)** in 1886. The phoneticians involved advocated practices as the teaching of spoken language first, the use of phonetic findings in language teaching, and phonetic training for teachers and students. This Reform Movement is believed by many historians of language teaching as having a great influence on the **Audiolingualism** and in the **Oral Approach** during the 1940’s and the 1950’s. In these two methods, pronunciation plays a major role and is taught explicitly from the beginning. These methods resemble the Direct Method as there is imitation and repetition, but the teacher also makes use of phonetic information, such as “a visual transcription system (...) or charts that demonstrate the articulation of sounds”. These methods are the first ones to use “the **minimal pair drills** – drills that use words that differ by a single sound in the same position” (pp.3).

The **Cognitive Approach** appears in the 1960’s, influenced by Chomsky (1959, 1965) and Neisser (1967), and “viewed language as a rule-governed behavior rather than habit formation” (pp.4-5). This method, advocating that native-like pronunciation would never be achieved and that grammatical structures and vocabulary were worthier to be learnt, deemphasized pronunciation. The 1970’s, however, came with two new interesting new methods. **The Silent Way** intends the achievement of accuracy on the production of both sounds and structures of the target language from the beginning. This is the first method to push students’ attention to the way words combine in phrases, as other supra-

segmental aspects such as stress and intonation. The Silent Way does not use explicit linguistic information, but deals with gestures, tapped rhythm and a sound-color chart, while the teacher speaks as little as possible. The other method is the **Community Language Learning** (CLL), developed by Charles A. Curran in 1976.

A typical lesson in a CLL classroom proceeds as follows. Students sit around a table with a tape-recorder – a key tool for the method. The counselor (i.e. a teacher) stands behind one of the student's shoulders. After speaking reassuringly, the counselor asks the student to say something in the native language he or she wishes to be able to say in the target language. This utterance is then provided by the teacher in the target language, who takes care to phrase it idiomatically. The counselor provides the phrase (broken into chunks for ease of repetition), the student repeats, and once the student can produce the whole utterance fluently, it is recorded on tape.

In the next phase of the lesson, the utterances are played back and the students match the new target language with the word-for-word translation provided by the counselor.

(CELCE-MURCIA, BRINTON & GOODWIN, 1996., pp. 7)

The student can, then, choose if, what and how many times he wants to repeat the utterance with the help of the teacher, whom he can “turn on and off” at his own will. In the CLL method, the student fully holds control over his own learning.

The **Communicative Approach** was set in the 1980's and is still very popular nowadays. Its primary goal is communication, so pronunciation is very important in this method. However, it does not aim to reach native-like pronunciation. This method recognizes “there is a threshold level of pronunciation for nonnative speakers of English; if they fall below this threshold level, they will have oral problems no matter how excellent and extensive their control of English grammar and vocabulary might be” (CELCE-MURCIA; BRINTON; GOODWIN, 1996, pp. 7). This considered, a more realistic goal would be to surpass the threshold level so as to provide intelligible oral communication.

In order to explain how to teach pronunciation within the communicative approach, Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996, pp.8) summarize the ten most used materials and techniques:

1. *Listen and imitate*, a heritage from the Direct Method;
2. *Phonetic training*, from the Reform Movement;

3. *Minimal pair drills*, from the Audiolingual method;
4. *Contextualized minimal pairs*, an attempt to contextualize minimal pair drills⁶;
5. *Visual aids*, which uses materials such as sound-color charts to describe how sounds are produced;
6. *Tongue twisters*;
7. *Developmental approximation drills*, in which the students retrace the steps taken by native-speaking children to acquire their first language sounds;
8. *Practice of vowel shifts and stress shifts by affixation*, in which “the teacher points out the rule-based nature of vowel and stress shifts in etymologically-related words to raise awareness⁷;
9. *Reading aloud/recitation*, focusing on stress, timing and intonation;
10. *Recordings of learning’s production*, with subsequent feedback and self-evaluation.

The authors organize all these techniques in five communicative stages:

1. Description and analysis (e.g., oral and written illustrations of when and how the feature occurs in order to raise learner consciousness)
2. Listening discrimination (focused listening practice with feedback)
3. Controlled practice and feedback (e.g., oral reading of minimal pair sentences, short dialogues, etc., with special attention paid to the highlighted feature.
4. Guided practice and feedback (e.g., structured communication exercises that enable the learner to monitor for the specified feature, such as information gap activities, cued dialogues)
5. Communicative practice and feedback (e.g., less structured activities that require the learner to attend to both form and content of utterances.

(CELCE-MURCIA, BRINTON & GOODWIN, 1996., pp. 36)

By summarizing all these techniques, the authors conclude that the emphasis in pronunciation instruction has been in the prosodic word level, mostly with isolated words (except the last two techniques). In the beginning of the use of the Communicative

⁶ For further information about this technique see Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), Chapters 3 and 4.

⁷ For more information about this method, see Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), Chapter 9.

Approach, materials for teaching pronunciation at the segmental levels were considered not appropriate for the method. So it was decided that suprasegmental features of language, such as rhythm and stress, should be the focus of a short-term pronunciation course for nonnative speakers. However, today there is a more balanced view of this segmental/suprasegmental debate. Nowadays, it is considered that both levels are important for oral communication and listening comprehension abilities. “Today’s pronunciation curriculum seeks to identify the most important aspects of both segmentals and supra-segmentals, and integrate them appropriately in courses that meet the needs of any given group of learners” (pp.10).

By presenting different approaches on pronunciation teaching, I intend to provide useful theoretical basis to understand the teacher praxis, to be observed in the empirical material provided by the present study. The discussion above may also help to identify the teachers’ behavior according to my second Research Question.

2.2.4 Corrective Feedback

As mistakes are part of the learning process, it is important to better understand its nature and the correspondent corrective feedback procedures teachers can provide. This Section first presents the treatment given by some methods discussed in Section 2.2.3 to error and correction. Then, based on the work by Lister and Ranta (1997), possible corrective feedback procedures are divided in six groups. This Section can be connected to the second Research Question, which deals with the methodologies employed by the teachers, as it supports the provided answers from the questions 4b and 4d from the teacher’s forms and the question 4 from the student’s form⁸. This feedback and uptake analysis will also allowed me to identify the correction techniques used by the participant teachers in their classes.

In order to provide an overview of error treatment through different teaching approaches, Gomes (2009, pp.42) suggests a table comparing the corrective steps assumed in eight different English teaching methods. However, just the ones explained in the

⁸ See appendix 3 and 5, as well as the Method Section.

present study (Section 2.2.3) are mentioned, since they are presented here as an introduction to what has been done concerning error and correction:

1. **Direct Method:** in this method, the error is in evidence, and different autocorrecting techniques are applied by the teacher.
2. **Audiolingualism:** as errors are seen as one of the causes of bad linguistic habits, they must be strongly prevented and combated. A contrastive analysis between L1 and L2 is used, and the correction must be done immediately.
3. **The Silent Way:** the error is considered as a natural part of the learning process. As it provides elements for class plans, it is seen as important and necessary. The correction is made through auto-correction techniques and gestures, and the right answer is given just after all other attempts of correction failed.
4. **Community Language Learning:** this method does not tolerate mistakes, although the correction is made subtly, through *recasts* (Lister and Ranta, 1997).
5. **Communicative Approach:** errors must be tolerated in this method, as they are seen as part of the linguistic communicative competence. When the objective is communication, the error is ignored during the task so as to be corrected afterwards, through specific Focus on Form activities.

As can be seen in this short panorama, errors in the classroom have been dealt with under very different approaches, from complete non-toleration up to complete toleration. Through these methods, many different approaches to correction can be seen. Lister and Ranta (1997, pp.47), by observing several communicative L2 classes, were able to divide correction in six different types of corrective feedback:

1. **Explicit correction:** the teacher provides the correction clearly, by indicating the error committed by the student (e.g., “I think you meant...” “You must say...”).
2. **Recasts:** the teacher reformulates, correctly, the student’s utterance (e.g., “student: ‘she do the job’, teacher: ‘she *does* the job’”) and does not use sentences as “you mean...” or “use the word ...” for introducing the feedback. Translations can be also used.

3. **Clarification requests:** sentences as “Sorry?” and “What do you mean?” are used by the teacher, indicating that the student’s utterance is whether ill-formed or unintelligible.
4. **Metalinguistic feedback:** the teacher makes comments about the error or may also provide further information on the mistake made, generally providing grammatical metalanguage or a word definition. “Metalinguistic questions also point to the nature of the error but attempt to elicit the information from the student (e.g., “Is it feminine?”)
5. **Elicitation:** it includes at least three different techniques. First, the teacher can use a pause in his sentence, allowing the student to complete it correctly (e.g., The cat is...?). “It may be preceded by some metalinguistic comment such as ‘No, not that. It’s a...’ or by a repetition of the error”. Then questions may be made in order to obtain correct forms (e.g., “How do we say ... in English?”). Subsequently, the students can be asked for a reformulation of the sentence.
6. **Repetition:** “refers to the teacher’s repetition, in isolation, of the student’s erroneous utterance. In most cases, teachers adjust their intonation so as to highlight the error” (e.g., student: “They is nice”; teacher “they is nice”). Sometimes the teacher may highlight the student’s error by using a different intonation.

