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The Place and Practice of Pronunciation Teaching

in the Context of the EFL Classroom in Thessaloniki, Greece

by

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DECLARATION

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

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Abstract

As part of an extensive survey of the relevant literature on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching, over 50 'ELT' and 'Pronunciation' handbooks were reviewed. The main ideas and arguments of all handbook writers were drawn together in the form of 11 themes which provided the basis for the research questions and the research instrument of the study reported in this thesis.

The study provided a comprehensive overview of current attitudes and practice in terms of pronunciation status and role, pronunciation models and targets and pronunciation teaching techniques in one major European city, Thessaloniki, Greece. Questionnaires were completed by 327 upper intermediate and advanced EFL learners and 47 EFL teachers. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 12 EFL teachers. The study explored the extent to which ELT writers' views agreed with EFL teachers' views. In many cases discrepancies emerged between what the experts advised and the teachers' perceived priorities and reported practises; possible explanations and appropriate recommendations are provided as part of this thesis.

A number of factors are identified as having a different effect on the perceived status of pronunciation; learners' age, level of English, language learning purpose, language context and L1. This thesis is an attempt to seek to establish a rightful place for pronunciation in TEFL.

In terms of pronunciation models, there was an overwhelming preference for RP and GA by the teachers and learners of this study. Nevertheless, the teachers would be largely content with accented international intelligibility whereas many learners would aspire to native-like pronunciation (NLP). It is recommended that teachers should help those learners who wish to achieve NLP to do so and that an updated version of RP or GA is the most appropriate pronunciation model for the teachers to adopt and the learners to follow in the context of TEFL in Greece.

For Manos

and Elena

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Abbreviations

English Language Teaching (ELT)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Applied Linguistics (AL)

Pronunciation (PRON)

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Native Speaker (NS)

Non-native Speaker (NNS)

Native-like Pronunciation (NLP)

First Language (L1)

Received Pronunciation (RP)

General American (GA)

English as an International Language (EIL)

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

Lingua Franca Core (LFC)

Inter-language Talk (ILT)

Accented International Intelligibility (AII)

Native-speaker Competence in Pronunciation (NSCP)

Standard British Variety (SBV)

Standard American Variety (SAV)

Standard Regional Varieties (SRVs)

Non-standard Regional Varieties (NSRVs)

Non-native but Fluent Speakers (NNFSs)

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Introduction

What is the place of pronunciation in English language teaching today? In the last decade of the twentieth century, Judy Gilbert described pronunciation as "something of an orphan in English programs around the world" (1994: 38) and, a decade and a half later, she wrote that "pronunciation continues to be the EFL/ESL orphan" (Gilbert, 2010: 1). The view that pronunciation is a neglected aspect of ELT has been expressed by many scholars and researchers in the field of phonology and/or ELT as well as by many EFL/ESL language educators and materials' writers to such an extent that Barrera Pardo (2004) stated that "for those committed to pronunciation teaching and research, it has become a commonplace topic to acknowledge the underdevelopment of pronunciation within the EFL profession" (: 7).

At best, the place of pronunciation practice in language courses is uncertain; for example, it "may or may not form part of regular classroom activities or student self-study" (MacDonald, 2002: 3) and "training in pronunciation skills (perceptive and productive) does not have a secure place in most language curriculums" (Setter and Jenkins, 2005 cited in Gilner, 2008: 93). At worst, pronunciation is "the aspect upon which least time is spent" (Fraser, 2000: 8), "more a supplementary activity rather than a central part of the syllabus" (Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 4) and "something of a 'poor relation' among course components" (Hughes, 2002: 68). According to Hughes (2006: 22), "there is no doubt that pronunciation plays second best to other aspects of language teaching in the classroom" and, according to Barrera Pardo (2004: 6), "pronunciation teaching has often been relegated to a subsidiary role of broader language performance skills such as speaking and listening".

At this point, it is important to note that pronunciation has not only been neglected in EFL/ESL classroom settings; it has also been neglected in teacher training courses, course books and applied linguistics research. Baker and Murphy (2011: 30) recognise that "an overall neglect of pronunciation teaching has been observed in teacher preparation programs (Breitkreutz, Derwing and Rossiter, 2002; Derwing and Munro, 2005; Gilbert, 2010)" and Gilner (2008) writes that "even when included in course books, pronunciation is marginalized and treated superficially" (: 94). Indeed, as far as EFL/ESL course books are concerned, "all too often, pronunciation appears at the end of a unit, in the bottom right-hand corner of a page, which only serves to reinforce its lowly status as the thing most likely to be omitted if time is short" (Marks, 2006: 35). Furthermore, the study of pronunciation has been marginalised within the field of applied linguistics (for more information, see Kelly, 1969) and remains marginalised; "there is relatively little published research on pronunciation teaching" (Derwing and Munro, 2005: 383). Cook (2001) and Lightbrown and Spada (2006) recognise that research on the acquisition of pronunciation generally lags behind research on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. As Madden and Moore (1997: 5) put it: "research on pronunciation is relatively scarce compared to that on other components of language learning, such as grammar, communicative competence, and sociocultural awareness". Baker and Murphy (2011) are concerned with the limited number of research studies on pronunciation in classroom-oriented research; however, they mainly focus on the lack of studies that address pronunciation teaching in the realm of teacher cognition (e.g., teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and understandings). They make the following declaration and proposal:

> From the literature review, we are convinced of a pressing need for investigations into diverse aspects of pronunciation instruction. We trust that this article will serve to motivate not only ourselves, but others to pursue research agendas designed to expand the knowledge base of

this important, yet underexplored area in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

<div align="right">Baker and Murphy, 2011: 45</div>

It is striking that despite the efforts of those committed to pronunciation either from a theoretical/academic point of view or from a practical point of view, pronunciation continues to be the area of foreign language teaching first described by Kelly (1969) as "Cinderella" (cited in Yeou, 2006: 2). Nearly two decades ago, Samuda (1993) wrote that "despite the best efforts of well-known pronunciation specialists such as Joan Morley, Judy Gilbert, and Rita Wong, the teaching of pronunciation can probably claim the dubious title of 'most likely to fall between the cracks'" (: 757 cited in Barrera Pardo, 2004: 7). Unfortunately, it seems that this continues to be the case even nowadays that we have entered the new millennium. The following quotes will serve to illustrate this point:

> Pronunciation teaching has often been relegated to a subsidiary role of broader language performance skills such as speaking and listening, but in the past few years instruction on specific features of the spoken language have been reassessed and consequently fostered in many programs. Many teachers, nonetheless, remain sceptical about the teachability of pronunciation, and in consequence continue to consider explicit pronunciation instruction of relatively little importance in their practice.
>
> <div align="right">Barrera Pardo, 2004: 6</div>

> Despite teachers' increased interest in pronunciation in recent years, as evidenced by the establishment of a TESOL interest section and a proliferation of pronunciation materials for learners, it remains a very marginalized topic in applied linguistics.
>
> <div align="right">Derwing and Munro, 2005: 382</div>

> Pronunciation has been enjoying something of a renaissance in the publishers' catalogues in recent years, which hopefully indicates that this aspect of English is being taught and learned more thoroughly and enthusiastically than previously. But ready-mate material specifically for *testing* pronunciation is relatively thin on the ground.
>
> <div align="right">Marks, 2005: 54</div>

> Recent years have seen an upsurge in the publishing of supplementary materials for pronunciation work. Where course books are concerned, though, it seems there is still a long way to go.
>
> <div align="right">Marks, 2006: 35</div>

> Despite decades of advocacy for greater investigative attention, research into pronunciation instruction in the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) continues to be limited.
>
> <div align="right">Baker and Murphy, 2011: 29</div>

What makes the situation regarding the place of pronunciation in the English language curriculum particularly problematic is not only that the low status of pronunciation has persisted over the years but, also, that this seems to be the case worldwide (see Gilbert, 2010).

Pronunciation is important for EFL/ESL learners' perception and production of oral discourse and, thus, it is disappointing that pronunciation is neglected in all areas of EFL/ESL; from research and teacher training courses to teachers' practices and course books used in class. Brown (1991) maintains that "no one would deny the importance of pronunciation as a contributor towards learners' proficiency in English" (: 1), and goes on to write that "learners are clearly aware that poor pronunciation represents a considerable barrier to their success in English" (Brown, 1991: 1). For Madden and Moore (1997: 3), "pronunciation is the most obvious and unavoidable marker of a language learner's proficiency", and for MacDonald (2002: 3), "pronunciation is a key element of the learning of oral skills in a second language". Gilner (2008: 93) describes the place and role of pronunciation in the context of ELT very succinctly: "pronunciation is an integral aspect of communicative competence (Morley, 1991) that can influence the desire to use the language (Guiora, 1972) as well as the quantity and quality of input received and output produced (Fraser, 2002)". Furthermore, Pennington (1996) argues that "whether or not they choose to teach phonology explicitly, second language teachers are in a sense always teaching phonology whenever they teach anything at all" (: 6). Indeed, the very same argument has been delineated in Brown's (1991) anthology entitled 'Teaching English Pronunciation: A Book of Readings', as follows:

> One can claim, as do Abercrombie and Stevens (in this volume) among many others that all language teaching involves pronunciation teaching. As soon as the English language teacher begins to teach English, the learners are 'thrown in at the deep end' as far as pronunciation is concerned, whereas in terms of grammar and vocabulary, they can be gradually immersed.
> Brown, 1991: 3

Let us consider the reasons why pronunciation is either completely ignored or treated contingently in many language programs. Brown (1991) recognises that pronunciation "has sometimes been referred to as the 'poor relation' of the English language teaching (ELT) world" (: 1) and states that "it is an aspect of language which is often given little attention, if not completely ignored, by the teacher in the classroom" (: 1). In order to account for the fact that pronunciation "often ends up begin 'swept under the carpet'" (Brown, 1991: 1), Brown (1991) identifies the following reasons:

> This may be due to the teachers' lack of proper training in phonetics or, if the teacher is not a native speaker, to uncertainty over the acceptability of his own pronunciation as a model for imitation. Often the teacher is unsure of what is important and needs to be taught or corrected and is not confident of how to go about this.
>
> Brown, 1991: 1

In a parallel view, MacDonald (2002) refers to the studies by Brown (1992), Claire (1993), Fraser (2000) and Yates (2001) that have indicated that many ESL teachers in Australia tend to avoid dealing with pronunciation because they lack the confidence, skills and knowledge. Hughes (2006) points out that the teachers' reluctance in teaching pronunciation "is not so much because teachers do not think it is useful but more because they are unsure of how to integrate pronunciation into their lessons" (: 22). Similarly, Yeou (2006) writes that "many teachers admit that their neglect of pronunciation is not due to their lack of interest in this subject but rather to lack of confidence in teaching it" (: 2). He goes on to write that these teachers "feel they need more knowledge about and skills relating to the teaching of pronunciation" (Brown, 1992; Murphy, 1997; Roads, 1999; Yates, 2001; MacDonald, 2002 all cited in Yeou, 2006: 2). In addition to teachers' lack of knowledge, skills, training and confidence as far as pronunciation is concerned, the absence of program directives which means that it is up to teachers to inform and prepare themselves on how to best meet their students' needs in the area of pronunciation instruction has been identified as a further reason by some researchers (for more information, see Gilner, 2008: 93). Gilbert

(1994) provides a different reason to the aforementioned ones by writing: "Why has pronunciation been a poor relation? I think it is because the subject has been drilled to death, with too few results from too much effort" (: 38). Vassilakis (2004) agrees with Gilbert (1994) and writes that "most pronunciation activities found in course books are based on a behaviourist drill-and-kill paradigm, which inevitably leads to boredom among students and teachers alike" (Vassilakis, 2004: 30).

