TAILORING INTERNATIONAL PRONUNCIATION ACTIVITIES FOR HUNGARIAN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

NOÉMI GYURKA
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
noemi.gyurka@gmail.com

ÁGNES PIUKOVICS
Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, Hungary
piukovics.agnes@btk.ppke.hu

Abstract
Pronunciation teaching is gaining more and more recognition in international contexts, however, empirical research concerning pronunciation teaching is underrepresented in the Hungarian educational context. While there are a few studies that briefly touch upon the learners' attitudes towards pronunciation, there is limited data concerning the ways in which pronunciation could be integrated into the Hungarian English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. Therefore, to narrow down the gap, this paper aims to investigate how international pronunciation activities could be modified when teaching Hungarian learners specifically, and how these activities could be integrated successfully into the classroom. The case study conducted involved 13 learners, who were taught by the first author of the paper as the teacher-researcher. The timeframe of the research was 11 weeks, throughout which altogether five pronunciation activities were tailored and integrated into the lessons. The results indicate that taking only methodological considerations when deciding on what feature to teach was not sufficient for successful integration. It was concluded that the learners needed to be aware of the goals of the task, its relevance to their development, and most importantly, they had to be motivated and in turn engaged, as all the factors mentioned above are prerequisites of successful integration.

Keywords: pronunciation teaching, pronunciation integration, L1-tailored activities, tailoring activities, EFL, explicit instruction, awareness raising

1. Introduction

Pronunciation is no longer considered to be the "Cinderella of language teaching" (Kelly, 1969, p. 87) in most international contexts, as the relevance of pronunciation has been revaluated within the framework of communicative language teaching (CLT), and it has been established that pronunciation integration is vital for successful communication (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 8).

Apart from its dominant role in ensuring intelligibility (Jenkins, 2000), explicit pronunciation instruction has a number of further advantages: it boosts the learners' confidence and reduces their anxiety (Baran-Łucarz, 2011); it contributes to the learners' language proficiency level being perceived as higher than it actually is (Baran-Łucarz, 2017); it may give rise to positive bias (Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015); and it also facilitates listening comprehension (Brown, 2011; Gilbert, 1995).

Nevertheless, despite the changes in its role in English language teaching (ELT), pre-CLT techniques appeared to be widely implemented in many countries (Buss, 2016; Tergujeff, 2012; Tergujeff, 2013; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010) instead of integrating pronunciation into the lessons in a communicative manner. The reasons behind this are manifold and may differ from country to country; however, in a large-scale survey examining the situation in 10 European countries, Henderson et al. (2012) identified the general problem of teachers' receiving inadequate training in teaching pronunciation. Specialised knowledge in phonodidactics, however, would be vital for a successful integration of pronunciation, as pronunciation activities can rarely be used without tailoring them to a particular group of learners based on their first language. Although an increasing number of ELT coursebooks include explicit pronunciation exercises (Kiczkowiak, 2021), these materials target international audiences, and thus many of them address pronunciation difficulties faced only by learners of certain L1s, and they are not helpful for other learners without modifications or at all. Similarly, since coursebook activities address a variety of pronunciation features to cater for the needs of an international audience, it is highly unlikely that the problems of a specific L1 are represented in full in the coursebook.

Therefore, the mere presence of pronunciation activities does not guarantee that they will be used, as teachers would need to take account of a variety of methodological considerations when integrating pronunciation into their lessons, and this would require substantial effort on their part. Our paper addresses the issue of integrating international pronunciation activities into EFL lessons, focusing on the case of Hungarian speakers of English.

2. Theoretical and Empirical Background

2.1 Guidelines for Pronunciation Integration

Task integration, in the framework of communicative language teaching, refers to teaching language through content that is meaningful to the students (Met, 1998, p. 36). Therefore, contrary to popular belief, pronunciation integration does not mean that other skills do not receive enough focus (Darcy et al., 2021). Pronunciation is crucial for the development of speaking and listening skills (Darcy et al., 2021; Levis, 2018, p. 190), thus, pronunciation integration benefits

the learners in multiple ways, as it helps improve their communicative (Levis, 2018) and listening competence (Gilbert, 1995) alike.

Consequently, Levis (2018) argues that pronunciation should be treated and taught the same way as other skills (p. 215): it is not enough to address arising pronunciation issues, just as it is not enough to teach speaking and listening only when the learners encounter difficulties (Levis, 2018, p. 215). Pronunciation should be a regular component of the lesson from an early age (Sicola & Darcy, 2015; Zielinski & Yates, 2014), and it cannot be ignored until the learners reach an advanced level to correct errors (Levis, 2018, p. 216) – it is more difficult to improve an advanced learner's fossilised pronunciation because they often exhibit an inflexible attitude towards change (Acton, 1984).