Following feedback, learners may provide **uptake**, which “refers to a student’s utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher’s intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student’s initial utterance” (LISTER & RANTA, 1997, pp. 49). Uptake can be divided in two main categories, one in which the student’s second attempt shows that the error focused on the feedback was repaired, or another one in which the second utterance still needs repair. According to Lister & Ranta (1997), the repaired uptake is still divided in four other sub-categories:

1. **Repetition**, by the student, of the teachers’ feedback utterance, e.g.,

St: ...and she follow the boy.

T: ... and she follows the boy.

St: ... and she follows the boy.

2. **Incorporation** of the correct form provided by the teacher into a longer utterance, e.g.,

St: And then they enter in the car.

T: they entered.

St: And then they entered in the car to travel to New York.

3. **Self-repair** of the utterance by the student, following teacher's feedback without the correct form, e.g.,

St: Susy was dating your boyfriend.

T: My boyfriend?

St: her boyfriend.

4. **Peer-repair**, which refers to a correction provided by another student in response to the teacher's feedback, e.g.,

St1: The cook cutted the onion.

T: Cut is an irregular verb.

St2: The cook cut the onion.

The "needs repair" category is also subdivided as follows:

1. **Acknowledgment**, in which the student answers with a simple "yes" in response to the teacher's feedback "as if to say, 'yes, that's indeed what I meant to say (but you've just said it much better!)"
2. **Same error**, when the uptake repeats the initial error;
3. **Different error**, when the uptake contains a different error;

4. **Off target**, when the uptake “is clearly in response to the teacher’s feedback turn but that circumvents the teacher’s linguistic focus altogether, without including any further errors”.
5. **Hesitation** from the student in response to the teacher’s feedback;
6. **Partial repair**, when just part of the initial error is corrected;

Feedback is an important part of the student-teacher relationship, mainly concerning learning pronunciation. As it will be seen in the transcripts, oral correction is one of the most recurrent pronunciation teaching techniques, so this Section provides theoretical support to identify the types of feedback and uptake involved in the preset study.

This Section covered specific aspects considering teaching pronunciation. It was possible to understand some theories related to teaching language according to the students’ age and see how the discussion from Section 2.1 affects the teacher’s practice and the students’ learning. The reasons for teaching pronunciation were also discussed, as well as the goals to be pursued by the teacher. Then, an overview of the pronunciation techniques was provided, from the Direct Method up to the Communicative Approach. Finally, the concepts of corrective feedback and uptake were discussed.

The following two chapters explain the methodology used and analyze the results from this study. The concepts discussed in the present chapter will serve as a basis for the next discussions, since it will allow us to understand the peculiarities older students may present in the acquisition of the English sound system, as well as how teachers might deal with them.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the data collection process, aiming to clarify the procedures used to develop the present study.

Its first Section describes the participants of the study – teachers and students. The second Section discusses the tools used to collect the data, such as the written forms and the video recordings carried out in two groups of different proficiency levels, from different teachers.

Ten students and four teachers answered the forms. Two of these teachers had their classes recorded in video, totalizing 4 hours recorded in one class and 3,5 hours recorded in the other class. Written forms asking about personal information, as well as questions about pronunciation teaching, were given to the teachers and students. This was done after the recording, in order to avoid their awareness of which aspects would be analyzed.

Due to the difficulty in finding EFL students older than forty years old, this research study took place in two different free language courses. The corpus also comprises data obtained from younger students, in order to provide a comparison between both learning situations. This comparison is dealt with in the first and second Research Questions of the study.

This research study is qualitative, since, according to Cristina Sanz (2005, p. 88), this type of investigation provides more detailed data about the foreign language teaching process. In other words, the use of recorded and transcribed videos and written forms is the best way to better understand the foreign language acquisition process in a specific context.

3.1 Teachers

The teachers investigated in this research study are from two free English private courses located in the town of Cachoeirinha, RS. All of them are currently teaching over-

forty-year-old students in mixed aged classes. Two of the teachers, Suzan and Bob, had their classes recorded in video. Suzan is nineteen years old and Bob is thirty-one. Both lived in English speaking countries and have been teaching for one year. Suzan lived in England for six months, and Bob lived in the USA for six months and in Australia for one and a half year. None of them have a college degree, although Bob is attending Law College in a private institution, and Suzan finished high school. Both took English courses for at least four years and have been teaching for at least eleven months. They teach many different levels, but the recorded classes were Free Conversation (Bob) and Advanced I (Suzan).

As for the other participant teachers, Daisy, 25 years old, is an undergraduate in Languages. She has been teaching for four years and lived in the USA for six months. Paul is 24 years old, and is taking his major in History. He has been teaching for two years and has not lived in any English speaking country. In the second question from the *Ficha de Participação Para Professores*⁹, most of the teachers investigated reported that they work in this field because they like the teaching job as well as languages. Suzan was the only participant who did not mention a taste for the language nor for the job: she teaches in order to keep in contact with the English language.

The following table describes the participant teachers, providing information about their age, sex, graduation, time spent teaching English and foreign experience. To protect their identities, such teachers are identified by a fictional name. This info was collected through a Participation Form (*Ficha de Participação*) filled by them. The ones who had their classes recorded are in bold.

Teacher	Age	Sex	Graduation	Experience in teaching	Lived in a English Speaking Country? Where?
Bob	31	M	Undergraduate - Law	1 year	Yes – USA, Australia
Suzan	19	F	High School	1 year	Yes – England
Paul	24	M	Undergraduate – History	2 years	No
Daisy	25	F	Graduated in Language	4 years	Yes - USA

Table 1 – Information about the participant teachers.

⁹ Appendix 2

3.2 Students

The students investigated are Brazilian learners at different ages, from teenagers up to elderly learners, attending mixed-aged classes from two different private¹⁰ language courses in Cachoeirinha, RS. Their proficiency levels range from Basic up to Advanced¹¹, and some of them are taking conversation classes. The recorded classes are from Advanced I¹² and Conversation. The Advanced I group had 2 students on the recording day, being one of them 59 years old. The Conversation group had 6 students, three of them over forty-years-old. One of the participant students, Augusto, attended both recorded classes. The following table displays a detailed panel of the participants who accepted to fill in the forms. To protect their identities, such students are identified by a fictional name. The ones who had their classes recorded are in bold.

Student	Age	Sex	Graduation	Proficiency Level*
Diogo	14	M	High School	Advanced
Juliana	17	F	High School	Advanced
Débora	24	F	Undergraduating	Advanced
Carlos	26	M	High School	Advanced
Eva	40	F	Undergraduating	Basic
João	41	M	Undergraduating	Intermediate
Ivo	45	M	Undergraduated	Intermediate
Ney	50	M	Undergraduated	Advanced
Augusto	59	M	Undergraduating	Advanced
Maria	NI (+40)	F	Undergraduated	Basic

Table 2 – Information about the participant students.

3.3 Data collection

This Section describes the data collection tools employed in this study.

¹⁰ One of these courses adopts the Communicative Approach, the other adopts a more grammar-focused approach.

¹¹ The proficiency level used here is the one informed by the students in their forms, according to the categorization proposed in the schools investigated.

¹² This is the level informed by the school.

In order to collect the necessary data, written interviews were answered by both students and teachers, each one of these groups having a specific form. Video recordings were also used in two classes from different teachers of the same school, totalizing 7,5 hours of recording. One of these classes is supposed to last 4 hours on a single day, whereas the other class lasted 2 hours a day, thus 2 days were recorded, totalizing 4 hours of recording as well. Every single participant signed down a consent form for the use of their information (Appendix 1), as well as their audio recording. They also filled in a participation form informing their age, graduation, sex, time studying or teaching English, life abroad, etc. All the forms used have their models attached at the end of this study (Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4).

3.3.1 Written Forms

In the following subsections, I provide more details about each of the forms, classified in Teacher and Students ones, in order to clarify my aims in proposing them and how I managed to obtain the results from these two groups. Such forms were divided in two parts: a Participation Form, asking about students' and teachers' personal data, whose results were exposed in Sections 3.1 and 3.2, and a more specific form focusing on pronunciation issues, which will be discussed in the following subsections. The answers from this second form, which will be analyzed in Section 4.1, were hand-written by the teachers and students and transcribed into digital files by the researcher, exactly as they were written in the manuscripts. Models of the forms are attached at the end of this study (Appendix 1 to 5).

3.3.1.1 Teacher Forms

The Teacher Form (Appendix3) had seven specific questions about teaching pronunciation in general and on the teaching of English to older students. The purpose of the forms was to investigate the importance these professionals give to the teaching of pronunciation, as well as how they deal with correction and with teaching pronunciation to this specific group of students. Their answers will be analyzed in Chapter 4.

The first question from the form intended to verify the way pronunciation is taught, if explicitly or not, and when it is done. The second one questions about the importance given by the teachers to the teaching of pronunciation. This question intends to be contrasted with the previous one, in order to check if the importance given to pronunciation may influence the teacher's approach on teaching that.

The third question asks about the beliefs of the teachers concerning pronunciation teaching and the age of the students, that is, if they see a need of a different approach or not. The fourth question is divided in four sub-questions concerning pronunciation teaching for over-forty-year-old students.