Unfortunately, the current problematic situation regarding the status and role of pronunciation in ELT also pertains to other matters related to the instruction of pronunciation. For example, the use of effective pronunciation techniques as well as the choice of appropriate pronunciation models and performance targets are not only complex issues but also controversial ones; they have engendered heated discussions among researchers and teachers in various ELT settings and despite the considerable body of published literature that exists on those issues, they have not been resolved yet. Thus, questions such as the following (see below) may plague English language teachers in different teaching situations and even if they do not plague them, they still need to be addressed: Which pronunciation model(s) shall I adopt and which performance target(s) shall I set for my learners? Shall I teach pronunciation systematically or treat it incidentally? Shall I teach pronunciation explicitly or implicitly? How much time (if any) do I need to/ shall I allocate for the practice of pronunciation? Which pronunciation teaching techniques shall I use?

So what is an English language teacher to do? An appropriate starting point for both novice and experienced teachers who wish to acquire information or extend their knowledge on such topics would be to consult manuals and handbooks on English language teaching, applied linguistics and pronunciation. It makes sense to do so since such manuals and handbooks represent established bodies of knowledge;

also, the priorities that teaching profession specialists accord to specific issues and practices at any given time are manifested in contemporary manuals and handbooks. As part of this thesis, I will examine how pronunciation is dealt with in currently used and recently published 'English Language Teaching' (ELT), 'Applied Linguistics' (AL) as well as 'English Language Teaching Pronunciation' (ELT PRON) manuals and handbooks. The main ideas and arguments of ELT, AL and ELT PRON handbook writers in relation to the place and role of pronunciation in the development of learners' speaking and listening skills, pronunciation models and targets and pronunciation teaching techniques will form the basis for the research questions and the research instrument of the study that will be reported in this thesis.

Thesis overview

The reader of this thesis may wonder whether or not the situation regarding the place of pronunciation within the language curriculum was different in the past and whether or not there are signs that it may change in the future. In this thesis, I will consider the past, the present and, also, the future of pronunciation in ELT. **This chapter** gives the background to and context for the place and practice of pronunciation in the teaching of EFL/ESL. By exploring how attitudes to the teaching of pronunciation and its position in the language curriculum have varied through time, a clearer perspective can be gained in terms of how current attitudes fit into a bigger picture and may even point to the way in which these may change in the future. This chapter also examines the treatment of pronunciation in ELT, AL and ELT PRON handbooks and manuals as such resources may serve as a reference point for prospective and/or practising EFL/ESL teachers and may even have a considerable influence on teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices in the area of pronunciation pedagogy. **The next chapter,**

'Review of the Literature' presents a critical summary of the most relevant background literature concerning the status and role of pronunciation, pronunciation models and targets as well as techniques for the practice of pronunciation in the teaching of EFL/ESL in a variety of contexts worldwide. Throughout this chapter, the reader will be informed as to what to expect from the research reported in this thesis and the aim is to convince him/her of the originality, theoretical importance and practical value of this research. Following the 'Literature Review' chapter, the thesis proceeds with **the 'Research Methodology' chapter** which describes, justifies and explains the methodological design of the study reported in this thesis. This chapter also includes information on the research participants as well as the development of the questionnaire and interview guide employed in the study. **The 'Results' chapter** presents the questionnaire results of the study into teachers' and learners' views and attitudes in relation to pronunciation status, role, models, targets and teaching techniques in the context of TEFL in Thessaloniki, Greece. Even though the research reported in this thesis has taken place in the city of one country, this thesis will address pronunciation issues that transcend local contexts and can apply to global contexts. Speculations and proposals will be made as to a rightful place for pronunciation in the mastery of learners' speaking and listening skills as well as in terms of appropriate pronunciation models and targets to be adopted and aimed at in different EFL contexts and teaching situations. This will become clear in **the 'Discussion and Conclusions' chapter**, which interprets the questionnaire results in the light of the interview data gathered as part of the study and against the backdrop of findings of relevant research studies. This chapter will also consider the extent to which EFL teachers' views agree with ELT writers' views and, in the case of any

discrepancies, possible explanations will be given and, where appropriate, recommendations for future action will be made.

Chapter overview

The present chapter is divided into three parts. The **first part** (**1.1 'The Place & Role of Pronunciation in Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Research')** aims to provide the reader with the background information necessary to be in the position to apprehend the current status of pronunciation in EFL/ESL teaching as well as to become familiar with key concepts, ideas, theories and practices in the area of pronunciation pedagogy which will be revisited throughout this thesis. **Section 1.1.1 'The Rise & Fall of Pronunciation: a Historical Review'** considers the place and role of pronunciation in the methodologies that have had the greatest impact on second and foreign language teaching; Grammar-Translation, the Direct Method, the Oral Approach, Situational Language Teaching, the Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching. Within each of those approaches and methods, the main learning goal with respect to pronunciation is identified and the pronunciation teaching techniques employed are described. **Section 1.1.2 'The Changing Status of Pronunciation: Focus on the Learner'** examines recent developments in the field of ELT and these will form the foundation upon which to base a discussion on how they may affect the current status of pronunciation. The particular section includes a discussion of the 'pro-method' versus 'post-method'/'anti-method' debate and what this may entail in terms of the status of pronunciation in TEFL. Moreover, it focuses on the current, renewed interest in EFL/ESL learners' needs (and desires) and the implications of the 'teacher-learner'

gap (that often emerges when teachers' and learners' views are compared) with respect to the interests of this thesis.

The second part (1.2 'The Place & Practice of Pronunciation Teaching in Manuals and Handbooks) provides a comprehensive summary of current thought on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching by drawing together in the form of themes the main ideas and arguments presented in currently used and recently published ELT, AL and ELT PRON manuals and handbooks. These themes formed the basis for the research questions and the research instrument of the research reported in this thesis. **Section 1.2.1 'A Review of 'English Language Teaching' & 'Applied Linguistics' Manuals & Handbooks'** considers the amount of attention that pronunciation receives in comparison to other areas of language knowledge in ELT and AL handbooks and manuals. Furthermore, it explores the ways in which pronunciation is addressed in the development of 'speaking' and 'listening' skills and, also, focuses on pronunciation models and targets and pronunciation teaching techniques. **Section 1.2.2 'A Review of 'English Language Teaching Pronunciation' Manuals & Handbooks'** mainly focuses on pronunciation teaching techniques as described in ELT PRON manuals and handbooks.

The third part (1.3 'Research Aim & Research Questions') describes the aim of the research reported in this thesis as well as the research questions that the particular research addressed; **Section 1.3.1'The Research Aim'** presents the principal research aim and **Section 1.3.2 'The Research Questions'** presents the three main research questions.

1.1 The Place & Role of Pronunciation in Second & Foreign Language Teaching and Research

1.1.1 The Rise & Fall of Pronunciation: a Historical Review

Pronunciation has occupied a peculiar position throughout the history of foreign and second language teaching as its status has varied considerably over the years. The twentieth century witnessed the rise and the fall of pronunciation as manifested by different language teaching methods and approaches; initially, language teaching methods did not recognise the need to teach pronunciation but subsequent methods (and approaches) employed a variety of techniques to develop pronunciation skills only to be replaced by more recent ones that neglected pronunciation once again. In this section, I will briefly consider the place and role of pronunciation in the methodologies that have had the greatest impact on second and foreign language teaching from the middle of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. For a more detailed account on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching according to different teaching approaches/methods, interested readers can turn to Appendix 1.1. This appendix also includes more detailed information on the momentous revolution, namely the Reform Movement, which the language teaching profession underwent in the final quarter of the nineteenth century and on the role of Henry Sweet, "who was in the vanguard of this new movement and, as the leading linguist and phonetician of his time, his influence was felt throughout the language teaching profession, not only in Britain, but in Europe too" (Tench, 1992: 90).

Towards the rise of pronunciation

The *Grammar-Translation* method dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 6). The

fundamental purpose of teaching and learning was to acquire a reading knowledge of the target language because literary language was considered superior to spoken language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 18). Thus, in the context of the Grammar-Translation method, the primary skills to be developed were reading and writing and, consequently, grammar and vocabulary were emphasised[1]. Speaking and listening were neglected and pronunciation received virtually no attention (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 16, 18). Grammar-Translation was severely challenged and, ultimately, rejected due to factors such as an increasing demand for practical competence in foreign languages; the need for oral proficiency in the target language could not be met through the use of that method (see Howatt, 1984: 129, 139).

The late nineteenth century Reform Movement, defined by Thornbury (2006: 95) as "a pan-European initiative aimed at a radical reform of existing language teaching practices in schools", spanned two decades; Howatt (1984) illustrates the scope of the Reform Movement by outlining a 'bird's-eye-view' of its achievements "between 1882 when it first attracted attention, and 1904 when Jespersen summarised its practical implications for the classroom teacher in *How to Teach a Foreign Language*" (: 170). During that time linguists and teachers worked together to question and reject well established procedures of teaching foreign languages. The exponents of the Reform Movement reacted to historical linguistics, the analysis of classical texts and the emphasis on the written text. They argued for the primacy of the spoken language over the written language and believed that its primacy should be reflected in an oral-based language teaching methodology.

Phonetics, "the science of speech-sounds" (Sweet, 1890 cited in Henderson, 1971: 28) and "the art of pronunciation" (Sweet, 1899 cited in Henderson, 1971: 28),

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[1] For more information, please turn to Appendix 1.1. Alternatively, you may wish to consult Howatt (1984), Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Larsen-Freeman (2000).

offered both a scientific foundation for the reformers' zeal in rejecting the teaching methods of the time and a practical technique for bringing about the improvements in the classroom they were looking for (Howatt, 1984: 177). The reformers, Viëtor, Sweet, Jespersen and Passy, regarded phonetics as the foundation of all study of language and accurate pronunciation as the foundation of successful language learning; Henry Sweet (1877) went as far as to declare that phonetics and phonology are "the indispensable foundation of all study of language" (see Henderson, 1971 for Sweet's writings). The importance attached to the mastery of accurate pronunciation made it imperative for teachers and learners to acquire knowledge of phonetics. Thus, the phoneticians and spoken language enthusiasts of the Reform Movement all shared the belief that training teachers and learners in phonetics would lead to the establishment of good pronunciation habits. Sweet demanded that teachers understand how sounds are produced physiologically and that they should be proficient performers themselves (see Howatt, 1984: 179). Viëtor insisted that reform must begin with the provision of accurate descriptions of speech based on the science of phonetics and that there must be a properly trained language teaching profession (see Viëtor's (1882) pamphlet 'Language Teaching Must Start Afresh' or Howatt, 1984: 172). Sweet's 'phonetic spelling system' influenced the final shape of the International Phonetic Alphabet (Howatt, 1984: 177). The International Phonetic Alphabet was designed by the International Phonetic Association (see Howatt, 1984: 178) as a means of symbolising the distinctive sound segments of any language or accent. The aim of the notation was that "there should be a separate letter for each distinctive sound: that is for each sound which being used instead of another, in the same language, can change the meaning of a word" (Phonetic Teachers' Association, 1888 cited in Finch, 2000: 47).