Furthermore, it is not sufficient to teach pronunciation implicitly only, since it is explicit pronunciation instruction that raises the learner's awareness (Darcy, 2018), therefore pronunciation activities should be an integral part of the lesson (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 303). Sicola and Darcy (2015) and Darcy (2018) argue that pronunciation should be incorporated into meaning-focused communicative activities. Tasks that focus heavily on form only (e.g., minimal pair drills) are considered ineffective (Sicola & Darcy, 2015). In contrast, Pennington (2021) advocates that a combined approach, focusing on form and meaning within a task-based framework, is the most effective way of integration. Explicit pronunciation instruction on form prepares the students for the communicative practice that takes place later. Additionally, providing oral corrective feedback during the production phase has also been proved to improve the learners' pronunciation (Darcy, 2018; Lyster et al., 2012). Moreover, Couper (2015) and Sicola and Darcy (2015) stress that pronunciation should be integrated into other activities to provide opportunities for further practice. This way, even reluctant teachers could experiment with pronunciation integration, which might result in them shifting their beliefs (Fekete, 2023).

Integrating pronunciation within a communicative framework allows a focus on form and fluency alike, since a communicative task "skilfully links the communicative role of the lesson with the grammatical exponents" (Nunan, 2004, p. 107). However, to achieve successful integration, it is not enough to make conscious decisions regarding the relevance of the feature to the learners (Levis, 2018, pp. 214–215) and include a communicative aspect. The task has to be fitted into the learning process in a way that the context and the task type are in harmony, as the context can also influence the complexity of the task (Ellis, 2003, p. 69). That is, the context can determine which pronunciation features of the L1 can be taught to the students. Moreover, the task has to reach its goals, otherwise, no matter how well-structured it is, its integration cannot be considered successful (Nunan, 2004, p. 4). Unless the learners fully understand the aims, the purpose and the utility of the activity, they will not be motivated (and thus engaged) during

the lesson (Kormos & Wilby, 2019), and later their lack of interest might influence their improvement (Mozgalina, 2015).

Task motivation is a key factor, which can impact the learners' performance (Mozgalina, 2015). Of the six motivational concepts that are related to task motivation (viz., achievement goals, self-efficacy, expectancy value, intrinsic motivation, flow, interest – Kormos & Wilby, 2019), flow and interest are the ones which are closely related to task design. Outlining clear goals and creating a task that is just above the learners' level so that it can challenge them are the two conditions to reach flow (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2002). In addition, situational interest can be increased by the content and novelty of the task, as well as aligning the goals of the task with the goals of the learners to increase its relevance (Renninger et al., 2015).

Consequently, for the purposes of the study, we define successful task integration as follows: A task is successfully integrated if it is context-appropriate, fits into the learning process, relevant for the learners, has clear goals and achieves them, and engages the learners in the learning process.

2.2 Methodological Considerations When Integrating Pronunciation

In today's professional discourse, the importance of incorporating pronunciation into the ELT syllabus is strongly advocated (Pennington, 2021; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015), and most researchers in the field agree that intelligibility should be prioritised over the nativeness principle (Gajewska, 2021; Jenkins, 2000; Jenkins, 2002; Kenworthy, 1987; Levis, 2005, Levis, 2018; Nádasdy, 2006; Pennington, 2021; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015). Nevertheless, the question of which features should be integrated into the curriculum is widely debated.

Szyszka (2017) suggests that pronunciation goals should be tailored to the learners' needs (p. 10). This is in accordance with Szpyra-Kozłowska's (2015) approach, who acknowledges that learners' different aims will hugely influence pronunciation teaching goals. In addition, the listener's perspective should be considered when clarifying the objectives of pronunciation instruction (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 4), and mispronunciations that are difficult to process should be given attention (Levis, 2018, p. 186). Correspondingly, Szpyra-Kozłowska (2015) distinguishes basic intelligibility from comfortable intelligibility. With the former, understanding the speaker can pose a challenge to the listener, while with the latter, comprehension does not require special attention on the listener's part. Therefore, aiming for comfortable intelligibility is encouraged (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 3; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015).

Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, pp. 72–73) and Gajewska (2021) emphasise taking into consideration the teachability and the learnability of the features as well when deciding on what to include. Jenkins (2000) compiled a collection of features that are essential for an intelligible pronunciation, also considering the

teachability and learnability of the features. This collection, called *Lingua Franca Core* (LFC), aims to strike a balance between segmental and suprasegmental elements (Jenkins, 2000, p. 136). However, the LFC only targets phonological pronunciation errors (i.e., stemming from the differences between English and other L1s), and it does not consider how intelligibility is affected by lexical pronunciation errors (i.e., ones which occur due to a lack of knowledge on how to pronounce a word as a lexical item, often because of its counterintuitive pronunciation, e.g., *various* pronounced as *[vəˈraɪəz] – Nádasdy, 2006). Granted that lexical pronunciation errors can impede intelligibility to a far greater extent than phonological errors (Nádasdy, 2006, pp. 24–25), the correction of these should receive more emphasis. Consequently, when dealing with new lexical items, pronunciation should also be incorporated into the lesson (Kelly, 2000, p. 13), and teachers should ensure that lexical pronunciation errors are corrected.

Instead of prioritising the inclusion of segmental elements over suprasegmental ones (or the other way around), Celce-Murcia et al. (2010, p. 11) and Szpyra-Kozłowska (2015) propose a balanced approach and suggest that time should be devoted to segmental and suprasegmental features alike according to the learners' needs. Moreover, when deciding on segmental elements, ones with a higher functional load must be opted for (Gajewska, 2021; Levis, 2018, p. 201). Pairs of phonemes that have a high functional load (e.g., /p/ and /b/, /l/ and /r/, etc.) distinguish a larger number of minimal pairs than phonemes with a low functional load do (Brown, 1988), thus, their mispronunciation can cause fundamental intelligibility issues (Levis, 2018, p. 201).

The learners' L1 also determines what features are to be taught. EFL coursebooks and textbooks on English pronunciation are rarely designed with learners with a specific L1 in mind, but they cater for the needs of students with various native languages. Consequently, pronunciation activities in coursebooks and textbooks touch upon a wide variety of pronunciation features of English, some (or many) of which may not be of help (or may even be irrelevant) to learners with certain L1s. While the pronunciation of the interdental fricatives (/θ/ and /ð/) is likely to cause difficulties to many speakers as they are not present in many languages, potential problems with other features might affect a few (groups of) L1s only. For instance, issues related to word stress are specific to speakers of languages with fixed stress, such as Hungarian, in which word stressed is fixed on the first syllable of words (Siptár & Törkenczy, 2000, p. 21), or Polish, which has fixed antepenultimate stress (Hayes, 1995, p. 31). Certain consonantal phonemic contrasts frequently appearing in pronunciation materials include those between /w/, /v/ and /b/, but only the contrast between the first two of these is needed for Hungarians (Nádasdy, 2006, p. 97) – that between the latter two exemplifies a typical Spanish problem (Goldstein et al., 2005). Romance languages are the target audience of various pronunciation problems: activities focusing on word-initial /h/s and on differences in vowel length are typical of Italian, Spanish, French, etc., and neither of these is difficult for a Hungarian learner.

To conclude, aiming for intelligibility in pronunciation teaching requires the teacher to prioritise certain features over others so that the instruction fits the learners' needs (Levis, 2018, pp. 214–215). Therefore, when deciding on what features to teach, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration:

- the learner's goals;
- the learner's L1;
- the feature's relevance to comfortable intelligibility (lexical pronunciation errors are to be prioritised over phonological ones);
- the listener's perspective;
- the teachability and learnability of the feature;
- the functional load of segmental elements.

2.3 Pronunciation Integration in International Contexts and in Hungary

While internationally, pronunciation teaching is universally advocated (Darcy, 2018; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Couper, 2015; Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2018; Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2015), and most instructors realise the value of pronunciation teaching (Bai & Yuan, 2019; Buss, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Huensch, 2019), in practice, few teachers dedicate time to pronunciation integration (Foote et al., 2016; Huensch, 2019). Celce-Murcia et al. (2010, p. 277) mentioned that EFL teachers "have traditionally been reluctant to focus on pronunciation". While a number of studies highlight the lack of pronunciation teaching in various international contexts (Bai & Yuan, 2019; Darcy, 2018; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Henderson et al., 2012; Zhang & Yuan, 2020), empirical results on the success of integration have been scarce.

In the Hungarian educational context, there have been no studies published dealing with pronunciation instruction to this date. In fact, pronunciation teaching in Hungary is severely underresearched, and there is limited empirical data connected to pronunciation in the EFL classroom. Two studies briefly mention the learners' attitudes towards pronunciation in relation to motivation, however, neither of these targets pronunciation integration specifically. Nikolov (2003) states that learners are more motivated to learn the General American (GA) accent as American movies and the American pop culture fascinate them, while Kontráné Hegybíró and Csizér (2011) observed that learners do not necessarily perceive GA as their target accent. Therefore, this paper aims to narrow down the gap highlighted above by providing insight into the process of integrating pronunciation activities in the Hungarian EFL classroom, as well as presenting empirical data on how successful integration could be achieved in the Hungarian educational context. To achieve these aims, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: How can international pronunciation activities be tailored to suit the needs of Hungarian learners of English?