Question 4.1 asks if the teacher uses some specific techniques to teach pronunciation and which technique this is. The intention here is to investigate the techniques used for teaching pronunciation, as well as if the teachers are aware of some specific approaches, if they act empirically or if they do it as they do with younger students.

Question 4.2 asks about the reaction of the target group to correction. Through this question, I intend to verify if, according to the teacher, his/her students present any specific restriction or reaction facing correction.

Question 4.3 asks about the difficulties that older students may face due to their age, and if they are different from the younger learners in this sense. It intends to verify if the teacher realizes any differences that may exist between pronunciation acquisition by older and younger students.

Finally, question 4.4 enquires about the actions taken by the teachers when having to face pronunciation correction, by enquiring if it is different according to the students' age, as well as how it is approached. It intends to provide a better understanding of the teachers' beliefs about pronunciation correction and if they see any need to adapt this correction according to the student's age, as well as the way this adaptation is done.

1.1.1.1 Student Forms

The Student Form had four specific questions dealing with their relationship with the learning of the English Language. The purpose of this form is to investigate the reasons which led these learners to pursue knowledge about the English language, the way they deal with pronunciation correction and their pronunciation difficulties. Their answers are discussed in Chapter 4.

In the first question from the form, I ask the students why they want to learn English, since I believe that their aim could influence the importance they give to each aspect of the language and the easiness of their learning. The second question asks about the importance of learning pronunciation for them. Through this question, I wanted to know how these learners judge the importance of pronunciation learning, which could clarify some aspects of their attention to phonetic aspects.

The third question deals with difficulties the students have about pronunciation, asking for examples of these difficult aspects. This question is contrasted with the third sub-question of the Teacher Form, in order to verify if the teachers agree with the students' own view of their difficulties, as well as to identify some possible interesting difficulties that may appear for older learners, but not be felt by younger learners.

The fourth question asks about the way the students feel about pronunciation correction, if they like to be corrected, when and how. The answer to this question is contrasted with the last question from the Teacher Form, as it intends to verify if the older students present any specific correction need, if the way they feel about it is different according to their age and in which moments they feel the correction may be more pertinent.

3.3.2 Video recordings

The video recordings took place in two different groups: Free Conversation, with teacher Bob, and Advanced I, with teacher Suzan. The Free Conversation group

comprises students from intermediate up to advanced levels, and Advanced I is the penultimate level offered in the school. Both groups have just one class a week, but Suzan's class lasted 3,5 hours, (although it was supposed to last 4 hours), while Bob's lasted 2 hours. In order to have an equivalent number of hours of recording in each group, two Free Conversation classes were recorded, totalizing 4 hours. The participants previously agreed to take part in this study, although the consent forms were given just after the classes, in order not to disturb the classes. These recordings provided enough data to answer my second and fifth Research Questions, which discuss about specific techniques used to teach pronunciation and compare the answers to the written forms in with the teacher's acting in their classroom. The recorded groups were chosen according to the presence of over-forty-year-old students. As some courses have some restrictions to allow recordings and it is difficult to find elderly students of English, it was not possible to find two groups of the same proficiency level to be recorded. However, I believe it did not play a detrimental role as far as the results are concerned.

Each class was listened to several times by me, so as to identify and confirm relevant moments which might be relevant to this study. The selection criteria for the passages to be analyzed in the next chapter consider episodes of pronunciation teaching and correction. The transcription conventions were inspired by Gil (2005), and all the transcripts are in Appendix 6.

This chapter presented the methodology used in the present work, exposing the instruments used for the data collection. The participants were described, as well as the written and video material and the procedures used for gathering the necessary data. The next chapter will analyze the data collected based on the theory presented, in order to understand the teaching of pronunciation to older students in the researched context.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes and analyses the results of this research study. The first three Sections describe the data collected through the written forms filled by teachers and students, as well as the video recordings. The fourth Section aims to provide answers to the research questions presented in the Introduction.

4.1 Analysis of the teacher's written forms

This Section analyses the answers provided by the teachers to each of the questions in the written forms (Appendix 3). The answers are divided in two sub-Sections. The first one comprises the first two questions from the forms, referring to teaching pronunciation and its importance. The second sub-Section analyses questions 3 and 4, which focus on teaching pronunciation to older students. The teachers are identified by fictional names, according to Table 1.

4.1.1 Teaching pronunciation and its importance

The first question of the teacher's written form asks if they teach pronunciation explicitly, as well as in which situations this is done. All teachers answered it affirmatively, but the moments when it occurs vary: Bob said that he “shows the right pronunciation” every time he teaches a language topic. Paul said he teaches pronunciation when he feels it is necessary, but he does not provide more details in his answer. Suzan said she teaches pronunciation during readings and while the student is reading, and Daisy does that at every possible moment.

I believe that teaching pronunciation explicitly is more than just correcting the student. These teachers, however, seem to consider correcting as explicit pronunciation instruction. I argue this because it is not possible to interrupt the class in “every possible moment”. In my opinion, there must be a moment dedicated to pronunciation instruction during the classes, but it is not profitable to interrupt the flow of the class every time the students make a mistake. Moreover, as I believe in intelligibility as a realistic goal, pronunciation must also be part of speaking activities. It should also be considered that reading activities must have a broader goal than reading aloud for the sake of pronunciation teaching. In this regard, as already stated in the Theoretical Background, pronunciation should be taught communicatively (cf. CELCE MURCIA, BRINTON and GODWIN, 1996)

The second question asks about the importance teachers give to pronunciation teaching. Bob and Suzan find teaching pronunciation extremely important, but present some prejudice concerning accent, since they cite foreign accent as a problem.

Bob>”(teaching pronunciation is) very important because the impression NATIVE SPEAKERS have from wrong pronunciation is very bad and I always explain this to my students¹³”¹⁴

Suzan> “(teaching pronunciation is) very important, but there is also the accent issue that ends up changing pronunciation a little¹⁵”.

These two professionals seem to pursue a native-like accent, which is, according to Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996), an unrealistic and unnecessary goal, especially if we consider what the goals in a communicative pronunciation class should be. It is also important to mention that one cannot have a clear idea on what these teachers mean by the term “native-speaker”. As these two

¹³ “importantíssimo pois a impressão que os NATIVE SPEAKERS tem da pronúncia incorreta é muito ruim e sempre explico isso aos meus alunos”.

¹⁴ This format was adopted in order to differentiate transcriptions from quotations.

¹⁵ “muito importante,mas também existe a questão sotaque que acaba mudando um pouco a pronúncia”.

teachers experienced living in two different foreign countries, it is possible that their conceptions of “native-speaker” may be different. Besides, there is also a possibility that the term “native-speaker” has turned out to be an imaginary construct, a far-fetched goal which these professionals base their classes on. In this sense, the answers above do not seem to recognize the fact that English is produced as an international language, whose purpose to communicate causes intelligibility, not a native-like accent, to be the main purpose of pronunciation instruction.

Teachers Paul and Daisy, however, present a more realistic view of pronunciation, justifying that their teaching aims at intelligibility, as illustrated by Paul’s answer:

Paul > “my objective is not that my students have a perfect pronunciation, but that they be clear and understandable¹⁶.”

By verifying the teachers’ answers, it is clear that their opinion vary a lot. Although they may consider teaching pronunciation as important, the reasons go from intelligibility to native-like accent as a goal. Also, all of them believe to give explicit pronunciation instruction, although, as it will be seen in the video recordings, it may be done just by corrective feedback.

4.1.2 Teaching pronunciation to older students

Then third question starts the discussion about ageing and teaching pronunciation, by asking if the teachers believe that teaching must be different according to the students’ age group. Suzan and Daisy do not think it is necessary, but Paul sees some pronunciation difficulties in older learners that young students do not present, but emphasizes that it is not a rule. Bob believes that the teaching of pronunciation to older learners must be different, since young learners and children are not afraid of making mistakes, and accept correction much more easily than older learners.

¹⁶ “não tenho como objetivo que meus alunos tenham a pronúncia perfeita, mas apenas que sejam claros e que se façam entender”.

The fourth question is divided in four sub-questions concerning the pronunciation of over-forty-year-old students. Question 4a asks whether the teachers use any specific technique to teach these learners. Three of the four participants answered it negatively, but Paul cited repetition as a technique to be used in extreme cases. Question 4b asks about the older student's reaction to correction. With regard to this question, Bob and Daisy provided opposite answers. While Bob argues that the students feel constrained most of the times, Daisy affirms that most learners feel comfortable, and even ask to be corrected during their speech. Paul affirmed that the ones who are more interested in learning react well, and Suzan said that they understand the fact that correction is important.

Question 4c asks about the most common difficulties found in this age group, and if the teachers see any difficulty which could be specifically shown by older students. Paul is the only teacher who did not admit identifying any specificity in older students. Suzan recognizes that it takes them more time to assimilate information, and Daisy affirms that over-forty year olds present speech difficulties. In this sense, Bob's answer is remarkable:

Bob> "They pronounce the words in a dry way, as if they were from the countryside"¹⁷.

He recognizes some specific difficulty in the target age group, but shows a certain difficulty in explaining exactly what, since he probably does not know either the phonetic alphabet or the jargon of the fields of phonetics and phonology.