It must be noted that it was towards the end of the nineteenth century that linguists directed their attention to phonetics and phonology and that there was a great deal of attention to and research in phonemes and other phonological units by the middle of the twentieth century; phonology had become the 'big issue' of the 1950s and all language teaching methods focused on the spoken element and the mastery of accurate pronunciation. The reformers argued that any teaching methods that did not employ phonetics should be rejected and replaced by ones that did; they fought battles to establish a place for pronunciation in the teaching and learning of languages and won the argument in the middle of the twentieth century; the application of the principles advocated by the proponents of the Reform Movement led to the development of oral-based language teaching methods that elevated pronunciation to the most important area in the language curriculum and employed a variety of techniques to develop students' pronunciation skills. Overall, it can be said that the 1940s and 1950s saw the fruition of work that had begun in the 1880s.

The reformers provided suggestions on how the principles they advocated could be best applied to foreign language teaching and learning. However, none of their proposals assumed the status of a method in the sense of a widely recognised and uniformly implemented design for teaching a language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 10). However, it must be stressed that it was the Reform Movement that laid the foundations for and served to underpin the new language teaching methods that emerged as a reaction to Grammar-Translation; "it is quite possible that without [it] all 'modern methods' would have been dismissed as 'just another fad'" (Howatt, 1984: 202).

Parallel to the ideas put forward by the reformers, there was an interest in developing principles for language teaching out of naturalistic language learning; such

as are seen in first language acquisition. The attempt to duplicate how children learnt their first language led to what have been termed 'natural methods'. These ultimately led to the development of what came to be known as the *Direct Method* (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 12). The Direct Method was the first oral-based teaching method that was widely adopted as a reaction against and a refreshing alternative to Grammar-Translation. One cannot fail to acknowledge the debt owed to Maximilian D. Berlitz for making the Direct Method available to large numbers of learners through his network of language schools; according to Howatt (1984: 204), "without Berlitz, very few people would have benefited from it". Berlitz opened his first language school in Providence, Rhode Island in 1878 and by 1914 he had nearly 200 schools in both America and Europe (Howatt, 1984: 203). The tenets of the Direct Method held that oral work should be strongly emphasised and pronunciation should receive great attention from the beginning and throughout the course.

The popularity of the Direct Method began to wane in the 1920s as light was shed on its drawbacks. The strict adherence to Direct Method principles was perceived to be counterproductive by the critics of the method. Moreover, the more academically oriented proponents of the Reform Movement, for example the prolific writer Henry Sweet, pointed to the fact that the Direct Method lacked a systematic basis in applied linguistic theory. Sweet and other applied linguists argued for the development of sound methodological principles that would serve as the basis for teaching techniques (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 14). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, British applied linguists engaged in the systematisation of the principles that had been proposed earlier by the Reform Movement. Their work laid the foundation for an oral-based approach to the teaching of English which, unlike the Direct Method, was thoroughly grounded in applied linguistic theory. The final outcomes of

this movement are known as the *Oral Approach* and, later on, *Situational Language Teaching*, which became the accepted British approach to English Language Teaching by the 1950s (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 38).

This thesis is mainly concerned with the place of pronunciation in *English Language Teaching*, and, thus, at this point, the reader's attention needs to be drawn to the specific reference to 'English language teaching' (at the end of the previous paragraph) instead of the more general reference to 'the teaching of modern or foreign languages' that has been employed so far. Howatt (1984) accounts for and describes the emergence of the teaching of English as an autonomous profession in the first half of the twentieth century as follows:

> The intellectual foundations for this autonomy rested on the fusion of the two reforming traditions inherited from the previous century: the applied linguistic approach of the Reform Movement and the monolingual methodology of the Direct Method. The catalyst was the work of Harold Palmer in the Department of Phonetics at University College, London, between 1915 and 1922, underpinned by the research in theoretical and applied English phonetics of his Head of Department, Daniel Jones.
>
> Howatt, 1984: 212

For more information on the instrumental role that Daniel Jones and Harold Palmer played in the field of ELT, the interested reader can turn to Appendix 1.1. Howatt (1984) sums up their contribution very effectively:

> The Jones-Palmer association effectively ensured that one of the 'ground rules' of English as a foreign language was an applied linguistic philosophy, the amalgamation of Jones's extension of the Sweet-Viëtor tradition in phonetics and Palmer's experience as a Direct Method teacher and materials writer.
>
> Howatt, 1984: 214

Returning to our review of language teaching methods, Palmer should also be credited for his contribution in terms of the development and establishment of the Oral Approach to language teaching; a theoretically well-grounded and systematically ordered language teaching methodology that was practically applicable to any modern language teaching course. All of Palmer's methodological handbooks, for example,

'The Oral Method of Teaching Languages' (1921) and 'This Language-Learning Business' with Redman (1922), displayed a preoccupation with the teaching of the spoken language based on the science of phonetics. Teachers and students should be phonetically trained and the use of phonetic transcription should be extensive, especially in the early stages of language learning. Throughout his works, he maintained, that teachers and students should be seriously concerned with the mastery of accurate pronunciation. Palmer went as far as to describe students' "bad (or relatively bad) pronunciation" in terms of having a "linguistic disease" (Palmer and Redman, 2nd edition, 1969: 106). This 'disease' can be prevented by employing procedures that will "cause our pupils to listen to the foreign language and to enunciate it in the manner of the native listener and speaker" (ibid: 107). Thus, intensive and systematic exercises in pronunciation, including ear-training exercises and exercises in articulation" (ibid: 107) form an integral part of Palmer's 'prevention' plan. Habit-formation was Palmer's core methodological principle.

Owing to the work of A. S. Hornby among other applied linguists, further development of Oral Approach teaching techniques led to the emergence of *Situational Language Teaching* (SLT) and its dominance in Britain and other European countries in the 1950s and 1960s. SLT adhered to the same principles as the Oral Approach; nevertheless, it placed greater emphasis on the principle that new language points should be presented and practised through situations (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 39). The language lesson began with the focus on pronunciation; drilling formed part of classroom tasks. Accuracy in pronunciation was regarded as crucial and practice techniques consisted of "guided repetition and substitution activities, including chorus repetition, dictation, drills and controlled oral-based reading and writing tasks" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 43).

Turning our attention to the United States of America, the Direct Method began to fall from favour following the publication of the Coleman Report in 1929, which identified the acquisition of reading knowledge of a foreign language as a more appropriate and feasible goal (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 13). Most foreign language courses concentrated on reading until the Second World War (ibid: 13) but subsequent developments ultimately led to the decline of such 'reading courses' and the advent of the *Audio-lingual Method* to the teaching of English and other languages in the 1950s.

The first American *English Language Institute* was developed by the University of Michigan in 1939 and specialised in the training of teachers of English as a foreign language and the teaching of English as a foreign language. The director of the institute, Charles Fries, and his colleagues rejected approaches such as those of the Direct Method (see Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 51-52) because they were structural linguists and as such saw grammar, or 'structure', as the starting point rather than the end-point of language learning. Structuralism views "language as a system and… investigates the place that linguistic units such as sounds, words, sentences have within this system" (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 519). As the dominant linguistic model of the 1940s and 1950s, it placed great emphasis on the description of different levels of production in speech (Saville-Troike, 2006). In the application of structuralism to second language acquisition (SLA), as pioneered by Fries (1945), pronunciation was placed at the forefront of L2 pedagogy. In his seminal volume entitled 'Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language' (1945), Fries proposed that in learning a new language the primary concern should be "first, the mastery of the sound system" (: 3) and then the mastery of morphology, syntax and lexis. Overall, the syllabus should be characterised by systematic attention to

pronunciation right from the beginning as well as intensive oral drilling of the basic sentence patterns of the target language.

The combination of structuralism with the then dominant theory of psychology known as *behaviourism*, which views learning as the result of habit formation (Osgood, 1953; Skinner, 1957), led to the development of the Audio-lingual method in language teaching. As deBot et al (2005) puts it: "structuralist linguistics provided tools for analysing language into chunks and behavioural theory provided a model for teaching any behaviour by conditioning" (: 77). In audiolingualism, language was primarily identified with speech and, thus, the oral/aural skills received most of the attention (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 46). The focus was on the mastery of accurate pronunciation and grammar of the target language through drills and practice (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 67). Listening and speaking exercises were designed to concentrate on the area of pronunciation, for example, the discrimination between members of minimal pairs, and "oral proficiency is equated with accurate pronunciation and grammar" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 58). Thus, pronunciation and grammar were accorded a far more important role compared to vocabulary. The Audio-lingual method dominated the teaching of English and other foreign languages in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States.

Towards the fall of pronunciation

All the language teaching methods and approaches mentioned so far, with the exception of Grammar-Translation, viewed spoken language as primary and treated pronunciation as central to second language proficiency. This 'golden era' for pronunciation came to an end in the second half of the twentieth century. In the 1960s, developments in linguistics and SLA research discredited structuralism and

behaviourism and any approaches to language teaching that focused on accuracy through drill and practice in the basic structures and patterns of the target language were called into question and ultimately rejected. There was a shift in attention from phonology to grammar and syntax and this was largely attributed to Chomsky's works, for example, his introduction of *transformational-generative grammar* (1965). The other linguistic frameworks he formulated later on referred to as the *government and binding* (1981) and the *minimalist program* (1995) models further shifted the attention to lexis. Chomsky's influential work in the field of linguistics from the 1960s onwards was also instrumental in challenging the view of language learning as the result of pure habit formation; "he argued convincingly that the behaviourist theory of language acquisition is wrong because it cannot explain the creative aspects of our linguistic ability" (Saville-Troike, 2006: 25). As the decades progressed, attention was directed towards other areas of language, mainly discourse and pragmatics, owing to a growing interest in the functional and sociolinguistic aspects of language. Dell Hymes (1972) coined the term *communicative competence*, which denotes knowing when and how to say what to whom, and M.A.K Halliday (1970; 1975) delineated the functions of language through the study of language in use. The corollary of such work has been to shift the emphasis away from a preoccupation with the form of language towards the study of the meaning of language. The rejection of the principles upon which SLT and the Audio-lingual method were based, as well as the replacement of the view of language as a system by one that sees it at as a means of communication, gave impetus to the emergence of new approaches in the teaching of foreign languages. These culminated in the development of *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) in the 1970s. The tenets of the communicative approach held that "the target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the

object of study" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 125) and, thus, the emphasis was on the process of communication rather than just the mastery of language forms (ibid: 126). Students concentrated on all four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, from the beginning and worked with language at the discourse level (ibid: 131).

The ascendancy of CLT pushed pronunciation to the sidelines (Jones, 2002: 178). Jones (2002) attributes the virtual disappearance of pronunciation work in the 'communicative' course books of the 1970s to the endorsement of Stephen Krashen's position regarding the teaching of pronunciation. Krashen, whose work is considered to be "one of the main driving forces of a CLT" (deBot et al, 2005: 79), insisted that focused instruction on pronunciation is at best useless and at worst detrimental (Jones, 2002: 179). He believed that "the factors affecting second language pronunciation are chiefly acquisition variables, which cannot be affected by focused practice and the teaching of formal rules" (Krashen, 1982 cited in Jones, 2002: 179).