- • RQ2: How can the L1-tailored pronunciation activities be successfully integrated into the EFL classroom in the given case of a group of Hungarian learners of English?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The case study was carried out in a secondary school in Budapest, Hungary with 13 Hungarian EFL learners, who were in grade 10 at the time of data collection and were aged 16. The study was conducted in accordance with basic ethical principles (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 68), with the knowledge and consent of the principal and the parents alike. Out of the 13 respondents, five were boys and eight were girls. Their level of English was C1 according to the CEFR due to them attending the higher-level EFL group in their class. Seven students had passed a B2 level language exams approximately one year prior to data collection, and two of them had a C1 level language certificate. All in all, they were learning from C1 level materials, which most of them found relatively easy. They had been learning English for more than six years, however, during those six years, they most likely had never been exposed to explicit pronunciation teaching. This information was obtained during an informal interview with their teacher, who had been teaching them from 5th grade (almost from the beginning of their language learning journey). The first author of this article also participated in the study as the teacher-researcher during the data collection period as part of her long-term teaching practice in the final year of her teacher training[1]. The presence of the teacher-researcher provided another perspective to the study to ensure triangulation (Duff, 2012).

3.2 Data Collection Methods and Data Analyses

Before designing the pronunciation activities, a contrastive analysis of the participants' L1 (Hungarian) and the target language (English) was performed to determine which features should be taught to the students (for a full account of the procedure, see Piukovics, 2021, Chapter 3). After taking into consideration the teachability and learnability of the features and their contribution to intelligibility (see Section 2.2), as well as the learners' previous knowledge related to explicit pronunciation instruction, five features were selected for integration, of which this paper presents four due to space limitations. The group was learning from *English File: Advanced Student's Book* (Latham-Koenig et al., 2015), which is a coursebook that contains pronunciation activities targeting various features that might be problematic for learners with different

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[1] The teacher training system in Hungary at the time of data collection included of a six-year undivided programme with a one-year long practice during the sixth year.

L1s. Therefore, the activities found in the book served as the basis for the study, and then they were tailored to cater for the specific needs of Hungarian learners of English, which was followed by the integration process.

Data regarding the success of integration was collected throughout an 11-week period starting from September 2021. To get the learners' perspective on the success of integration, the participants were administered a feedback form before each of the two unit tests. The feedback forms were also used to shed light on the informants' perceptions of the lessons and the activities, so that, whenever judged necessary, the upcoming pronunciation activities could be modified utilising the feedback provided by the group. The feedback form contained open-ended questions, which did not target pronunciation activities specifically, they aimed to procure the learners' unbiased opinion of the lessons and the activities. For this reason, the participants' anonymity was ensured.

After the end of the teaching period, in-depth interviews were conducted with a few volunteering students from the group (Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4) to yield further insight into their perceptions about the pronunciation activities. Therefore, four semi-structured interviews were held on Zoom with an average length of 30 minutes. It is crucial to mention that since participants volunteered, their responses might not be representative of the group due to self-selection bias. To be able to identify the participants, the utterances that appeared in the feedback forms are marked with "F" and the number of the comment, and the quotations from the interviews are identified with "I" and the number of the participant.

In addition to the data collection methods mentioned above, the teacher-researcher kept a journal during the timespan of the study, in which she noted down the results of her continual observations. Moreover, she reflected on each lesson and made notes of the most important behavioural phenomena displayed by the students.

To analyse the verbal and written data connected to the integration process, the interviews were transcribed, and both the answers from the feedback forms and the teacher-researcher's journal were digitised. Then, data was processed in two different ways. Firstly, it was coded according to activities and within the activities, according to participants to be able to differentiate the individual responses. Then, the method of thematic content analysis (Xu & Zammit, 2020) was implemented to determine emerging themes. As the first step of thematic analysis, initial codes were generated, which were used to define the main themes after organising the data. As a result of this process, the following themes have been named:

1. the relevance of pronunciation learning;
2. attitudes towards the participant's own pronunciation development;
3. the role of previous experiences related to communicational failure;
4. aspects of task motivation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Modification Process of the Pronunciation Activities