Finally, question 4d asks whether the teachers correct their students' pronunciation mistakes, as well as if this correction depends on the student's age and how this correction is done. Bob answered that his correction procedures depend on the student's age, since children and young learners are corrected by him at the time of the error, but older students are corrected by the end of their speech. Paul affirms that his correction depends on the error made, and is done subtly so that the student does not feel uncomfortable. Suzan admits correcting every student by using

¹⁷ "eles pronunciam as palavras de uma forma mais seca, parecem pessoas que nasceram no interior do RS".

repetition. As far as corrective feedback approaches are concerned, Daisy also uses repetition:

Daisy > “I always try to correct the students, independently of their age. I show on the board how the word is written, then I repeat that a couple of times”¹⁸.

As can be seen in this section, once more the opinion of the teachers varies a lot. While some teachers do not see any need to give different pronunciation instruction for older learners, others recognize a need to give a special treatment to this age group.

4.2 Student’s written forms analysis

This Section analyses the answers provided by the students to each of the questions proposed in their written forms (Appendix 5). The answers are divided in two subsections. The first comprises question 1 from the form, which is related to their reasons for learning English. The second comprises questions 2, 3 and 4, focusing on learning pronunciation. The students, when mentioned, are identified by fictional names, according to Table 2.

4.2.1 Motives

The first question from the student’s form asks about the reasons which led them to study English. The four younger students alleged professional reasons, besides other motivations such as travelling, cultural knowledge and a taste for the language:

Carlos > “(I want to learn English) to increase my knowledge, to boost my curriculum and for travelling in the future¹⁹”.

¹⁸ “procuro sempre corrigir os alunos, independente da idade. Mostro como se escreve a palavra no quadro e repito algumas vezes”.

Débora> “(I want to learn English) because I like it and feel challenged to learn another language, and also because I work in a British multinational where all the internal system is in English²⁰”.

Actually, from both age groups, all but one of the students mentioned professional reasons. The only student who did not mention professional reasons is Augusto, who is 59 years old. His answer is in agreement with the concepts discussed in Section 2.1.1:

Augusto> “(I want to learn English) because I like to broaden my horizons, and English is one of the ways to interact with the world²¹”.

The other students older than forty-years-old also cited travelling abroad, which is also according to the motivations discussed in Section 2.1.1.

4.2.2 Learning pronunciation

The second question from the student’s form asks about the importance they give to learning pronunciation. All the students consider it very important, but many different reasons were raised. Ney, who presents strong difficulties in pronunciation (see Section 4.3), answered that in the beginning he did not find pronunciation very important, but now he considers learning pronunciation as a necessity. Three students (one older and two younger ones) mentioned intelligibility as their main goal in pronunciation learning, as illustrated by the answer from Diogo:

Diogo> “It has a maximal importance to me, for communicating in English or even for your classmates to understand you.²²”

¹⁹ “Para aprimorar o conhecimento, ter uma carga no curriculum e futuramente viajar”. ”.

²⁰ “porque gosto e me sinto desafiada a aprender outra língua e também por trabalhar em uma multinacional de origem britânica e onde todo o sistema interno é em inglês”.

²¹ “por que gosto de ampliar meus horizontes e inglês é uma das maneiras de interagir com o mundo”.

Other reasons mentioned are: to understand the information around us, to avoid confusion among different words, and the value given by the labor market to fluency.

The third question from the student's form is consistent with my fourth Research Question. It asks about the major difficulties related to English pronunciation. In this question, students were also asked to provide examples and underline the problematic sounds. Regarding this question, a curious answer was the one provided by Augusto:

Augusto > “I don't have any difficulty related to pronunciation, my difficulty is in listening²³”

Despite being the eldest participant student (59 years old), Augusto does not recognize pronunciation problems, which goes against the theories concerning articulation problems. However, his listening problems confirm other biological aspects discussed in Section 2.1.3. Nevertheless, it could be speculated that he may not recognize his problems due to his listening difficulties. Another interesting speculation is the possibility that Augusto's listening skills are weak because, as he had already been my student, I could realize that he presents difficulties in discerning the sounds of the target language, so there could be a relation between listening skills and phonological development.

Considering the whole sample, the problems related concerned the sounds of words with the graphemes “th” (e.g., think) “ss” (e.g., essure^{24 25}), “gn” (e.g., foreign), “rl” (girl), “r” (e.g., really), “y” (if pronounced as /I/ or as /aI/), second and third stressed syllables, contractions, past tense with “ed” and minimal pairs (e.g., fell/feel).

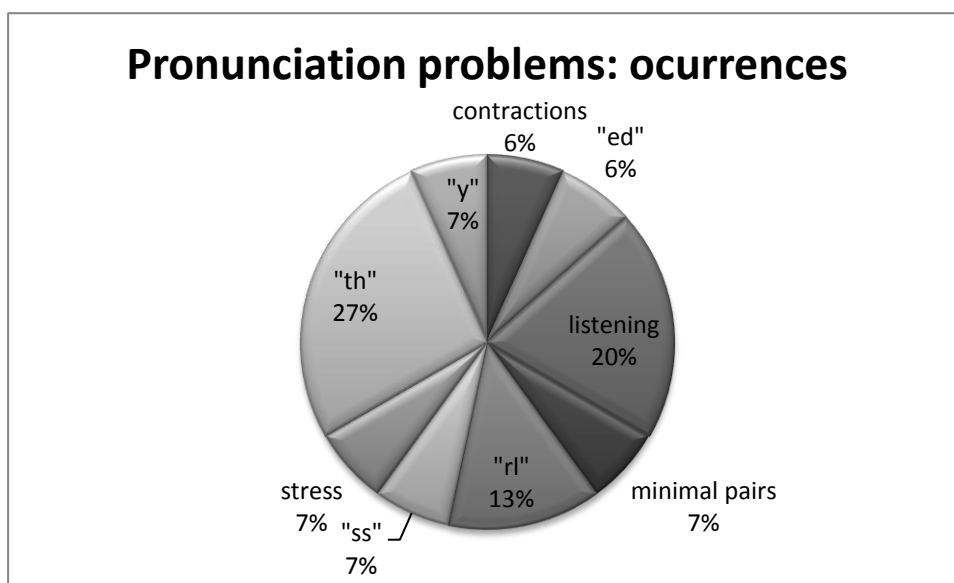
²² “para mim de máxima importância, para comunicar-se em inglês ou até mesmo para seus colegas entenderem”

²³ “eu não tenho dificuldades a pronuncia, as dificuldades é na audição”.

²⁴ All the examples were given by the students, and are transcribed exactly as they wrote, including the underlining..

²⁵ The student probably meant *assure*.

Graph 1 illustrates the rate at which these problems have been mentioned by the participant students:



Graph 1 - Occurrences of pronunciation problems.

Table 3 also presents the problems mentioned by the learners, but according to their age groups. It is interesting to notice that the voiceless “th” sounds (e.g., *think* /θ/) has the same occurrence among young and older students, so we can infer that these sounds, which are not part of the phonological inventory of Brazilian Portuguese, are difficult to acquire for both groups of learners. Listening problems are also cited by two of the four older participants, confirming, once again, the biological influences on learning (Section 2.1.3).

<i>Problems</i> ²⁶	<i>Older students</i>	<i>Young students</i>
Contractions	1	0
-ed morpheme	0	1
Listening	2	1

²⁶ In this table, graphemes are represented between the symbols ‘ ‘.

Minimal pairs	1	0
'rl'	1	1
'ss'	0	1
Stress	1	0
'th' (/θ/) ²⁷	2	2
'y'	0	1

Table 3 – Pronunciation problems according to age groups

One of the young students seemed not to have understood the question, since he related vocabulary difficulties (phrasal verbs), not pronunciation difficulties.

Question four asked if, how and when students would like to be corrected. All the students alleged to like to be corrected, and most of them (73%) also want to be corrected immediately after the error is made. The following answer illustrates this:

Carlos> “Of course. At the moment of my mistake; I prefer to be corrected instantly²⁸”

It is interesting to observe that 50% of the older students consider correction as essential to learning, so it can be inferred that error is seen as something bad, not tolerable. None of the young students, however, referred to this kind of judgment. This kind of judgment can be illustrated by these two answers:

Maria> “yes, I believe that you only learn with somebody correcting you²⁹”.

Eva> “pronunciation correction, only then can we learn the right pronunciation³⁰”.

²⁷ Words with the phoneme / / were not among the examples given by the students.

²⁸ “Com certeza. No momento que eu erro, prefiro que seja na hora.”

²⁹ “sim, acredito que somente alguém corrigindo vc aprende.”

³⁰ “a correção da pronúncia, só assim conseguimos aprender a maneira correta.”

Eva continues her answer citing the importance of avoiding constraining the student, which is consonant with the study of Scopinho (2009) in Section 2.2.1 of the present study, but Augusto said he does not have any problems been corrected:

Eva> “Whenever necessary and in a polite way without imposition. Without embarrassing me in front of the other people in the room”³¹

Augusto> I do not feel any kind of constraint related to corrections³².

Repetition was cited twice as a good correction technique. Another interesting answer was Débora’s, who affirmed to like to be informed of the “basis³³” of the correction, in order to know whether the word she spoke is completely wrong or if it means something else.

4.3 Analysis of the video recordings

Through the video recordings, the fifth Research Question could be answered, as it related the teachers’ written answers in the questionnaires with their real acting in the classroom. In order to transcribe the audio recordings, I used the conventions from Table 4, which was based in Gil (2005), with some necessary additions, as mentioned in the Section 3.3.2.