Saville-Troike (2006) cites the general acceptance of the *critical period hypothesis* (Lenneberg, 1967) as another reason that contributed to the marginalisation of the teaching of pronunciation during the second half of the twentieth century (: 142). Lenneberg's (1967) hypothesis is based on first language acquisition and refers to a critical period for language acquisition that extends from infancy until puberty. The particular hypothesis has been extended to second language acquisition; it has been claimed that it is not possible to achieve native-like proficiency when the learning of a second language starts after puberty and this is most strongly associated with the acquisition of the phonological system of the target language (deBot et al, 2005: 65). Scovel (1988) argues that "late starters may be able to learn the syntax and the vocabulary of a second language, but… attaining a native-like pronunciation is impossible for them" (cited in deBot et al, 2005: 65). Indeed,

there are studies that support the hypothesis that children have an advantage over adults in pronunciation learning (for example, see Fathman, 1975 or Oyama, 1976 cited in Leather, 1983: 205). However, there are studies that have put forward counter-evidence (for example, see Hill, 1970 or Neufeld, 1980 cited in Leather, 1983: 205). Overall, the existence of a critical period for SLA has been strongly challenged nowadays; for example, Birdsong and Molis (2001) have even found that there are adults who can achieve native-like performance in second language learning.

Returning to the points made earlier regarding the status of pronunciation in the second half of the twentieth century it is worth noting that even if Krashen's theory and/or the critical period hypothesis had been refuted or had not been taken into account at the time, the incorporation of pronunciation within CLT would have still been problematic. A brief, comparative analysis of some of the main features of the Audio-lingual method and CLT will serve to illuminate this matter.

Audiolingualism	*Communicative Language Teaching*
Linguistic competence is the desired goal.	Communicative competence is the desired goal.
Attends to structure & form more than meaning.	Meaning is paramount.
Language learning is learning structures, sounds, or words.	Language learning is learning to communicate.
The target linguistic system will be learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system.	The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate.
Drilling is a central technique.	Drilling may occur, but peripherally.
Oral/aural drills and pattern practice	Information gap activities, role plays games.
Native-speaker-like pronunciation is sought.	Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal.	Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal.

Adapted from Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983   cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 156-157

These two approaches are diametrically different as to the philosophy and principles that underlie each of them. According to the proponents of audiolingualism, the creation and subsequent establishment of the students' linguistic competence should be sought by teaching the formal system of the language systematically through rule-learning and habit-formation (drilling) procedures (Efstathiadis, 1993: 74). Language is regarded as an end in its own right and it is the performance of drills, aimed at habit-formation, that lead to the mastery of the sound system, grammar and lexis. On the other hand, CLT is based on a theory of language as a tool to negotiate meanings: "if language is naturally used as an instrument for communication, then it is best learned through tasks in which language is meaningfully used" (Efstathiadis, 1993: 70). Language is viewed as a means to an end and activities based on meaningful interaction are expected to promote learning.

As has been already demonstrated, pronunciation was considered to be of utmost importance in the SLT and audiolingual curriculum and a great deal of time and effort was spent on the formation of good pronunciation 'habits'. However, when structuralism and behaviourism become outmoded and discredited in mainstream language teaching in the 1960s, pronunciation lost its unquestioned role as a pivotal component in the curriculum, and class time spent on pronunciation was greatly reduced or even dispensed with altogether (Seidlhofer, 2001: 57). It was CLT, which was seen as "a reaction away from… the audiolingual method" (Richards and Schimdt, 2002: 90), that played an instrumental role in the considerable reduction of the status of pronunciation in language teaching. "Pronunciation, traditionally viewed as a component of linguistic rather than communicative competence or as an aspect of accuracy rather than conversational fluency, has come to be regarded as of limited importance in a communicatively orientated classroom" (Pennington and Richards,

1986: 207). It seems that researchers and practitioners failed to deal with the role of pronunciation in a model of language teaching predicated upon the attainment of communicative rather than linguistic competence. As Terrel (1989: 197) puts it: "communicative approaches… have not known what to do with pronunciation".

Fraser (2000) considers the effect that the advent of CLT has had on the teaching of pronunciation and describes the issues that have arisen very eloquently:

> In the 1960s, there was a huge focus on pronunciation – in the form of behaviourist drilling of sound contrasts and word pairs, with a strong emphasis on the articulation of individual sounds, and little attention to rhythm and intonation, the construction of useful sentences, or the practice of realistic conversations… in the 1970s with the development of communicative methods… the focus was on communication and the use of language in real situations. This was in general a good thing, but it had one unfortunate side-effect – the almost complete ignoring of pronunciation. Pronunciation was so strongly associated with the 'drill and kill' methods that it was deliberately downplayed, rather than being incorporated in the communicative method. The result was that few if any 'communicative pronunciation' methods were developed.
>
> Fraser, 2000: 33

Indeed, traditional pronunciation teaching methods, as utilised in audiolingualism, were heavily criticised by adherents of CLT: "a mere parroting of the forms of language, as in an audio-lingual drill, will get the student nowhere" (Prodromou, 1995: 100). Pronunciation drills were considered to be purposeful only in a purely linguistic sense; there was no purpose beyond practising pronunciation forms for their own sake. Instead, it is through the performance of meaningful tasks, activities that involve real communication, that learners could 'pick up' pronunciation effectively. In addition to the rejection of audiolingual pronunciation teaching methods, an important idea that can be extracted from Fraser (2000), as quoted above, concerns the virtual non-existence of 'communicative pronunciation teaching methods'. In a parallel view, Celce-Muria et al (1996) highlight the failure on the part of proponents of CLT to develop "an agreed-upon set of strategies for teaching pronunciation communicatively" (: 8). Indeed, even though "researchers have examined almost every facet of language acquisition in relation to the Communicative Approach, the

acquisition of pronunciation has fallen to the wayside and has suffered from serious neglect in the communicative classroom" (Eliott, 1997: 95).

The close link between CLT and the reduction in the status of pronunciation has been established with what has been stated so far. Now it is important to consider the extent to which CLT has been the dominant methodological approach in language classrooms. The communicative approach was mostly developed by British applied linguists in the 1980s (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 90). It was adopted rapidly and disseminated worldwide owing to the fact that it "quickly assumed the status of orthodoxy in British language teaching circles [by] receiving the sanction and support of leading applied linguists, language specialists, and publishers, as well as institutions such as the British Council" (Richards, 1985 cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 172). To this day, a huge range of course books and other teaching resources are based on the principles of CLT (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 174). Indeed, it seems that CLT persists to this day in different parts of the world (Hismanoglou, 2006; Hajati, 2006) and most teachers claim to practise it in their classrooms (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005; Kanellou, 2001). Whether or not the teachers do so genuinely, in other words, whether or not they are consistent in their application of CLT throughout the syllabus, is a matter that is open to debate.

In his consideration of the overall impact of the communicative approach on language teaching, Howatt (1984) asserts that CLT enriched and extended the traditions initiated by the reformers at the end of the nineteenth century. "The spoken language, for example, is promoted with more determination now than at any time since the Reform Movement", he wrote (ibid: 289). Nevertheless, such a statement needs to be approached with caution. Of course, one cannot deny that the primary importance of learning to speak a language and communicate successfully was

recognised in the 1970s and 1980s, perhaps, to a greater extent than ever before. However, and as we have just seen, speaking was divorced from pronunciation in the CLT curriculum in the 1970s; such a 'divorce' would have been very difficult for the reformers of the nineteenth century to apprehend, let alone to accept.

Overall, this section has demonstrated that the place and role of pronunciation in the language curriculum throughout the years has greatly depended on the type of methodology used. For example, pronunciation was considered to be of utmost importance in the Audiolingual curriculum but its status was considerably reduced in the CLT curriculum. Furthermore, it seems that it is quite possible to make an accurate guess as to the status of pronunciation in a language classroom if we are informed about the language teaching method/approach employed. For example, if a lesson adheres to the principles of SLT, we can anticipate that the spoken language is viewed as primary and pronunciation is treated as central to second language proficiency. Indeed, Kanellou's (2001) study demonstrated a highly significant association between teaching method employed and teachers' perceptions of the status of pronunciation; those who indicated that they mostly employed a CLT approach to ELT viewed vocabulary as more important than pronunciation. Thus, the endorsement or rejection of a particular teaching method/ approach by a language school or teacher can serve as a useful indicator as to the school's or teacher's stance and attitudes towards pronunciation. Interestingly, if we accept that the teachers' choice of certain teaching methods over others has an effect on the perceived status of pronunciation (and the pronunciation teaching techniques employed), then part of the study reported in this thesis seems superfluous; for example, why do we need to ask EFL teachers in Greece several questions through questionnaires and interviews in order to discover the perceived status of pronunciation when we can simply ask them to indicate the

teaching approach/method used in class? The next section of this chapter will consider why we cannot rely on the teaching method/approach employed in order to make an accurate guess as to the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in a language course or class.

1.1.2 The Changing Status of Pronunciation: Focus on the Learner

The 'post-method'/ 'anti-method' position

Having entered the new century and millennium we have also entered what has been termed by many scholars (e.g. Richards and Rodgers, 2001) as the 'post-methods' era:

> Although for much of the twentieth century the primary concern of the language teaching profession was to find more effective methods of language teaching, by the twenty-first century there has been a movement away from a preoccupation with generic teaching methods toward a more complex view of language teaching which encompasses a multifaceted understanding of the teaching and learning processes.
>
> Richards and Renadya, 2002: 5

Let us consider the reasons for the decline of methods and also how language teaching is perceived in the 'post-methods' era from the perspective of different writers. Many language educators and writers have now taken an 'anti-method position', "arguing that there is little point in classifying and labelling teaching procedures that are regularly not followed in practice" (Rost, 2002: 117-118). Candlin and Mercer (2000) express the view that language teaching methods disempower both the teacher and the learners as "power over what happens in the classroom is exerted from outside the classroom" (: 10). Teaching methods are considered to be universally applicable and as such they do not take into account the context of a particular teaching situation; the local social and cultural dimensions (Candlin and Mercer, 2000). They are too prescriptive and "overgeneralised in their potential application to practical situations" (Brown, 2002: 10). So, what does the rejection and demise of methods entail in terms of language teaching? Brown (2002) proposes what may be described as a 'principled curriculum development' approach to teaching which comprises diagnosing students' needs, treating students with successful pedagogical techniques and assessing the outcome of these treatments (: 11). This approach, which he maintains can be utilised by any teacher and applied to any teaching context, is grounded on twelve principles and is divided into three stages:

The Twelve Principles of Brown's Approach

1. Automaticity	2. Meaningful Learning,
3. The Anticipation of Reward,	4. Intrinsic Motivation,
5. Strategic Investment,	6. Language Ego,
7. Self-confidence,	8. Risk-taking,
9. The Language – Culture Connection,	10. The Native Language Effect,
11. Interlanguage	12. Communicative Competence.

The Three Stages of Brown's Approach

Stage 1: Diagnosis (needs analysis)

Stage 2: Treatment (syllabus, materials and instruction designed to target learners' needs as exposed by diagnostic assessments, etc.)