This section answers the first research question (RQ1: How can international pronunciation activities be tailored to suit the needs of Hungarian learners of English?) utilising a contrastive analysis of the phonology of the two languages and the methodological considerations (for the latter, see Section 2.2). The results of the contrastive analysis yielded the selection of the following features: selected sound contrasts and words with counterintuitive pronunciation, schwa in unstressed syllables, selected problematic letter-to-sound rules, stress-fixing suffixes, and the pronunciation of the *-ed* suffix. The following subsection, therefore, will present the process whereby four of the activities were developed to fit the needs of Hungarian learners. The activities described below focus primarily on raising metalinguistic awareness, as that is the first step in developing L2 pronunciation. Moreover, this is the step that is the most relevant in terms of tailoring activities to a specific L1. In most cases, the activities included production practice, which are not discussed here in detail due to space limitations.

4.1.1 Hunglish Homophones

The focus of the original activity (Latham-Koenig et al., 2015, p. 6) is reading information from IPA transcriptions. This was significantly modified because, in its original form, the activity would not have suited the needs of the group as they had not been exposed to explicit pronunciation instruction before and they were unfamiliar with the IPA. Thus, the task was reconceptualised to demonstrate the advantage IPA symbols have to offer over audio materials found in online dictionaries since learners might not be able to detect the difference by listening. The activity was turned into a written "same or different" task focusing on "Hunglish homophones" (pairs of words that have the same pronunciation in a typical Hungarian-accented English) and words with counterintuitive pronunciation.

The word pairs that appeared in the task can be categorised into three error types. Firstly, as letter-to-sound correspondences are closer to one-to-one relations in Hungarian than in English, learners might mispronounce words by applying the letter-to-sound rules of Hungarian relying on the spelling of the word. This results in L1-based spelling pronunciation errors. Secondly, minimal pairs exhibiting a phoneme contrast that is not present in Hungarian might be perceived as homophones, and in production, this can lead to misunderstandings. Thirdly, and finally, L2-based spelling pronunciation errors can occur when the student encounters a word that has an irregular pronunciation and applies a letter-to-sound rule of the L2 incorrectly. Table 1 organises the target words according to the error types mentioned above.

Table 1: The Target Words in the Homophones Activity According to Error Types

Error type	Target word
L1-based spelling pronunciation error	[k]*now*, [w]*rite*, *s*[o]*n*, *w*[o]*n*
L2-based spelling pronunciation error	***sew*** [s(j)uː], ***they're*** *th*[eɪ]*'re*, ***suite*** [s(j)uːt], ***pear*** *p*[iə]*r*
No phoneme contrast in Hungarian	***wet*** [v]*et*, ***boat*** *b*[oː]*t*, ***bat*** *b*[ɛ]*t* (Thus, these words become homophonous with *vet*, *bought* and *bet*, respectively.)

The procedure of the activity was the following: the students received a handout with 18 pairs of words and a hardcopy dictionary. In pairs, they had to decide inductively whether the word pairs are pronounced the same or differently using only the dictionary. The pairs had to realise that only by comparing the transcriptions of the words can one undoubtedly tell if they are pronounced the same or not.

4.1.2 Schwa

In Hungarian, vowel reduction is unattested, therefore, students may not realise that, in English, unstressed syllables can only have one of the three weak vowels ([ə], [ɪ] and [ʊ]). Accordingly, Hungarian learners of English fail to produce reduced vowels in grammatical function words, and if not acquired correctly, in certain unstressed syllables of lexical content words. Both of these result in L1-based pronunciation errors. The absence of vowel reduction in function words does not hinder intelligibility, although during listening comprehension exercises, the learners can encounter difficulties, since they might fail to perceive function words because they expect to hear their strong form (Gilbert, 1995). In view of this, as well as considering the substantial amount of practice required to successfully produce weak forms, the activity aimed at improving perception rather than practising production in the case of function words.

The original activity (Latham-Koenig et al., 2015, p. 77) introduces the schwa and provides a few examples (function words only) in an information box. Using this, the learners' task is to look at a sentence in which all content words are typed in a bigger font and circle the words with the schwa sound. This is followed by a "listen and check" exercise, and a "listen and repeat" production practice task with different sentences related to the topic. This was not suitable for the learners' since it introduced vowel reduction in grammar words, and for Hungarian learners who have never been acquainted with the notion of vowel reduction, grasping the concept on content words makes the learning process easier. Moreover, the original task included production practice for producing weak forms in

grammar words as well, which can be especially difficult for speakers whose L1 is characterised by syllable-timed rhythm[2].