T	teacher
Sts	students together
T+Sts	teacher and students together
St1, 2, 3 ...	identified student
St	non-identified student

³¹ Sempre que necessário e de maneira educada e sem imposição. Sem me deixar constrangida diante das pessoas que estão no mesmo ambiente.”

³² “eu não sinto nenhum tipo de constrangimento quanto a correções.”

³³ “(...) Gosto que a correção tenha um embasamento, para saber se o que estou falando está errado ou se significa alguma outra coisa”.

{Y}	young student (under 40 years old)
{O}	older student (more than forty years old)
Di, Ju, De..	identified students who answered the questionnaires (according to Table 2)
CD:	CD listening
+	short stop
++	long stop
[]	phonetic transcription
(())	my comment
xx	inaudible
?	question intonation
CAPITALIZED	emphasized word / letter
Bold	word focused in the correction / instruction

Table 4 - Convention for the audio transcriptions.

In this Section, I analyze parts of the video transcription of Bob's and Suzan's classes, contrasting their written answers to their acting. The full transcription of these vignettes can be seen in Appendix 6.

In the following transcriptions, the numbers in the beginning and at the end of each vignette represent its starting and ending moments within the class. Sometimes the symbol (...) is used to indicate that the piece continues. The names on the transcriptions are fictional in order to preserve the identities of the participants, but the symbols {Y} and {O} are used to indicate if the student is young or older, respectively. Along with the vignettes, some of the teachers' written answers to the questionnaires will be resumed, in order to trace a parallel between those answers and what really happened in their classes.

4.3.1 Group A – Teacher Bob

Some pieces of Bob's classes are analyzed in this Section. As mentioned in Section 3.1, Bob does not have a degree in Languages, and has been teaching for one year, but lived in two English speaking countries. In what follows, I present his answer to the first question from the form, in which I asked if he teaches pronunciation explicitly to his students and when.

Bob> “Yes, I always explain the subject (and) show them the correct pronunciation³⁴”³⁵

Bob, however, did not do any explicit pronunciation teaching in the four hours recorded, despite his affirmation to do so. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that he teaches a conversation class, where students are supposed to be highly proficient, so a possible speculation is that Bob considered his grammar classes when he answered the questionnaires. He may give explicit pronunciation instruction in his grammar classes using the book, as will be seen in Suzan’s classes. I believe that, in the context of a conversation class as Bob’s, at least in that kind of activities proposed in the recorded classes³⁶, there would be no place for an explicit pronunciation teaching, so it was not possible to really check what Bob does in a class like Suzan’s, which is the most common situation faced by a teacher. As it is a conversation class, I believe that working on intelligibility is essential.

The next three vignettes analyzed are related to questions 3 and 4b, c and d from the form. These questions asked about teaching pronunciation according to age and correction. With regard to these questions, Bob answered that pronunciation instruction must be different according to the student’s age, since older learners may feel embarrassed due to correction. He also claimed that he corrects young learners immediately, while older students are corrected by the end of their speech. As for the pronunciation problems related to ageing, Bob mentioned the occurrence of a somewhat “dry” pronunciation among older learners (see Section 3.3.1.1), though he was not able to clarify what this meant in terms of phonetic-phonological difficulties. Some pieces of his classes are in the vignettes that follow.

Vignette A1

<p>20:18 Ne {O}: I+ahn++drove é drove [drouv]? T: drove [drouv] Ne {O}: drove[drouv] my car + the car + between Miami and xx West (...)</p>
--

³⁴ The teacher probably meant “I always show the right pronunciation it when I explain the subject”.

³⁵ “sim, sempre explico a matéria mostro para eles a pronúncia correta”.

³⁶ See Appendix 6, Teacher Bob.

Vignette A2

20:34
 Ne {O}: I **studied** [stut] xx puc xx
 T: yes + I **studied** ['stʌdiəd]³⁷ at + PUC
 (...)
 Ne {O}: I **received** [rɪ'si:v] a **kurs** [kurs]in ahh **France** [frans].
 T: Yes? I **won** a **course** [kɔ:s] in **France** [frens].
 (...)

Vignette A3

29:29
 T:how long did you stay there?
 St1 {Y}: one **month** [mɒθ]
 T: one **month** [mʌnθ], so + you could enjoy + yes? Very good.
 (...)

Vignette 4A

34:44
 St2 {Y}: ok, ähh of course I drive a **license** ['lisəns]
 T: **License** ['ləisəns]
 (...)

As can be seen, Bob did not do explicit pronunciation instruction: the only occurrences of pronunciation teaching are his corrective feedbacks to the students' pronunciation mistakes. It is important to highlight that, in the Vignette A1, Bob produced an illegal vowel [e] when attempting to produce the “-ed” marker in the verb “studied”. He possibly tried to highlight the final ‘ed’ from the verb the past, which resulted in a new mistake.

Once more, the vignettes illustrate the incongruence between his answers and his acting, since he corrected both young and older students the same way (instantly). During the whole class, Bob did not correct any student by the end of their speeches. Instead, he provided instant requests (Lister and Ranta, 1997). Another curious point in Bob's classes is the lack of uptakes. The only uptake episode from the two classes

³⁷ Regardless of the dialectal differences in English, the production of the “ed” morpheme is [ɪd], according to the literature in the field (CELCE- MURCIA, BRINTON and GOODWIN,1996) and to most EFL manuals in the market.

was the incorporation made by Ney in Vignette 1A, but the feedback was asked by the student. Moreover, Ney, who was the only older student corrected during the classes, did not seem embarrassed at all. Concerning the older students' specific difficulties, it was not possible to identify a pattern. Ney, as the only older learner in Bob's class, presented different types of errors, and did not speak much. He presented, however, difficulties about vowel pronunciation (course as [kurs], Vignette A2), as the younger students did, as exemplified in Vignette A4 (license as ['lisəns]).

4.3.2 Group B – Teacher Suzan

Some pieces of Suzan's classes are analyzed in this Section. As mentioned in Section 3.1, Suzan does not have a degree in Languages either, and has also been teaching just for one year, as she started her teaching career after having returned from a stay in England.

With regard to the first question, which aimed to discuss the place of explicit pronunciation instruction in her class, Suzan affirmed to do it while students speak and read texts aloud. As exemplified in Vignette B1, although she does not do it so often, there are situations in which Suzan really provides explicit pronunciation instruction, as seen in Vignette B1:

Vignette B1

<p>31:14 Au{O}: the + the letter have xx don't + don't + don't have pronunciation + pronunciation? T: yeah, in xx English xx speak fast they don't pronounce (<i>sic</i>³⁸) the H of xx. For example + when you say only the verb xx the verb to have. You'll listen to the + sound. For example: scientists will have + will have + will have xx (...)</p>

It is important to highlight that explicit instruction mentioned above came from the student's question. Nonetheless, most of her explicit pronunciation

³⁸ The right word should be *pronounce*.

instruction is actually done by using the activities suggested in their coursebook, as can be seen in Vignette B2.

Vignette B2

2:10:04
 ((the teacher asks the students to go to page 51, exercise 4 from the coursebook))
 T: listen and notice the consonant sounds in these words + right? Let's list listen first (...)
 CD: pressure ++ promotion ++ prospects ++ experience ++ stay ++ started ++ strengths ++ asked ++ she asked about my previous experiences ++ she asked me what my strengths were ++ I told her I work well under pressure ++ I asked her about the prospects for promotion ++ she asked me how long I plan to stay ++ she asked me when I could start
 T: ok, let's repeat?
 ((the CD is played again. students listen and repeat after each word or sentence. She also repeats the words with them))
 2:13:06

As answered in the second question of the teachers' form, Suzan believes that pronunciation teaching does not need to be done differently in view of the student's age, and so she acts (see Vignettes B3 -- with Augusto, 59 years old, and B4, -- with Juliana, 17 years old). She also says that older students take more time to assimilate information, as can be seen in the following vignette (the pronunciation highlighted in Vignette B3 was taught a little earlier in the same class -- at 8:45 -- and the student makes the same mistake again). Still regarding Suzan's answers to the questionnaire, it is important to remember her claim that she uses repetition to correct all the students (but she just does it according to the book instructions³⁹).

Vignette B3

31:14
 (...)
 CD: we'll be able to swallow tiny **computers** [kəm'pjutərs]
 Au{O}: we'll be able to swallow **tinys** ['tənis] **computers** [kəm'pjutərs]
 T: **tiny** ['təni] **computers** [kəm'pjutərs]
 Au{O}: **tiny** ['təni] **computers** [kəm'pjutərs]
 (...)

³⁹ See Attachment 1.

Vignette B4

45:42
 Ju {Y}: xx about your job perspectives. Don't waste your time **applying** [a'pli:ŋ]
 T: applying [a'plaiŋ]
 Ju {Y}: **applying** [a'plaiŋ] for a job if you know xx
 T: **unqualified** [ʌn'kwələfaɪd]
 Ju {Y}: **unqualified** [ʌn'kwələfaɪd]
 T: **unqualified** [ʌn'kwələfaɪd]
 (...)