Stage 3: Assessment (testing and evaluation – i.e. ongoing assessment of learners' accomplishment of curricular objectives)

Adapted from Brown, 2002: 13-17

Brown's proposal may, at first, appear as the ideal solution within the new "era of understanding a vast number of language teaching contexts and purposes, and an even larger number of student needs" (Brown, 2002: 17). It is also congruent with Nunan's (1999) interpretation of the 'post-method condition' in which language teaching "is explained not in terms of classification by prescribed methodologies, but rather by actual practice of interactive teaching… by systematically observing, analysing and evaluating what actually takes place in classrooms" (cited in Rost, 2002: 118).

Even though it is difficult to challenge the basic premises upon which Brown's (2002) argument for a new approach are based, two critical points need to be noted. The first is a practical question that refers to the implementation of such an approach; for example, how realistic is it for language teachers to engage in this three-phase time-consuming process given the time they have available? Or, how feasible is it for teachers to attempt innovative pedagogical techniques when institutional constraints imposed upon many language programs severely limit or do not allow for any degree of flexibility? For example, the Greek Ministry of Education does not only provide the guidelines that must be adhered to as to TEFL in Greek state schools but also supplies teachers and students with the textbooks they are expected to use. The second point addresses Brown's (2002) interpretation of the term 'approach' as it pertains to

language teaching and also deals with the 'method – post-method' argument. Brown (2002) refers to his approach, "as a theory of language and language learning" and provides a general definition for the term as "the theoretical rationale that underlies everything that happens in the classroom" (: 11). His definition of 'approach' echoes the one by Richards and Schmidt (2002: 29): "an approach in language teaching is the theory, philosophy and principles underlying a particular set of teaching practices". Moreover, Brown (2002: 12-13) places emphasis on "communicative competence" and "meaningful learning" as part of the principles that underpin his approach. In this respect, Brown's (2002) 'principled curriculum-development' approach does not seem to differ greatly from CLT, the "approach to… language teaching which emphasises that the goal of language learning is communicative competence and which seeks to make meaningful communication and language use a focus of classroom activities (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 90) and is "method independent" (Efstathiadis, 1993).

This second critical point leads us to the 'method'/'post-method' dichotomy which has recently become a rather controversial issue in TESOL. Bell (2003) makes an important contribution to the debate with the following statements:

> Postmethod, despite its disparagement of innovations called methods, can be seen as an attempt to unify these disparate elements into a more holistic, redefined communicative language teaching (CLT) through a dialectical process of building and deconstructing forces.
>
> Bell, 2003: 326

> I have suggested the transcendence of methods in terms of postmethod can be seen as a process of thinking through and pulling together the diverse, piecemeal attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to articulate the paradigm shift toward CLT. The current paradigm should not be understood as maturation but rather as a construction of the prevailing socioeconomic, cultural and ideological forces. As those forces shift, so will methods. And one element in those shifting forces is the way that method and postmethod can also be seen as inevitable and necessary dialectical forces: the one imposing methodological coherence, the other deconstructing the totalizing tendency of method from the perspective of local exigencies.
>
> ibid: 334

Furthermore, Bell's (2003) definition of CLT, as influenced by Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Savignon (2001), is equally important:

> I define CLT as a diverse set of principles that essentially stress the engagement of learners in authentic, meaningful, and fluent communication, usually through task-based activities that seek to maximise opportunities for interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning in integrated language skills contexts; and that facilitate inductive or discovery learning of the grammatical, pragmatical, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse rules of the language with the ultimate goal of developing communicative competence. Given the diversity of these principles, CLT usually supports a wide range of classroom procedures.
>
> Bell, 2003: 328

It is worth noting that even though Bell's definition encompasses essential principles and goals as realised and implemented in CLT, it does not address the concept of intelligibility and makes no reference to pronunciation. For example, it needs to be acknowledged that "the engagement of learners in authentic, meaningful, and fluent communication…." should also be successful; engagement has to be intelligible and pronunciation is relevant in the spoken medium. Even though Bell (2003) may have operated on the assumption that the learners' engagement was going to be successful, he should have not neglected to mention the importance of intelligibility in his definition of CLT.

Nevertheless, Bell's (2003) position regarding method and post-method demonstrates that method and post-method are not only compatible but also complement one another within the framework of CLT. Richards and Rodgers (2001) sum up their views as far as the 'post-methods' era is concerned in the following statement:

> Despite changes in the status of approaches and methods, we can… expect the field of second and foreign language teaching in the twenty-first century to be no less a ferment of theories, ideas and practices than it has been in the past.
>
> Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 254

It seems that CLT has retained its prominence even within what may be referred to as the 'post-methods' era; CLT "continues to be considered the most plausible basis for language teaching today" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 244). Regardless of whether or not one endorses the 'post-method' or 'anti-method' position, the contribution of

its proponents in terms of a new, revised version of the CLT paradigm cannot be overlooked; considerable attention is directed towards how the application of CLT may vary from one local context to another and adequately pinpointing the needs of learners of English as a foreign language has become one of the principal avenues of inquiry in the field of language teaching. Designing programs aimed at responding to learners' needs as perceived by the learners themselves and as defined according to the particular teaching situation and context seems to be the way forward; "learning is enhanced when… the content of courses is directly related to [learners'] immediate needs and context" (Hebert, 2002: 192). Thus, "needs analysis is now seen as the logical starting point for the development of a language program which is responsive to the learner and learning needs" (Finney, 2002: 75). This view corresponds to Brown's (2002) 'diagnostic phase', the first stage of his proposed approach to language teaching.

So what does this new, revised version of CLT based on students' needs entail in terms of the current status of pronunciation? To provide an answer to this question, first, we need to investigate what kind of language teaching methodology (if any) EFL teachers adhere to in class and what effect (if any) this has on the perceived status of pronunciation. Second, we need to discover if EFL teachers base their teaching (as well as pronunciation practice) on an analysis of students' needs. The research reported in this thesis can be seen as an attempt to answer such questions in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in one major European city.

Analysis of learners' needs, views and desires

The concept and practice of needs analysis is not new. For example, Crookes (2003: 135) describes how proponents of needs analysis in the field of TEFL, namely

Richterich (1972), Wilkins (1976), Robinson (1987) and Brindley (1989), assumed that a program which appears to meet the students' own expressed needs (or whatever their supervisors believe to be their needs) will be more motivating, thus, more efficient and successful. In fact, the concept of needs analysis in ELT can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century; Michael West conducted a survey on the needs of Bengali speakers of English and published the results as part of an extended report entitled 'Bilingualism (with special reference to Bengal)' in 1926. Even though needs analysis is not new, there is currently a renewed interest in learners' needs among applied linguists probably due to the dominance of learner-centered approaches to language teaching. There is also an increased emphasis in any discrepancies between learners' needs as perceived by themselves and as perceived by others (for example, teachers).

Let us now see why it is important to seek learners' views and compare them with those of their teachers. More than two decades ago, Nunan (1988) the statement reproduced below:

> So far, however, the most important actor in the drama, the language learner, has been left standing in the wings. In a learner-centred curriculum, methodology, as much as any other element in the curriculum, must be informed by the attitudes of the learners. What, then, do learners think are legitimate learning activities, and how do these compare with the perceptions of the teachers who instruct them?
>
> Nunan, 1988: 88

It seems that, at the time, the views of learners on pedagogical issues were not given much attention; however, learners' attitudes merit particular attention as part of a learner-centred curriculum. Since then a number of researchers have speculated on how important learners' views are at the practical level of decision making and programme preparation in the language classroom and studies which explore learners' perspectives on pedagogical issues have attracted the attention of researchers (see for example, Garrett and Shorthall, 2002).

There is not sufficient space here to provide a detailed account of researchers' views and research studies in this area; nevertheless, I will refer to a few examples of such views and research here and interested readers can turn to Appendix 1.2 for more information. Garrett and Shorthall (2002) investigated Brazilian EFL students' attitudes towards different types of classroom activities and state that "taking account of students' evaluations of their language learning experience has now become an integral component of some significant recent developments in language learning" (: 27). They provide an excellent discussion on the reasons why it is important to seek learners' views by referring to a number of influential studies, such as that of Gardner and Lambert (1972), which demonstrated the important role of learners' attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition. According to Garrett and Shorthall (2002), teachers should take into consideration students' views on various matters such as "when planning and implementing their teaching programmes, when designing or selecting activities to balance, if not combine, learning and enjoyment" (: 48). They argue that those teachers who listen "to the voice of their learners… are more likely to foster and protect the enthusiasm, vitality and sustained commitment that their learners need in their efforts to learn a second language well" (Garrett and Shorthall, 2002: 48).

Furthermore, Garrett and Shorthall (2002) addressed the 'gap' that often emerges between teachers' and learners' perceptions on pedagogical issues by referring to Barkhuizen (1998) who pointed out that "students' perceptions are often at variance with those of teachers" (: 87 cited in Garrett and Shorthall, 2002: 27). Interestingly, Horwitz (1988) proposed that "gaps between teacher and learner beliefs probably result in negative [language learning] outcomes" (: 292 cited in Peacock, 1999: 290). Peacock (1999) investigated the beliefs about language learning of EFL

students and EFL teachers in Hong Kong and demonstrated that student responses differed from common teacher perceptions on a number of issues. He provided evidence that a mismatch between teacher and learner beliefs had a detrimental effect on language learning and, thus, drew the following conclusion and made the following recommendation:

> I conclude that the gaps I found between teacher and learner beliefs did result in negative learning outcomes for the participating learners; did lead to reduced learner confidence in and satisfaction with the class; and did lead to a reluctance to participate in communicative activities…
> The same differences between learner and teacher views may certainly be found in many other classrooms. I therefore suggest that teachers examine their learners' beliefs and do what they can to reduce learner misunderstanding and dissatisfaction. The questions on how far learner and teacher beliefs diverge, why they diverge, and how these differences can be removed deserve further investigation.
>
> <div align="right">Peacock, 1999: 262</div>

Moving on to learners' views on matters related to the acquisition of English pronunciation, Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) wrote:

> Focusing on learners can provide answers to the following questions: How do foreign learners view the acquisition of English pronunciation? Are they aware of its difficulty? Which factors do they find to be good predictors of phonetic development? Which accents do they prefer? Do learners with different first languages perceive the acquisition of English pronunciation in the same way?
>
> <div align="right">Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 5</div>

Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999: 5) maintained that "learners' perspectives are relevant for second language acquisition…because awareness, beliefs and attitudes are very likely to influence the second language learning process". Gaining such information is necessary "for the teacher to assess his/her students' needs and even to influence and change students' beliefs in cases where wrong beliefs can negatively affect the acquisition process" (: 13). The importance attached by Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) on seeking learners' views on the area of pronunciation is congruent with the position adopted by Janicka et al (2005) on this matter. Janicka et al (2005) carried out an investigation into Polish students' attitudes to native English accents as models for EFL pronunciation and justified their research as follows:

…students' attitudes and beliefs "are an important source of teachers' critical reflection on the aims, methods and results on the courses which they offer, as well as of the didactic process on a macro scale" (Sobkowiak, 2002: 177-178). Secondly, as Sobkowiak claims, we know very little about what students think about pronunciation in general (role of pronunciation, objectives of phonetic training, pronunciation courses, etc.).

<div align="right">Janicka et al, 2005: 251</div>

Who should study learners' views & how should they be obtained?