The activity was modified both in terms of layout and content: when introducing the schwa to the learners, three content words and three function words containing a schwa were provided as examples to ensure that the students realised that the schwa cannot only appear in weak forms of function words, but also in unstressed syllables of content words. In the part where the learners are to circle places where a schwa is pronounced, the highlights were removed as they falsely suggested that all syllables of the content words are stressed (thus overlooking the fact that schwas are pronounced in the unstressed syllables of those words), and the number of example sentences was increased to make sure they contain enough examples to make the learners realise that any letter in the English alphabet can denote a schwa (which non-native speakers of English may have difficulty believing).

The activity was conducted in the following way: after demonstrating the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables, the schwa sound was introduced. Then, it was discussed through examples that the schwa can appear either in the unstressed syllables of content words or in the weak pronunciation of grammar words. Next, the group listened to six sentences[3] one by one, and their task was to circle the vowel letters pronounced with a schwa. A quick "listen and repeat" practice was also included to reinforce the correct pronunciation of the most problematic content words, e.g., *peril, cauldron, frozen*.

4.1.3 Word stress with suffixes

This activity (Latham-Koenig et al., 2015, p. 20) was included since stress placement poses problems for Hungarian learners of English, which stems from the fact that in Hungarian, word stress is always on the first syllable (Siptár & Törkenczy, 2000, p. 21), while in English, primary stress may fall on any syllable in a word. Because of the fixed stress placement, Hungarian learners might be affected by stress deafness (Dupoux et al., 1997), making them unable to perceive differences in stress degrees. The feature of stress was chosen to be dealt with because correct stress placement greatly contributes to mutual intelligibility (Jenkins, 2000), as a mixed-up stress pattern distorts the words to such an extent that it might not be recognisable.

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[2] English speech rhythm is stress-timed, which means that stressed syllables (rhythmic beats) occur in speech at approximately regular intervals, irrespective of the number of syllables in between (Balogné Bérces & Szentgyörgyi, 2006, p. 99), resulting in the fact that unstressed syllables are "squeezed" between stressed ones. A speaker of an L1 with syllable-timed rhythm (i.e., one in which syllables are approximately of the same length) will have difficulty with the "squeezed" unstressed syllables in English, both in perception and production.

[3] We would like to thank Shanti Ulfsbjorninn for letting us record his voice for the activity.

The aim of the original activity is to introduce stress-neutral and stress-fixing suffixes with abstract nouns. The exercise consists of two parts ("underline the stressed syllable" by listening to audio input, "listen and check"), of which only the former was kept and tailored to the needs of Hungarians. The latter was switched to a "listen and repeat" exercise, considering that stress perception exercises, in the case of Hungarian learners of English, have been proved to produce poorer results than production exercises (Piukovics, 2021).

The procedure of the modified activity was the following: After teaching the pupils how to read primary stress from IPA transcriptions, the students received an extended list of word pairs, and they had to underline the stressed syllable with the help of the transcriptions in an online dictionary. Next, they had to circle the number of word pairs where the suffix changes the stress pattern of the root. The number of examples was doubled so that the students could confirm that stress-fixing suffixes change the stress pattern. Then, a frontal check and a "listen and repeat" practice took place focusing on the examples where the stress changes. As a follow-up activity, a game called *Happy Families* (Hancock, 1995, pp. 28–31) was included to provide an opportunity to practise without the students losing interest.

4.1.4 The -ed suffix

The *-ed* suffix denotes the regular form of past tense verbs, past participle verbs and participle adjectives. This activity was incorporated into the course from a lower-level volume of the coursebook series (Latham-Koenig et al., 2017, p. 18) as the [t] pronunciation of *-ed* suffix is likely to be mispronounced by Hungarian learners of English even at higher proficiency levels. This stems from the fact that the two languages exhibit a fundamental difference in voice assimilation: in Hungarian, the direction of the assimilation is fixed (it is always regressive), while in English, in the case of the *-ed* suffix, it is the suffix that assimilates to the word-final consonant, making the direction of this assimilation progressive. Hungarian learners of English might be misguided by the principle of morpheme identity, which ensures that the orthography of the suffix remains unchanged regardless of the pronunciation. Therefore, they assume that the pronunciation of the suffix is [d] and resolve voiced-voiceless oppositions by assimilating the preceding voiceless consonant to the suffix, e.g., *pushed* *pu[ʒd], *kissed* *ki[zd], *stopped* *sto[bd], etc. Thus, it is the pronunciation of verbs ending in voiceless consonants that is problematic even for advanced learners. Accordingly, the activity was designed to highlight the difference the two languages display, then provide ample opportunity for the students to practise applying the rule of progressive assimilation.