The vignettes above show that her written answers were congruent with her acting. Though not that frequently, she really provides explicit pronunciation instruction. Nevertheless, explicit pronunciation teaching occurs mostly when she is using the coursebook, which she follows during her whole class. Her pronunciation instruction occurs during the readings of the texts in the book and in the situations of oral exercise checking, when she corrects her students' pronunciation. She also makes use the pronunciation instructions, via audio and reading materials (see Attachment 1), suggested in the coursebook.

4.4 Discussion: answering the Research Questions

This Section discusses the main aspects verified through the written forms and video transcripts in order to answer the Research Questions proposed in the Introduction. These answers are guided by their correspondent specific objectives. Section 4.5.1 analyses my first and second Research Questions. Section 4.5.2 discusses the third Research Question. Sections 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 answer the fourth and fifth Research Questions, respectively.

4.4.1 Teaching pronunciation: differences among students due to ageing

My first Research Question aimed to verify if the participant teachers see any difference between teaching pronunciation to older students and to young ones. Through the written forms, it was possible to identify that 2 out of the four participant

teachers do not see any need to differentiate pronunciation teaching in view of the student's age. The other participants alleged that pronunciation teaching should have a special approach to this age group due to their tendency to feel more difficulty in learning than young students, as well as a tendency to feel embarrassed when they are corrected. This tendency of feeling embarrassed, however, was not proved by the students questionnaires nor by video recordings. On the contrary: when asked about it, both young and older students affirmed they liked being corrected, and just one of the older students mentioned that correction should be carefully done to avoid embarrassment. Nevertheless, the video recordings showed that a distinction between young and older learners concerning pronunciation teaching is not made: the teachers proceed the same way with both age groups.

The second Research Question investigated the use of specific techniques for teaching pronunciation to older students. This study showed that 3 out of the 4 teachers do not use any specific technique for older students. The other said that, only in extreme cases, repetition is used. The video recordings seem to be in agreement with these answers: no differences concerning techniques were noticed towards young and older students. It is important to mention that most of the participant teachers do not have a degree in Languages, so they are probably unaware of other techniques but the ones learned in the private language course in which they work.

4.4.2 The importance of pronunciation for students

Departing from the third Research Question, I intended to verify the importance students give to pronunciation teaching. This study shows that pronunciation has a high level of importance to the students. All of them consider it very important as a means to be understood. None of the students, regardless of their age, mentioned native-like goals on pronunciation. The importance of pronunciation is regarded as a door to intelligibility. It is interesting to mention that the students consider this intelligibility not just for speaking, but also as a tool for mastering listening skills.

4.4.3 *Most common difficulties*

The fourth specific objective investigated the most common difficulties concerning pronunciation for older students. In order to reach this objective, the fourth Research Question asks about those difficulties and compares them between the two age groups. As can be seen in Graph 1 and in Table 3, the difficulties vary a lot in both age groups. Contractions, minimal pairs, stress and the pronunciation of specific phonemes and graphemes were cited by both young and older students. The only case which matches both age groups is concerning the pronunciation of the voiceless “th” sound. This difficulty is common among Brazilian students (cf. ZIMMER, SILVEIRA & ALVES, 2009), as Brazilian Portuguese does not present /θ/ in its phonological inventory. In turn, reports of listening problems were more recurrent among older learners, and this might represent a source of difficulty in learning pronunciation.

It is important to mention that, even though the interdental fricative corresponds to the most highly cited source of difficulty mentioned by students, the analysis of the class recordings which we have presented indicates a greater difficulty when these learners were dealing with the vowel system of English. Therefore, it may be the case that learners do not seem to be aware of their main pronunciation problems. Indeed, these learners seem to be overconcerned about the production of a consonant sound which, according to Jenkins (2000), does not seem to play a role as far as intelligibility problems are concerned.⁴⁰ This considered, the possibility that teachers and students have elected some specific myths concerning pronunciation difficulties and teaching priorities, such as the interdental fricative, deserves further investigation.

Given the answers above, I believe that with a bigger sample and by resorting to other research methodologies (such as tests and oral interviews), other pronunciation problems related to ageing would be mentioned, since there are

⁴⁰ In fact, as stated by Hancock (2003), the interdental fricatives are not produced by many Londoners as well as Irish speakers. Jenkins (2000) also points out that the fricatives may be substituted by [t] in many non-standard varieties of English.

biological issues playing an important role on their learning, as discussed in Section 2.1.3. These biological influences seemed to be noticed by most of the teachers. Two of the teachers mentioned they could notice speech and pronunciation problems among older students and one of the teachers mentioned they could notice that older students are slower to gather information. Finally, the other teacher affirmed not to notice any specific difference between older and young learner's pronunciation.

4.4.4 What teachers wrote and what they did: a parallel

This Section, by comparing the teaching procedures verified in the video recordings and the answers provided by the teachers in the forms, answers the last Research Question.

As discussed in Section 4.4, Bob and Suzan presented very different actions. While Suzan was completely coherent in both instruments, Bob seemed to be more incoherent. Suzan claimed she provided explicit pronunciation teaching, not discerning between young and older learners. She also mentioned the use of repetition, and all her answers to the written forms could be seen through the video recording.

Bob's answers, on the other hand, proved to be the opposite from his class. He stated he usually provides explicit pronunciation instruction to his learners. However, no explicit instruction episode was found in his two recorded classes, as there were only interruptions for the provision of corrective feedback, most requests (Lister and Ranta, 1997) while students were speaking. He also mentioned the necessity to provide a different approach for teaching older students, but he proceeded the same way with both age groups.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider that Suzan's and Bob's classes had totally different goals. While Suzan's can be considered a class aiming at the development of all language skills, Bob's is focused on conversation, so a more communicative approach is needed and, as mentioned in Section 2.2.3, some professionals prefer not to give explicit pronunciation instruction in this method. It

could be profitable to investigate how Bob would proceed in a class like Suzan's, and how Suzan would proceed in a conversation class, before comparing the teaching practice of these two professionals. Moreover, the number of older students present in Bob's class was too small, so he may not have found it necessary to proceed according to what he wrote in his form.

5 CONCLUSIONS

There are many factors which influence second and foreign language acquisition, mainly concerning older students. Besides all the common difficulties most students present, older have their biology running against them.

Through this study, it became clear to me that, even with biological problems related to ageing, teachers do not seem to be alarmed to have older students in their classes. The problems noticed by teachers related to ageing were too small compared to the difficulties presented in the theoretical background concerning this age group of students. The teachers also seemed not to be aware of specific techniques for teaching pronunciation to older students, and most of them do not use any different technique between young and older learners.

Pronunciation is considered as a very important matter among students and teachers. However, some teachers showed some concern related to native-like goals, which I believe is an unrealistic goal, while students are more concerned about intelligibility. The common pronunciation difficulties related to ageing pointed out in this study were mostly inconclusive, since it was not possible to relate specific phonetic problems to age, but listening.

Through the investigation made in the present study, important influences on the learning process of older students emerged. As I predicted, based on my experience as a teacher, older learners present important biological influences on their L2 acquisition, but many teachers are not aware, nor are they prepared, to deal with this profile of student. The role of motivation is also an important point to these students, and there are some procedures teachers can take to improve their learning.

I believe that, although the present study can provide a starting point for a discussion on teaching pronunciation for older students, it is a huge field for researching, since few investigations have been carried out to date. Older students are definitely a special group, not only for their motivation, which is much more intrinsic than that shown by young learners, but also for their limitations caused by ageing. A more comprehensive study, with a larger sample of both students and teachers and

more investigation techniques is worth to be done, in order to identify difficulty patterns related to ageing and, possibly come up with some techniques to improve older students' pronunciation learning.

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7 APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 - FORMULÁRIO DE CONSENTIMENTO DOS PROFESSORES

Formulário de consentimento

Prezado Informante:

Por favor, leia o texto a seguir. Ele apresenta informações importantes a respeito do estudo de que você fará parte. Após isso, assine o documento, indicando que você entende a natureza desta pesquisa e que você consente participar dela.

DADOS DA PESQUISA

Investigador: Vanessa Paz, graduanda.

Graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - UFRGS

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Ubiratã Kickhöfel Alves – Professor e Pesquisador.

PROPÓSITO E BENEFÍCIOS

Este estudo tem por objetivo investigar o ensino da língua inglesa para estudantes com mais de 40 anos. A pesquisa visa a contribuir com os estudos de aquisição de língua estrangeira. A pesquisa em questão é requisito parcial para a obtenção do título referente à graduação em Letras – Língua Moderna Inglês. A pesquisa faz parte do Curso de Graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS.

PROCEDIMENTOS

A pesquisadora coletará dados de alunos e professores através de uma ficha de participação e de um questionário escrito. Caso necessário, após a coleta de dados poderá ser feita uma entrevista gravada para esclarecimento das respostas. A pesquisadora também poderá fazer gravações de vídeo de uma das aulas, com aviso prévio. As eventuais gravações serão feitas em arquivos digitais e posteriormente serão armazenadas em computador.

OUTRAS INFORMAÇÕES

A participação no estudo é de caráter voluntário. Todos os participantes têm a liberdade de cancelar a participação a qualquer momento. O material de vídeo coletado será assistido pelo examinador e por outro pesquisador-árbitro, selecionado para confirmar a veracidade das informações levantadas pelo pesquisador após a análise desse material. Somente eles terão acesso ao material de coletado. As gravações em vídeo ficarão de posse do pesquisador, e os dados coletados poderão ser utilizados em estudos posteriores.