Having established that it is important to seek EFL learners' views and compare them with EFL teachers' views, we need to consider who should obtain the learners' (and teachers') views and how. This will also help explain certain aspects of the rationale behind the research questions and methodology of the study reported in this thesis. Davies (2006) acknowledged that the classes he taught began suffering from the 'teacher-learner gap' problem and demonstrated how the use of short, teacher-designed, class-specific questionnaires, in order to obtain course evaluation data from his learners helped him rectify the problem. He argues for the use of 'class-specific questionnaires' rather than 'institution-wide surveys' as follows:

> The focus is firmly on the local level, on individual teachers and their classes, rather than on institution-wide surveys, since this is where success or failure of courses is ultimately determined, and where plans for action derived from questionnaire data will be acted upon.
>
> <div align="right">Davies, 2006: 3</div>

Davies (2006) explains that 'institution-wide' surveys are those conducted across all of an institution's classes and, also, refers to them as 'global' questionnaire surveys. Of course, it is my view, and, one that would be supported by other researchers, that the term 'global' questionnaire surveys can be extended to surveys conducted across all (or a representative sample of) institutions in one city or in one country and so on.

There is insufficient space here to reproduce the advantages of 'class-specific' and the disadvantages of 'global surveys' as outlined and exemplified by Davies (2006). Thus, those issues will be touched upon briefly here (for more information, interested readers can turn to Appendix 1.2). Davies (2006) questions the utility of

'global' questionnaire surveys by pointing out that they suffer from an important drawback: "the results are not always made available to learners or teachers" (: 4). Furthermore, he promotes the use of 'class-specific' questionnaires on the grounds that "they are more reliable" (Davies, 2006: 6) and that they will lead to the selection and design of better classroom materials by EFL teachers (ibid: 4). While it cannot be denied that class-specific questionnaire surveys are associated with certain advantages, I will argue against the aforementioned points. To begin with, the results of institution-wide surveys can be made available to teachers and learners; for example, the teachers and learners that have participated in the study reported in this thesis will be provided with summarised copies of the results once the project has been completed. Furthermore, I disagree with the view that class-specific questionnaires are more reliable than global ones on the following grounds: the 'reliability' of questionnaire results is a very complex matter that pertains to a number of issues such as the researcher's expertise in designing a questionnaire that will yield reliable results. Also, it depends on issues such as the students' culture, the particular context/teaching situation or even the particular teacher who seeks his/her learners' views; for example, the learners may hesitate to reveal what they really think if they know that it is their teacher who is going to read their answers[2], whereas they may record their answers truthfully if they know that it is the independent researcher who will process the questionnaires and analyse the results. Finally, it is unrealistic to assume that EFL teachers in different contexts are the ones responsible in terms of the selection or modification in terms of existing materials and/or that they will be willing to devote the time and effort required to create new materials for use in class. Overall,

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[2] For example, I recall an incident that I experienced myself. When I was asked to complete a questionnaire on my views on a particular module I had taken as part of my Bachelor's Degree in Applied English Language & Linguistics, I hesitated providing a truthful account of what I thought about the module fearing that the lecturer who had administered the questionnaire might recognize my handwriting.

the construction, administration and analysis of questionnaire results is a time-consuming process; EFL teachers who are often underpaid[3] and/or, at least in some parts of the world, struggle to overcome certain obstacles such as multinational overcrowded classes on a daily basis may not be in the position to allocate time to such a task.

Such observations lead us to a rather problematic situation. On the one hand, EFL teachers should seek their learners' views and beliefs in order to modify course content accordingly (Davies, 2006) or try and change those beliefs that are wrong and have a negative influence on the acquisition process (Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999). On the other hand, it seems that for many teachers, the study of their learners' attitudes and beliefs in terms of pedagogical issues may be a complex task that presents certain challenges and difficulties. So, are there any alternative options? For example, Garrett and Shorthall (2002) recognise that a study such as the one they conducted "is beyond the means of most teachers in their day-to-day teaching" (: 48) and refer to Barkhuizen's (1998: 103) suggestions in terms of other ways of gathering useful information: "through short class discussions after classroom activities or through learners keeping journals or writing short compositions about their learning experiences" (cited in Garrett and Shorthall, 2002: 48).

It is my view that researchers can play a very useful part in assisting communication between EFL teachers and learners as far as learners' needs, wishes and beliefs are concerned. Let us not forget that communication between teachers and learners may not always be encouraged due to factors such as the teachers' and or students' culture or may not always be possible due to factors such as time constraints. Of course, it is not my intention to ignore the value of class-specific

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[3] For more information see Fraser (2000).

questionnaires; on the contrary, I recognise that each teaching situation is unique and class-specific questionnaires as well as teachers' assessment of their learners' needs at the micro level can contribute to successful language learning. Nevertheless, the power of global surveys cannot be underestimated; results of such surveys can influence the design or adaptation of commercially available pedagogic materials that will meet learners' needs more effectively and can have a much greater impact on teaching methodologies as advocated by mainstream ELT manuals and handbooks. They may even influence pedagogical decisions often made by others (e.g. EFL exam boards, the Ministry of Education and school principals) and imposed upon EFL teachers and learners.

Let us consider an example in order to better understand the aforementioned points: let us imagine a single EFL teacher who discovers via the administration, collection and analysis of a class-specific questionnaire that his/her learners wish for more instruction in the x area of pronunciation through y and z activities. The ideal scenario is that the teacher agrees with his/her learners' views on the particular matter, has access to materials that can be used to satisfy the learners' particular wishes and begins using them in the classroom. However, there are other scenarios that we need to consider; one possible scenario is that the particular teacher does not share his/her learners' particular view and even disagrees with them (on the grounds that throughout his/her training or education the x area of pronunciation did not receive much attention) and, thus, chooses to ignore his/her learners' wish and adopts a 'doctor knows best' approach. Another possible scenario is that the teacher would like to satisfy his/her learners' needs but there are no materials available that he/she could use and, also, lacks the time and/or the skills to design his/her own materials. Alternatively, if the same result is produced by a large-scale quantitative survey

conducted across all (or a representative sample of) classes of an institution or (a representative sample of) institutions in a particular city or country, there is a much greater chance that, for example, publishers and ELT course books writers will take this finding into consideration and produce materials that will be responsive to this particular need.

Learners' & teachers' views in relation to the research of this thesis

Thus, I believe that it is essential to carry out large-scale survey studies into learners' needs in relation to EFL pedagogical issues and make teachers, curriculum developers and EFL materials' writers aware of those needs. It is also of great importance to directly compare teachers' and learners' views in order to discover if conflicting ideas are held by teachers and learners. And, if there is evidence of conflict, to consider ways of reconciling teacher-perceived needs with learner-perceived needs. As far as this thesis is concerned, and bearing in mind the advantages associated with the global survey approach, a large-scale quantitative survey was conducted in Greece into the attitudes, views and beliefs of EFL teachers and learners on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching. If it emerges that learner beliefs differ markedly from teacher beliefs in the area of pronunciation, I will first explore the reasons behind this. Then, on the basis of evidence in terms of learners' needs of our study, the views of ELT handbook writers and the findings of other relevant research studies, I will need to decide whose beliefs are wrong and therefore should be convinced to adopt a different perspective. Finally, I will consider ways for bridging the gap between teachers' and learners' beliefs.

Furthermore, in terms of the interests of this thesis as to the place of pronunciation in EFL, large-scale surveys can become a powerful tool in enhancing

the status of pronunciation. A few large-scale surveys that demonstrate that learners and/or teachers assign greater importance (e.g. Willing, 1988) exist already[4]. If more recent and more comprehensive research reveals that learners and/or teachers attach great importance to the mastery of pronunciation then the role of pronunciation within the ELT needs to be reconsidered. As part of the research reported in this thesis, the perceived importance of pronunciation will be determined according to teachers' and learners' responses to various questions; it is expected that this research will obtain and present evidence that the status of pronunciation needs to be enhanced.

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[4] Those surveys appear in Section 2.1, Chapter 2.

1.2 The Place & Practice of Pronunciation Teaching in Manuals & Handbooks

1.2.1 A Review of 'English Language Teaching' & 'Applied Linguistics' Manuals and Handbooks

So far in this chapter, we have seen that it is important to seek EFL learners' views on pedagogical issues and compare them with those of EFL teachers. We have also discussed who should do it, how it should be done and who will benefit from this (Section 1.1.1). Furthermore, we have seen that the study of pronunciation has been marginalised within the field of applied linguistics and that there are only a few studies on pronunciation teaching in terms of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, understandings and attitudes (Section 1.0). Thus, the research reported in this thesis focuses on learners' as well as teachers' views, beliefs, attitudes and preferences with respect to the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in EFL.

Nevertheless, simply comparing EFL teachers' with learners' responses is not sufficient; we need a point of reference in order to decide, for example, whose and/or which views may need to be changed when discussing the results of our study. Such a point of reference in terms of pronunciation status, role, models, targets and teaching techniques is provided through the review of currently used and recently published ELT and AL handbooks (this Section) as well as ELT PRON handbooks (Section 1.2.2). It will be interesting to see to which extent ELT writers' views agree with EFL teachers' views and, where appropriate, with EFL learners' views. And, if any discrepancies emerge between what the experts advise and what the teachers' (and learners') perceived priorities and practices are, possible explanations will be provided and appropriate recommendations will be made. Moreover, as it has been

noted, the main ideas and arguments of ELT handbook writers have also provided the basis for the research questions and the research instrument of our study[5].

Of course, it goes without saying, that the primary role of ELT handbooks is their use by practising EFL teachers as a point of reference and as a learning tool for prospective EFL teachers; teachers who wish to acquire information or extend their knowledge on matters such as teaching techniques, may consult ELT handbooks. However, time constraints and access issues may prevent many EFL teachers from doing so; thus, this section (and Section 1.2.2) should be of great interest to EFL teachers since they encompass a full range of current views in terms of the place and practice of pronunciation teaching as presented in ELT handbooks[6].

Furthermore, the review of current ELT handbooks will help us understand the present place and status of pronunciation in TEFL. This particular reason for reviewing ELT handbooks as part of this thesis will become clear through a brief discussion of CLT and the treatment of pronunciation in ELT handbooks. As CLT grew to dominate the scene of language teaching in the 1970s and 1980s, teachers' manuals dealt with pronunciation contingently, at best, and ceased to contain any material on pronunciation work, at worst. A reference to Martin Bygate's (1987) *Speaking*, a classic handbook for language teachers that is entirely dedicated to the skill of speaking, will serve to clarify and consolidate the points that have been raised in relation to CLT and pronunciation so far[7].

As part of the introduction to Bygate's (1987) *Speaking*, we are informed that "clearly, an enquiry into a mode of behaviour like speaking… must also refer to

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[5] See Chapter 3 'Research Methodology' for more information on this matter.
[6] To this end, two summaries of the contents of this section have been published in SPEAK OUT! (Please see references list at the end of the thesis).
[7] See Section 1.1.1 'The Rise & Fall of Pronunciation: a Historical Review'.

aspects of language knowledge which it realizes" (Bygate, 1987: ix)[8]. Interestingly, vocabulary and grammar are recognised as prerequisites for successful speaking (see quote reproduced below); pronunciation is overlooked throughout the entire book despite the fact that, as an aspect of language knowledge, it is (and should be) clearly relevant in a book that addresses pedagogical issues on handling spoken interaction.