The procedure was the following: since making a distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants was crucial, a game in which the pupils had to sort obstruents according to voicing was included to refresh their memories. Next,

the difference between the direction of voice assimilation in English and Hungarian was demonstrated with example words ending with the same two consonant letters (see Table 2). The learners filled in a handout summarising the rule after the frontal explanation, then they had to sort different verbs into the appropriate columns. Finally, after the presentation of the rules, the activity ended with a production practice game with peer monitoring, to enable the students to incorporate the newly learnt feature into their pronunciation.

Table 2 The Difference in Voice Assimilation Between Hungarian and English

Hungarian	English
csuk+d → csu[gd] 'close, 2ndSg imperative'	*pick+ed → pi*[kt]
mász+d → má[zd] 'climb, 2ndSg imperative'	*kiss+ed → ki*[st]

4.2 The integration of the activities

This section answers the second research question (RQ2: How can the L1-tailored pronunciation activities be successfully integrated into the EFL classroom in the given case of a group of Hungarian learners of English?) with the data gathered from the feedback forms, the interviews and the teacher-researcher's journal.

The most crucial factor in terms of integration proved to be the relevance of pronunciation learning as perceived by the participants. The learners had not been exposed to pronunciation teaching previously, and many of the participants did not realise the value of pronunciation inclusion. The students voiced their concerns regarding relevance mostly in the feedback forms, in which the relevance of pronunciation integration was questioned 10 times. One participant noted that "sometimes [learning pronunciation] did not seem logical, if I talk to a foreigner, they will understand what I'm saying without all this" (F/21). This comment reveals that even though the features were selected keeping in mind intelligibility and Hungarian-specific issues, the learners still failed to grasp the benefit of pronunciation integration, and thus had varying attitudes towards it. Their assumption could be justified on the grounds that Hungarian-accented English does not exhibit as severe intelligibility issues as some other non-native varieties – as English has roughly similar phonotactic constraints as Hungarian, a typical Hungarian accent will not display features such as heavy vowel epenthesis applied by Japanese speakers of the language (Tajima et al., 2002), which distort words to such an extent that they may become unrecognisable. However, the teacher-researcher's journal revealed that many pronunciation errors that the learners made were of the lexical type, which *can* cause serious intelligibility problems.

On the other hand, the respondents believed their pronunciation was sufficient enough, therefore, another emerging theme related to the success of integration turned out to be the participants' attitudes towards their own pronunciation development. The following comments in the interview revealed that they judged their pronunciation adequate for their purpose: "I think my pronunciation is pretty good, mostly because I've watched a lot of English content" (I/P2), "... if we go abroad, they will understand us with our current the pronunciation, and that's all that matters" (F/67). To understand their attitudes, it is important to highlight that the participants have been learning in an EFL (as opposed to ESL) setting and had few opportunities to use the language outside the classroom, hence, the lack of exposure might have led them to believe that their pronunciation did not need development.

Due to the respondents not perceiving the tasks as relevant for their development, their lack of interest resulted in the activity targeting the schwa and the one focusing on word stress being the least successful in terms of integration. The students were disengaged during the lessons, and the schwa was listed 11 times in the feedback forms as an activity that a respondent did not like. The group provided various reasons for this, all of which pointed to the task being "new and foreign" (F/18). Thus, with a group that has never been exposed to explicit pronunciation integration, a more delicate approach should be adopted to ensure that they fully realise the opportunities pronunciation tasks can offer without being overwhelmed so that their achievement goals can be influenced (Schunk, 2012). To achieve this, asking the students to provide personal experiences when an unintelligible pronunciation was a barrier to understanding could help to showcase the importance of pronunciation inclusion, and it turn, increase the chances of successful integration.

The significance of previous experiences related pronunciation issues in interaction could be seen in the interviews. Participants 1, 2 and 3 highlighted in unison that they had not experienced issues related to intelligibility when interacting in English and therefore, they were not convinced that the pronunciation activities were important. Contrary to their belief that pronunciation development was not useful, participant 4, who had experienced a communication failure with a non-native speaker of Hungarian, firmly believed that pronunciation should not be ignored: "[pronunciation development is necessary] for easier communication as it is certainly more pleasant if I can talk to someone with ease without needing to ask for clarification after every second word" (I/P1). Hence, demonstrating how an unintelligible pronunciation can prevent effective communication with L1 examples might also make the students see the relevance of pronunciation learning.