A identidade de todos os participantes permanecerá confidencial - ao participar da pesquisa, o informante receberá um Número de Identificação, de modo que o nome do participante não seja nunca divulgado.

DECLARAÇÃO

Declaro que li e compreendi a informação acima e que consinto participar desta pesquisa.

.....

Nome

Assinatura

Data

APPENDIX 2 – FICHA DE PARTICIPAÇÃO PARA PROFESSORES**Ficha de Participação Para Professores**

Nome:

Idade:

Sexo:

Escolaridade:

Ensino Fundamental Ensino Médio

Ensino Superior:

Incompleto Completo Curso: _____ Em que local: _____

Pós-graduação:

Especialização Mestrado Doutorado Área: _____

1. Quanto tempo você estudou formalmente a língua inglesa? Onde você estudou?
2. Por que você decidiu lecionar inglês?
3. Há quanto tempo você leciona a língua inglesa? Em quantas escolas lecionou até hoje? Quais?
4. Você já morou (estudou ou trabalhou) em um país onde a língua oficial é o inglês? Por quanto tempo?

APPENDIX 3 – QUESTIONÁRIO PARA PROFESSORES

Questionário Para Professores

1. Você ensina pronúncia de forma explícita para seus alunos? Em que momentos?
2. Qual a importância do ensino de pronúncia para você?
3. Você acha que o ensino de pronúncia deve ser diferente em função da faixa etária do aluno?
4. Considerando a pronúncia de seus alunos com mais de 40 anos, responda:
 - a. Você usa alguma técnica específica para ensiná-la? Em caso afirmativo, qual?
 - b. Como seus alunos reagem à correção?
 - c. Quais as dificuldades mais comuns nessa faixa etária? Há dificuldades que você julga serem específicas desta faixa etária?
 - d. Você corrige a pronúncia de seus alunos? Sua correção depende da faixa etária do aprendiz? Como é feita esta correção?

APPENDIX 4 – FICHA DE PARTICIPAÇÃO PARA ALUNOS**Ficha de Participação Para Alunos**

Nível de inglês: () Básico () Intermediário () Avançado

Nome:

Idade:

Sexo:

Escolaridade:

() Ensino Fundamental () Ensino Médio

Ensino Superior:

() Incompleto () Completo Curso: _____ Em que
local: _____

Pós-graduação:

() Especialização () Mestrado () Doutorado Área: _____

APPENDIX 5 – QUESTIONÁRIO PARA ALUNOS

Questionário Para Alunos

1. Por que você quer aprender inglês?
2. Qual a importância de aprender a pronúncia da língua inglesa, para você?
3. Quais são as suas maiores dificuldades em relação à pronúncia da língua inglesa? Dê exemplos de palavras/frases com as quais você tem muita dificuldade, sublinhando o som específico ou a combinação de sons que lhe é mais difícil nas mesmas.
4. Você gosta de ter sua pronúncia corrigida? Em que momentos? Como você gosta que seja conduzida tal correção?

APPENDIX 6 – TRANSCRIPTIONS

Teacher Bob

Class 1

00:34

T: So guys+ you're xx again+ yes+ please+ feel comfortable. Tonight we'll have a different activity. It's a mix of writing and speaking. So you'll have to + hã+ write xx and to use good basis to write use good grammar+ but+ the main topic is the speaking+ of course. But+ with this activity+ you'll write about the past+ the present and the future. With different situations. For example: this is a book about our lives. Yes? So+ a book needs a an introduction. For introduction+ we never write+ the au author never writes n introduction+ it's always a different person. So+ who would be this person for you? Who knows you very well? For example+ ah! My mother writes for me+ because she knows me very well+ and xx. blablabla+ blablabla. Yes? This kind of reasons. Chapter one: what's in the book in the pasts? I wants three topics+ always: three topics for each chapter+ ok? So+ ah! I travelled to New York+ I worked five years in Manaus+ blablabla+ good things you want to share with the class+ yes+ three topics. What are the three best moments in your lives? So+ when my son was born+ when I bought my first car+ blablabla+ of course+ you have to explain everything. Why do you feel like this? Yes? Here use the pasts+ this or past perfect to refer I have been doing+ past perfect continuing+ continuous+ whatever you wants. What are you doing now? Present continuous of course+ yes? I'm studying English+ I'm studying for vestibular.

Come in+ hello St1. xx+ whatever you have to share with the class. What will you do+ certainly+ in the future. Will+ you use in this chapter. So+ when will we use? When we're certain about something+ and when it's a promise+: I will bring my homework next class+ I promise. Yes? Typical student+ yes? And use will for when you are asking something+ for example+ will you turn off the lights? Or when you are giving an order+ yes? Will you stop talking on the phone? Or situations xxx. And the last one+ chapter 5: what are you going to do in the 5 years. Be going to+ remember? 2 situations we use be going to: our plans+ intentions+ and with evidence xxx. For example+ you see an pregnant woman and say she is going to have a baby+ yes? It's an evidence+ it's not my opinion+ it's notorious+ everybody can understand this.+ so guys+ I will give 5 minutes to think about your lives. And write just three topics for each chapter and then you'll share with the class and will explain to the class.ok?

((Bob asks the students to write an autobiography, and gives 8 min for them to write that.))

19:18

((Students share they autobiography))

St2 {Y}: I++ I wish++ I wish to know **German** ['dʒɜrmən]

T: uhum

St2 {Y}:xx

T: **Germany** [ˈdʒɜrmənI]

St2 {Y}: **Germany** [ˈdʒɜrmənI] + yeah

19:54

((Students keep sharing their biographies))

20:18

Ne {O}: I+ahn++**drove é drove** [drouv]?

T: **drove** [drouv]

Ne {O}: drove[drouv] my car + the car + between Miami and xx West

(...)

Ne {O}: I **studied** [stut] xx puc xx

T: yes + I **studied** [ˈstʌdiəd] at + PUC

Ne {O}: I++ about the

T: three best moments

Ne {O}: three best moments.

(...)

Ne {O}: I **received** [Riˈsiv] ++ **curs** [kurs] in ah **France** [frans].

T: Yes? I **won** a **course** [kɔrs] in **France** [frens].

Ne {O}: xx

T: uhum, yes

Ne {O}: ahn xxx my graduate

T: my graduation, yes? Very good.

(...)

29:23

T: how long did you stay there?

St1 {Y}: one **month** [mɔθ]

T: one **month** [mʌnθ], so + you could enjoy + yes? Very good.

(...)

34:35

St2 {Y}: ok + ãhh of course I drive a **license** [ˈlisəns]

T: **License** [ˈlaisəns]

St2 {Y}: and ãh++ complete ãhn + seria++ completar o ensino médio

T: finish high school

(...)

46:30

((The teacher divides the students in two groups: one group must come up with arguments for abortion and the other group must be against abortion. After this discussion, students have to choose five professions to take to another planet, due to an earth explosion which is coming))

1:22:11

St3 {Y}: teacher to teach a language

T: aham + so we can write a language teacher + yes? Doesn't matter the language, yes?

St4 {Y}: no

T: xx any difference ++ ahn++ language teacher + and?

St5: **Lawer** [ˈlouər]

T: and a **lawyer** [ˈlɔɪər] ++ very good!

(...)

1:23:16
 St6{Y}: One.. **veterian** [ˈvetəriən]
 T: **Veterinarian** [ˌvetərəˈneəriən]
 ((they keep discussing until the end of the class))
 1:43:19

Class 2

((The class starts with the teacher explaining reported speech. Following, he sorts 2 students to come to the front of the class to role play a conversation, while other student reports to the other classmates what the pair is talking. Right after the end of this exercise, Bob explains that that exercise is too difficult for kids. St7 {Y} is teaching kids and is not self confident, getting nervous after each error))
 43:40
 T: How old are you?
 St7 {Y}: I'm **fifteen** [faj'ftin]
 T: **Fifteen** [fif'tin] years old
 St7 {Y}: xx
 ((her whining shows she is very nervous and that she is trying to excuse her mistakes))
 Sts: Calma
 Sts: calm down
 T: St7 please+ relax+ calm down+ it's your first day here+ you don't know everybody and you are here to fight+ yes+ so + calm down
 50:30
 ((Bob asks students to talk about environmental problems. Then, the students are asked to come in front of the class to explain what they were talking about))
 1:35:24
 Ne {O}: Is true because ah+ today is any company+ the the++ the xx+the gas the xx
treatment [ˈtri:təmənt]
 T: with no **treatment** [ˈtrɪtmənt]
 ((after Ney's group presentation, the class finishes))
 1:59:13