> It is obvious that in order to be able to speak a foreign language, it is necessary to know a certain amount of grammar and vocabulary…. To test whether learners can speak, it is necessary to get them to actually say something. To do this they must act on a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.
>
> Bygate, 1987: 3

Bygate (1987) distinguishes between *motor-perceptive skills*, which involve "perceiving, recalling, and articulating in the correct order sounds and structures of the language" (: 5), and *interaction skills*, which involve "the ability to use language in order to satisfy particular demands" (: 7). The first set of skills is closely related to accuracy whereas the second set embraces fluency and being pragmatically right. "Since most discussion has in the past been devoted to materials for developing accuracy skills" (Bygate, 1987: 53), it seemed more appropriate for this book to concentrate on the development of interaction skills. Indeed, the book offers an array of speaking tasks that focus mainly on the negotiation of meaning and the management of discourse. If we zoom in on more closely, we can make the intriguing discovery that pronunciation receives no attention in any of Bygate's recommended speaking tasks.

This is a book whose main topic is "to discuss ways in which speakers effectively use knowledge for reciprocal interaction under normal processing conditions, and to explore ways in which the ability to do this can be developed in foreign-language or second-language learners" (Bygate, 1987: 9). It is a book that

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[8] Bygate's *Speaking* (1987) is part of the widely adopted and highly influential 'Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education' Oxford University Press series. The scheme is aimed at "teachers and teacher trainers who want to deepen the knowledge that informs their professional skills" (http://www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/isbn/31017/?cc=gb (accessed on 26.06.2007).

emphasises the reciprocal dimension of speech; yet the fact that intelligibility is a prerequisite for successful communication and the fact that intelligibility depends to a great extent on pronunciation are not addressed at all. Bygate (1987), along with other writers of 'communicative' textbooks, such as Byrne (1986), viewed behaviourist teaching techniques that aimed at the development of accuracy negatively and, instead, concentrated on communicative tasks that aimed at the development of conversational fluency. Thus, the corollary of the switch of attention from accuracy to fluency has been the ignoring of pronunciation; the relationship between accuracy and pronunciation and the perceived irrelevance of pronunciation in the CLT context has been explored in detail in Section 1.1.1 and needs not be rehearsed here. It is interesting to note that, as this thesis is going to print, Bygate's (1987) *Speaking* has not been replaced by any other book as part of the series, is still used today and the original edition has not been revised or updated.

My brief review of Bygate's (1987) *Speaking* serves to illustrate that the priorities that the language teaching profession accords to specific issues and practices at a specific point in time are manifested in contemporary manuals and handbooks. Thus, considering the place of pronunciation in current ELT manuals will help us begin to discern the present status of pronunciation in the context of TEFL. The amount of attention pronunciation receives in comparison to other areas of language knowledge, e.g. vocabulary, and the extent to which pronunciation is (or is not) addressed in books and chapters of books that deal with 'speaking' and 'listening' skills will help us detect any signs that its status may change again. ELT handbooks present established bodies of knowledge to prospective, practising (novice and experienced) teachers and teacher trainers. Thus, such a review will also provide answers to questions pertaining to the use of pronunciation models, targets and

appropriate pronunciation teaching techniques which relate to the interests of this thesis.

Overall, I have examined 29 books and 11 book chapters, which fulfilled the following criteria: they have been published within the last decade (the vast majority have been published from 2000 onwards), they are commercially available[9] and they focus on ELT; even the very few books whose aim is to address second/foreign language teaching in general, such as *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* by Saville-Troike (2006), make specific references to ELT. Books with a very narrow scope whose ideas cannot be applied to a context where English is taught as a foreign language have been excluded[10].The manuals and handbooks I have examined can be divided into three categories; those that are dedicated to the skill of listening, those that are dedicated to the skill of speaking and those that deal with a wide range of language teaching issues. The complete list of books and book chapters is reproduced below:

‘Listening’ manuals and handbooks

Flowerdew and Miller's (2005) *Second Language Listening: Theory and Practice*
Rost's (2002) *Teaching and Researching Listening*
Buck's (2001) *Assessing Listening*
Hadfield and Hadfield's (1999a) *Simple Listening Activities*

‘Speaking’ Manuals and Handbooks

Bailey's (2005) *Practical English Language Teaching: Speaking*
Thornbury's (2005) *How to Teach Speaking*
Luoma's (2004) *Assessing Speaking*

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[9] My quest for relevant manuals and handbooks has been greatly assisted by the well-developed websites of all major publishing houses in the TEFL and Applied Linguistics market.
[10] For example, Philipa Schellekens's (2007) *The Oxford ESOL Handbook* which has been specifically designed to help teachers promote effective language learning among migrants and refugees who have come to settle in countries where English is the national language.

Anderson, Maclean and Lynch's (2004) *Study Speaking: A Course in Spoken English for Academic Purposes*[11]

Baker and Westrup's (2003) *Essential Speaking Skills: A Handbook for English Language Teachers*

Hughes's (2002) *Teaching and Researching Speaking*

Hadfield and Hadfield's (1999b) *Simple Speaking Activities*

'English Language Teaching' & 'Applied Linguistics' manuals and handbooks

Hadfield and Hadfield (2008) *Introduction to Teaching English*

Harmer's (2007) *How to Teach English*

Ligthbrown and Spada's (2006) *How Languages are Learned*

Saville-Troike's (2006) *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*

Thornbury's (2006) *An A-Z of ELT*

Scrivener's (2005) *Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers*

Seymour and Popova's (2003) *700 Classroom Activities*

McDonough and Shaw's (2003) *Materials and Methods in ELT: A Teacher's Guide*

Riddell's (2003) *Teach Yourself Teaching English as a Foreign Language*

Schmitt's (2002) *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics* – including the chapters:

Burns and Seidlhofer's 'Speaking and pronunciation'

Lynch and Mendelsohn's 'Listening'

Richards and Renandya's (2002) *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* – including the papers:

Jones's 'Beyond 'listen and repeat': pronunciation teaching materials and theories of second language acquisition'

Hebert's 'PracTESOL: it's not what you say but how you say it!'

Shumin's 'Factors to consider: developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities'

Green et al's 'Developing discussion skills in the ESL classroom'

Tsang and Wong's 'Conversational English: an interactive, collaborative, and reflective approach'

Nunan's 'Listening in language learning'

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[11] This book has been included in the list as it is likely that European EFL learners may pursue undergraduate or postgraduate study in an L1 English-speaking country (for example, we will see later on in this thesis that many Greek EFL learners study at universities in the UK).

Cook (2001) *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*

Harmer's (2001) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*

Carter and Nunan's (2001) *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* – including the papers:

> Seidlhofer's 'Pronunciation'
>
> Bygate's 'Speaking'
>
> Rost's 'Listening'

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain's (2000) *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching; A Guide for Language Teachers*

Hedge's (2000) *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*

Wharton and Race's (1999) *500 Tips for TESOL.*

Richards's (1998) *Teaching in Action: Case Studies from Second Language Classrooms*

There is not sufficient space here to consider the treatment of pronunciation in each book and book chapter (for such a detailed review, interested readers can turn to Appendix 1.3). Here, I have drawn together the main ideas and arguments presented in the aforementioned books in the form of ten themes; these provide a comprehensive summary of current thought on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in the EFL language curriculum.

Theme 1

The Place & Role of Phonology in L2 Listening

Phonology is recognised as one of the most important types of linguistic knowledge to be drawn on by listeners in order to comprehend a spoken message and, thus, the important role that phonology plays in the context of listening comprehension is delineated in many ELT handbooks (see Harmer, 2007; Flowerdew and Miller, 2005; McDonough and Shaw, 2003; Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2002; Buck, 2001; Rost; 2001; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). Phonological knowledge is utilised not only to

process sound but also to organise meaning (McDonough and Shaw, 2003: 127); for example, "second language learners who are not sensitive to intonation patterns[12]... may misunderstand utterances that depend on intonation for their meaning" (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005: 33). Indeed, "much of the communicative effect of utterances is expressed by stress and intonation, and listeners need to be able to understand that to construct a reasonable interpretation" (Buck, 2001: 28) and, for learners to be in the position to cope with natural intonation patterns and connected speech features, they should be exposed to authentic spoken English through listening activities (see Harmer, 2007; Lynch and Mendelsohn, 2002; Buck, 2001; Hedge, 2000). Overall, for learners to comprehend spoken language, a certain level of mastery of phonology is required.

Notable exceptions: in a couple of handbooks (Rost, 2002; Hadfield and Hadfield, 1999a), pronunciation receives considerably less attention compared to other language components.

Theme 2

Accents of English & Listening Comprehension

Listening to and processing the pronunciation of speakers of different English native and non-native varieties is a challenge for many learners (Saville-Troike, 2006; Buck, 2001). Nevertheless, the existence of different regional varieties of English in one country as well the emergence of World Englishes, creates the need for learners to be able to understand a wide variety of accents. Thus, the general consensus among authors of ELT handbooks is that accent is a very important variable in listening comprehension and teachers need to embrace the presence of various accents of

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[12] For example, "a change in direction or topic may be indicated by intonation" (McDonough and Shaw, 2003: 121).

English and use listening material that will help learners become aware of different accents and dialects of English (Harmer, 2007; Flowerdew and Miller, 2005; Bailey, 2005; Riddell, 2003; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000; Hedge; 2000; Wharton and Race; 1999).

Theme 3

The Place of Pronunciation in L2 Speaking

The place of pronunciation in terms of the development of speaking skills appears to be a controversial issue owing to the different treatment of the topic by ELT handbooks and (handbook chapters). I have identified three categories in this respect:

Category 1: pronunciation issues are treated as focal points of language teaching by some authors (Bailey, 2005; Thornbury, 2006; Baker and Westrup, 2003; Burns and Seidlhofer, 2002; Hughes, 2002; Harmer, 2001; Hedge, 2000; Hadfield and Hadfield, 1999b). The books that belong to this category devote whole chapters to the topic of pronunciation (e.g. Baker and Westrup, 2003) and the book chapters devote whole sections (e.g. Hedge, 2000). Pronunciation practice forms an integral part of recommended speaking activities (Hadfield and Hadfield, 1999b) and a couple of writers go as far as to declare that speaking and pronunciation are inextricably linked; "every lesson involving the spoken language is (also) a pronunciation lesson" (Seidlhofer, 2001: 212) and "pronunciation is not a separate skill, it is part of the way we speak" (Harmer, 2001: 186).

Category 2: other areas of language knowledge are highlighted to a greater extent than pronunciation. Nevertheless, pronunciation is not overlooked. Vocabulary features most prominently in Anderson et al (2004) and slightly more prominently throughout Thonrbury (2005) compared to all other areas of language knowledge. Also, Luoma

(2004) places greater emphasis on vocabulary and grammar than pronunciation and Cook (2001) and Lightbrown and Spada (2006) concentrate more on grammar and less on phonology.

Category 3: attention is directed towards 'vocabulary' and 'discourse/conversation management' and pronunciation receives hardly any attention. Tsang and Wong (2002) and Shumin (2002) focus on the development of conversational fluency, Green et al (2002) on discussion skills and Saville-Troike (2006) on speech acts. Bygate's (2001) 'Speaking' echoes his earlier work (1987) in the sense that pronunciation is almost completely ignored. Finally, in McDonough and Shaw (2003)[13] and in Richards (1998)[14] pronunciation is addressed very briefly.