The last two crucial factors that had an impact on successful integration were related to the components of task motivation: challenge and the role of clearly accentuated goals (Kormos & Wilby, 2019). The teacher-researcher's journal revealed that the students were more motivated to participate actively during the

lesson if the procedure of the activity included a warmer or a part that challenged them in any way. The learners were engaged during the task focusing on words with counterintuitive pronunciation, since the concept of the activity was a novelty to them, which increased their situational interest (Renninger et al. 2015). The competition aspect of the task increased their motivation even further, ensuring a higher level of engagement. Moreover, the inductive nature of the task posed a challenge to students, which guaranteed their involvement (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2002). This aspect was accentuated in the interviews as well; "it was really interactive that we had to look up the rule in the dictionary" (I/P2).

The same pattern emerged in the case of the *-ed* suffix. Initially, the lead-in part did not succeed in establishing task motivation as the learners were markedly hostile towards learning Hungarian grammar due to previous negative experiences, which is indicated in the following response during the interviews: "did not like [the *-ed* suffix activity] because of the grammar part" (I/P4). However, the final part of the activity included a considerable amount of practice that was intertwined with a communicative goal during which the students were mainly engaged. Since telling a story with the given vocabulary items was challenging for them, it distracted them from the fact that they were primarily targeting pronunciation by playing the game. The aspect of challenge and the fact that they also had to use the language to produce meaningful sentences also had an impact on their perceiving the task as relevant and thus, it increased their motivation (Kormos & Wilby, 2019). For this reason, when integrating pronunciation into the Hungarian context, especially in the case of a group with a high language level and no previous encounter with pronunciation instruction, including activities which combine pronunciation with vocabulary, or a communicative exercise could prevent the students from developing a negative mindset.

Finally, the lack of clearly accentuated goals is another aspect that emerged as a factor that impeded integration. In the case of the task dealing with the schwa, the informants interviewed stated in unison that they did not manage to grasp what the schwa was and why we devoted time to learning it. Participant 4 noted that "it was challenging to comprehend what it was because there is no such thing in Hungarian" (I/P4). Participant 2, who was generally pleased with the pronunciation activities, stated that she had felt frustrated because she had failed to understand the concept. In this case, the learners would have needed to see the aims defined more clearly with an ample amount of demonstration on the utility of knowing about the feature to become motivated and possibly reach flow (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2002).

The disinterest could be observed during the word stress activity, and as a result the procedure of the activity had to be rearranged. Instead of reflecting on their previously acquired knowledge about the schwa, firstly, increased emphasis was placed on the prominence of stress placement (Jenkins, 2000). In spite of this, half of the pupils still failed to see the purpose of the activity. This was obvious

during the lesson as well, and the results of the feedback forms confirmed this observation. One student commented that they had been bored during the activity (F/32), while seven informants mentioned in the feedback forms that they had disliked the activity because they considered it superfluous. On the other hand, the students who volunteered for the interview had opposing views. All of them asserted that the activity had been useful, and that the explanation of the stress-fixing suffixes was perfectly understandable. Participant 1 and 2 highlighted that it was the most practical activity. Participant 3, one of the most critical students, was also satisfied with the explanation. She added that "it was great [...] that there was a rule we could memorise" (P/3). Their positive perceptions of the activity can be attributed to their realising the relevance and the ultimate goals of the task.

5. Conclusion

The contrastive phonological analysis showed that the two languages differ in several aspects (cf. Piukovics, 2021), of which the following five were chosen for teaching due to their high learnability and teachability: selected sound contrasts, words with counterintuitive pronunciation, vowel reduction, stress placement and voicing assimilation. Then, international exercises addressing these issues were tailored to be suitable for Hungarian learners specifically. The findings of the modification process revealed that the international pronunciation activities needed substantial revision both in terms of focus and practice methods. All of the alterations included explicit instruction and specific examples to help the students realise how the features of English differed from those of their mother tongue.

After integrating the modified pronunciation tasks, it could be concluded that out of the five criteria proposed to contribute to successful task integration, the most influential was the perceived relevance of the task to the learners. Whenever the participants felt the task in question was not relevant to them, integration could not be considered entirely successful. In turn, when the learners realised how they could benefit from learning the feature in question, they became engaged, which facilitated task integration immensely. In addition, tasks with a potentially challenging aspect guaranteed a higher level of learner motivation and thus, the integration process was more successful. Lastly, the respondents felt that, for example in the case of the schwa activity, the goals of the tasks were not clearly defined, which resulted in their expressing disinterest during the task.

Therefore, it can be concluded that tailoring the activities to the needs of the learners' L1 and making the task inherently context appropriate, did not automatically ensure successful integration. Accordingly, adopting a critical approach when selecting and modifying pronunciation tasks is vital, however, teachers are also advised to devote attention to the different factors that can facilitate task integration in order to increase learner involvement in the lessons.

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