Teacher Suzan

((the class starts with Augusto looking for his glasses))
 00:40
 Au{O}: xx my my **glass** [glæs]
 T: Glasses, my **glasses** [glæsIs]
 ((then he, spontaneously, explains some health problem his aunt is facing))
 2:14
 Au{O}: how can I say+ teacher, ++**her** [her] heart ++ is weak because **your** age
 T: because of **her** age [hɜr]
 Au{O}: **age**
 2:31
 ((the teacher asks Augusto to open the coursebook and proceeds explaining some language topic. The student is asked to read a text in the coursebook))
 8:45
 Au{O}: we will be able to + **swallow swallow** ['swɑ:.ləʊ]
 T: **swallow** ['swɒl.əʊ]
 Au{O}: **swallow** + tiny [tini] computers
 T: uhum
 8:55
 ((the teacher corrects some exercises and explains some language points. Augusto is asked to do an exercise and, then, reads his answers))
 26:07
 Au{O}: seven+++someday **blind** [blaɪnd]?
 T: **blind** [blaɪnd]
 Au{O}: someday blind people (...)
 28:50
 T: let's do the pronunciation exercise. Exercise five, right?
 Au{O}: ok
 T: listen+ notice the contracted weak form of will and the way will is linked to the weak form of had. Linked sounds+ ok?
 Au{O}: linked is xx?
 T: uhum, ligados
 ((teacher tries to find the right track in the course cd.))
 CD: we'll be able to swallow tiny computers. ++ they'll record what's going on
 ((four more sentences are told using the same model))
 T: ok?
 Au{O}: ok. Teacher, ++ the preposition on ++
 T: on?
 Au{O}: yes.
 Au{O}: the+ the letter have xx don't don't don't have pronunciation pronunciation?
 T: yeah + in xx English xx speak fast they don't pronounce the H of xx. For example when you say only the verb xx the verb to have. You'll listen to the + sound. For example: scientists will have will have will have xxx
 ((the teacher answers some vocabulary questions and replays the CD for the student to repeat the sentences while he reads them in the book. Juliana arrives))
 32:51

CD: we'll be able to swallow tiny **computers** [kəm'pjʊtərs]
 Au{O}: we'll be able to swallow **tinys** ['tənis] **computers** [kəm'pjʊtərs]
 T: **tiny** ['təni] **computers** [kəm'pjʊtərs]
 Au{O}: **tiny** ['təni] **computers** [kəm'pjʊtərs]
 CD: they'll record what's going on.
 Sts: they'll record what's going on.
 CD: **communication** [kəmjunɪ'keɪʃən] will be easier.
 AU{O}: **communication** [kəmjunɪ'keɪʃən] will be easier.
 CD: scientists will have perfected the brain link computers.
 Sts: scientists will have perfected the brain link computers.
 CD: we'll have learnt to communicate by brainwaves
 Au{O}: we will have learned to **communicate** [ko'mkeɪt] by brainwaves.
 CD: they'll have found xxx
 T: to **communicate** [kə'mjʊnɪkeɪt]
 Au{O}: to **communicate** [kə'mjʊnɪkeɪt]
 CD: to read people's thoughts
 Au{O}: they will have they have+ found ways to **read** [hɪd] people's thoughts
 ((the class continues with the teacher explaining more language topics, and then students are asked to make some activity in the coursebook))
 39:56
 Au{O}: **impressive** [ɪm'pre:sɪv]xx **impressive** [ɪm'pre:sɪv]xx
 T: sorry xx?
 Au{O}: impressive xx it's **impressive**
 T: oh, it's **impressive** [ɪm'presɪv]
 40:07
 ((Students read their answers))
 42:26
 Ju {Y}: xx your inter + I interv ['ɪntərv]
 T: **interviewers** ['ɪntərvjuərs]
 Ju {Y}: **interviewers** ['ɪntərvjuərs]
 42:36
 43:22
 Au{O}: to talk about your + best **experience** [ɪk'spɪəriəns] **experience** [ɪk'spɪəriəns]?
 T: **experience** [ɪk'spɪəriəns]
 Au{O}: **experience**
 43:29
 ((Students are asked to read another text in the book))
 45:42
 Ju {Y}: xx about your job perspectives. Don't waste your time **applying** [ə'pli:ŋ]
 T: applying [ə'plaiŋ]
 Ju {Y}: **applying** [ə'plaiŋ] for a job if you know xx
 T: **unqualified** [ʌn'kwələfaɪd]
 Ju {Y}: **unqualified** [ʌn'kwələfaɪd]
 T: **unqualified** [ʌn'kwələfaɪd]
 ((students are asked to make two other vocabulary and two other listening exercises. Then the teacher starts a pronunciation instruction through repetition))

55:22

T: repeat with me guys, **previous** ['prɪviəs] **experiences** [ɪk'spɪəriəns]

Ju {Y}: previous experiences

Au{O}: previous experiences

T: xx under pressure

Sts: xx under pressure

T: strengths

Sts: strengths

T: long term goals

Sts: long term goals

T: weaknesses

Sts: weaknesses

T: reasons for leaving the previous jobs

Sts: reasons for leaving the previous jobs

T: salary

Sts: salary

T: taking breaks during work

Sts: taking breaks during work

55:57

((The teacher provides some grammar instruction and students are asked to make some exercises. Then they start to read their answers))

1:27:49

I: what+ **are**+ your+ **strengths**

T: **strengths** [streŋkθ]

I: **strengths** [streŋkθs]+she asked me what my **strengths were**

1:28:00

((the continue reading their answers))

2:05:53

Au{O}: do I have to wear a uniform? Xx he asked her ah if he had + to **wear uniform**

T: **wear**[weər]+**he**[hi] **had** [hæd] **to** [tə] **wear** [weər]

Au{O}: wear a uniform

(...)

2:07:16

Ju {Y}: who will I work with. He wanted to **know** [nəʊ]

T: **know** [nəʊ], he wanted to **know** [nəʊ]

(...)

Ju {Y}: to **know**[nəʊ] who would he work **with** [wɪθ]

T: with ++ with [wɪθ]

Ju {Y}: with [wɪθ]

T: uhum + And ten?

Ju {Y}: can you work some weekends? She wanted to **know** [nəʊ]

T: **know** [nəʊ]

Ju {Y}: to **know** [nəʊ] if he could work some weekends

2:08:25

((the teacher asks the students to go to page 51, exercise 4, from the coursebook))

2:10:04

T: listen and notice the consonant sounds in these words + right? Let's list listen first

(...)

CD: pressure ++ promotion ++ prospects ++ experience ++ stay ++ started ++ strengths ++ asked ++ she asked about my previous experiences ++ she asked me what my strengths were ++ I told her I work well under pressure ++ I asked her about the prospects for promotion ++ she asked me how long I plan to stay ++ she asked me when I could start

T: ok, let's repeat?

((the CD is played again. students listen and repeat after each word or sentence. She also repeats the words with them))

2:12:15

((students are asked to write about situations faced in their lives using reported speech. She answers some questions about the topic. Following, the teacher tells her own story, then the students are asked to share their stories. At 2:44:00 my questionnaires are given to the students. They deliver them at 2:58:00. They talk about going home earlier. Juliana leaves at 2:59:36. The teacher and Augusto talk about coincidences. He asks about prepositions and adverbs of frequency. Augusto reads a text from the coursebook and talk to the teacher about coincidence until the end of the class. No pronunciation instruction nor correction is done until the end of the class.))

3:27:32

8 ATTACHMENT 1 – COURSEBOOK’S PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION

8.1 Instructions for the teacher


Teacher's Notes — Lesson B

Pronunciation


LANGUAGE NOTES

- Students often have difficulty with English consonant clusters, or groups of consonant sounds.
- English allows many combinations of consonants to be grouped in clusters at both the beginning and end of words. At the end of words, consonant clusters often result when *-s* and *-ed* endings are added; for example, *prospects* /kts/, *strengths* /Nθs/, *asked* /skt/.

Exercise 4

-  Play the audio. Ask students to notice the groups of consonant sounds, shown in bold.
- Point out that the number of consonant *sounds* and the number of consonant *letters* is not always the same. Ask, for example, how many consonant sounds there are in the underlined consonant groups in *experience* (two letters but three sounds /ksp/) and *strengths* (five letters but three sounds /Nθs/).
- Remind students, if necessary, that the *e* in *asked* is silent, resulting in the consonant group /skt/.

Exercise 5


-  Play the audio. Stop the recording after each item to allow students to repeat chorally.
- Ask a few individual students to repeat and check their pronunciation.
- If students tend to add a vowel before the /s/ in *stay*, *start*, etc., it can help to have them start these words by saying a long /ssss/ sound.
- Encourage students to link the words smoothly in the sentences without adding any extra vowel sounds between the words.
- Sometimes native speakers simplify final consonant clusters by leaving out one of the sounds. Usually, they leave out the middle sound (for example, *asked* /æst/). They don't leave out the sound of the *-ed* ending because it would sound like a grammatical error.

8.2 Reading

11

Lesson B

Pronunciation


4  Listen. Notice the groups of consonant sounds in these words.

pressure	promotion	prospects	experience
stay	start	strengths	asked

She **asked** about my **previous experience**. She **asked** me what my **strengths** were.

I **told** her I work well under **pressure**. I **asked** her about the **prospects** for **promotion**.

She **asked** me how long I **planned** to **stay**. She **asked** me when I could **start**.

5  Listen again and repeat.

8.3 Listening transcripts

Pronunciation, Exercises 4 and 5, page 51

A: pressure, promotion, prospects, experience

B: stay, start, strengths, asked

A: She asked about my previous experience.

She asked me what my strengths were.

I told her I work well under pressure.

I asked her about the prospects for promotion.

She asked me how long I plan to stay.

She asked me when I could start.