Theme 4

Pronunciation & Intelligibility

The important role that pronunciation plays in terms of the intelligibility of L2 speakers' oral production is recognised by the majority of ELT authors: Saville-Troike, 2006; Bailey, 2005; Scrivener, 2005; Luoma, 2004; Baker and Westrup, 2003; Riddell; 2003; Burns and Seidlhofer, 2002; Hebert, 2002; Harmer, 2001; Seidlhofer, 2001; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000; Wharton and Race; 1999. The authors agree, that unless L2 speakers pay attention to their pronunciation, they may convey unintended meanings, misunderstandings may occur and communication breakdowns may take place. As Thornbury (2006: 185) put it: "faulty pronunciation is one of the most common causes of misunderstanding". Thus, English language learners need practice in all areas of pronunciation (sounds, sounds in connected speech, word

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[13] The 20 page long 'Speaking skills' chapter comprises a section on pronunciation that is only one page long.
[14] Only 1 out of the 11 case studies of the 'Teaching Speaking' part deals with pronunciation.

stress, sentence stress and intonation) if they are to become fully effective communicators.

Theme 5

Phonological Perception & Production

A distinction is drawn between receptive and productive phonology and proficiency in both phonological perception and phonological production is recognised as a prerequisite for successful communication (see Harmer, 2007; Saville-Troike, 2006; Scrivener, 2005; Baker and Westrup, 2003; Riddell, 2003). Furthermore, receptive awareness precedes productive competence in L2 phonology and thus, teachers need to concentrate first on recognition activities and then on production activities to help improve students' pronunciation (see Harmer, 2007; Scrivener, 2005; Riddell, 2003). For example, Riddell (2003: 79) points out that "students need to get the chance to hear a sound within a word before being expected to try to repeat it".

Theme 6

Suprasegmentals versus Segmentals

The suprasegmental level of pronunciation is perceived as more important than the segmental level for the comprehensibility of spoken language; for example, Hebert (2002) states that the suprasegmental level "causes the most communication breakdowns between ESL learners and native speakers" (: 199). Thus, most ELT writers argue that there is a greater need for learners to master the suprasegmental features of pronunciation (see, for example, Lightbrown and Spada, 2006). The general consensus among authors of ELT manuals is that stress and intonation are instrumental in terms of information and conversation management and,

consequently, most manuals explore the functions of stress and intonation and recommend activities for their practice: Bailey (2005), McDonough and Shaw (2003), Cook (2001) and Wharton and Race (1999) concentrate on intonation, Anderson et al (2004) and Rost (2001) explore stress at word and sentence level and Thornbury (2005), Luoma (2004), Riddell (2003), Hebert, (2003), Burns and Seidlhofer (2002), Buck (2001) and Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) focus on both. As for Harmer (2001), he emphasises connected speech.

Theme 7

Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets

The writers that address pronunciation standards unanimously agree that it is necessary for learners to succeed in pronouncing English in a fully comprehensible manner. For most learners, achieving a native-like standard is not needed; it is sufficient to succeed in being understood and, thus, retaining a foreign accent is acceptable as long as intelligibility is not threatened (Saville-Troike, 2006; Bailey, 2005; Thornbury, 2005; Luoma; 2004; Baker and Westrup, 2003).

As for pronunciation models, Scrivener (2005) explains that the activities and examples of his 'phonology chapter' are based on RP "mainly because this is what is found in the majority of current international course books (and because it happens to be my own pronunciation variety)" (: 286). Hedge (2000) points out that choosing which English variety to take as a model for production has become a very sensitive and complex issue nowadays[15] and Wharton and Race (1999) suggest talking to students about different accents and emphasising that "there is more than one acceptable model" (: 40).

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[15] Interested readers can see the relevant part on Hedge (2000) in Appendix 1.3. Alternatively, see Section 1.2, Chapter 2 for more information on the issues concerning the choice of pronunciation models.

Theme 8

The Pronunciation Syllabus & Teaching/ Learning Needs

The general consensus among authors of ELT handbooks seems to be that teachers need to consider and, ultimately, decide which pronunciation variety to teach and what kind of pronunciation activities to use. Such decisions should depend on an analysis of learners' needs in any teaching situation and a consideration of variables such as learners' age and learning purpose (Scrivener, 2005; Burns and Seidlhofer, 2002; Hebert, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2001; Hedge; 2000).

Theme 9

Phonological Knowledge & IPA Symbols

A great number of ELT writers insist on the benefits to be gained if learners master the symbols of the phonetic alphabet; for example, they will be able to work out the pronunciation of a new word by consulting a dictionary (e.g.. Cook, 2001). Thus, many ELT writers recommend activities that either require knowledge of the phonetic script or help learners become competent in phonetic transcription (see Bailey, 2005; Scrivener, 2005; Anderson et al, 2004; McDonough and Shaw, 2003; Riddell, 2003; Harmer, 2001; Wharton and Race, 1999).

Also, ELT writers believe that in order to help learners improve their pronunciation, teachers need to acquire some understanding of how sounds are produced. To this end, Bailey (2005) provides information regarding the place and manner of articulation of phonemes in the relevant section of her book (: 65-72) and Baker and Westrup (2003) encourage teachers to demonstrate difficult sounds "by showing where in the mouth the sound is made, how the lips should be shaped, the place of the tongue, and so on" (: 57). Seidlhofer (2001) recommends a number of

accessible introductory textbooks to help teachers acquire an understanding of phonetics and phonology (: 60-61).

It is interesting to note that some of the suggestions made by writers of currently used ELT handbooks allude to the Reform Movement era which placed great emphasis on phonetically trained teachers and learners.

Theme 10

Pronunciation Teaching Methods & Activities

Approximately half of the authors, whose works I have looked at, consider techniques for the practice of pronunciation. Harmer (2007), McDonough and Shaw (2003), Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002) and Wharton and Race (1999) recommend 'ear training/discrimination between similar-sounding phonemes' exercises. Thornbury (2005) and Riddell (2003) recommend mechanical and analytic/cognitive exercises such as 'reading aloud' activities and drilling; they both maintain that such activities allow students to focus on pronunciation and provide safe and controlled practice of new language. Bailey (2005) explains how pronunciation software programs can make the practice of model utterances more interesting and effective: "some programs allow students to listen to a model utterance, repeat the utterance, and see a visual comparison of their speech with the model. The visual image can help learners match their pitch and intonation contours with those of the model" (: 180). Even though computer technology offers new and more modern ways of improving students' pronunciation, the language laboratory has not been abandoned (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005). Hadfield and Hadfield (1999b) and Hedge (2000) explain how pronunciation work can be incorporated in speaking lessons as preparation for/ part of/ follow-up of specific speaking tasks.

Burns and Seidlhofer (2002) illustrate how pronunciation teaching procedures can range on a continuum from either fairly mechanical or analytic/cognitive exercises, that draw attention to specifics of the language code (e.g. 'listen and repeat' and 'phonemic script' activities), at one end of the continuum to communication tasks (e.g. 'mini-plays') at the other. Seidlhofer (2001) believes that pronunciation pedagogy is currently undergoing "a move from sound manipulation exercises to communication activities" (: 64). On the other hand, Hughes (2002) believes that hardly any progress has been made in this area:

> Although more holistic or communicative approaches to teaching pronunciation and fluency may have been developed over the past twenty years or so…, this is an area of language pedagogy which has changed remarkably little over they years. The central tools for the teacher remain the phonemic chart, discrimination of minimal pairs and practice based on models. Nowadays the practice may take place via a game rather than a dialogue or a drill, but the fundamentals are barely changed.
>
> Hughes, 2002: 70

Concluding remarks

Some ELT authors recognise that pronunciation is often an overlooked area of language teaching; Thornbury (2006), Scrivener (2005) and Hughes (2002) state that pronunciation is generally neglected among course components and Hedge (2000) points out that "many textbooks produced for the international market avoid explicit reference to phonology". Lightbrown and Spada (2006) and Cook (2001) recognize that research on the teaching and learning of pronunciation has not been as extensive as in other language domains. Nevertheless, according to Lightbrown and Spada (2006) "research related to the teaching and learning of pronunciation is gaining more attention" (: 107). Also, Saville-Troike (2006) points out that renewed emphasis is being placed upon pronunciation in some contexts of use, Riddell (2003) urges

teachers not to neglect pronunciation work and Wharton and Race (1999) state that the importance of pronunciation work is increasingly recognised in course books.

Interestingly, my review of the ELT and AL handbooks listed in this section has presented evidence that is sufficient to suggest that pronunciation is increasingly noted as playing an important part in second language listening and speaking pedagogy (see Themes 1-4, this section). Furthermore, I would like to note that **recently published ELT handbooks have begun to include a pronunciation component;** this can also be viewed as an acknowledgement that pronunciation is nowadays regarded as an important aspect of second language proficiency. **Indeed, the vast majority of recently published ELT manuals include a part/ chapter/ section that deals with pronunciation.** Here, there are two things I would like to draw the reader's attention to. First, the new editions of three widely used and popular teacher manuals (Scrivener, 2005; McDonough and Shaw, 2003; Harmer, 2001) have been expanded, revised and updated in line with current methodology and practice and concentrate on pronunciation a great deal more than previous editions. For example, in Harmer (1991) there is no chapter on pronunciation whereas in Harmer (2001) there is a whole new chapter on the topic. Second, the traditional components of language knowledge receive equal treatment in many handbooks. The mastery of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary are each discussed in a separate part that comprises different articles in Richards and Renandya (2002), in a separate chapter in Riddell (2003), Carter and Nunan (2001) and Celce-Murcia and Oshtain (2000), and in a separate section in Thornbury (2006), Saville-Troike (2006) and Wharton and Race (1999). Of course, there are exceptions; there is no chapter that deals exclusively with the teaching of pronunciation in Schmitt (2002) and Hedge (2000) whereas there is a chapter on grammar and one on vocabulary in both. Also, there is no part on

'pronunciation' in Seymour and Popova (2003) whereas there is one on 'grammar' and one on 'vocabulary'. In Richards (1998), there is a part entitled 'Teaching vocabulary and grammar' but no 'Teaching pronunciation' part.

1.2.2 A Review of English Language Teaching Pronunciation Manuals & Handbooks

I will now consider how pronunciation instruction is addressed by and explored in ELT PRON manuals and handbooks. Pronunciation instruction and practice, as documented in ELT PRON manuals, is a vast subject and this is a relatively short section. Indeed, there is an abundance of materials for teaching pronunciation and what I do not want to do here is attempt an exhaustive coverage of these materials. Instead, I will confine myself to those pronunciation handbooks and manuals that have been pivotal in the teaching of pronunciation within the last decade of the 20th century and within the first decade of the 21st century.

In order to compile the list of ELT PRON manuals and handbooks, the following steps were taken: First, a consultation took place between the author of the thesis and the main supervisor of the thesis, Dr. Paul Tench, to discuss which books and authors have been the most influential in the teaching of pronunciation in the last twenty years. Second, Robin Walker, the editor of *Speak Out!*[16], offered advice as to which authors and books to include in the list. Third, a couple of English language teacher trainers in Greece were asked about which books they have used in the training courses they held. Fourth, eight EFL teachers in Greece were asked about which pronunciation manuals and handbooks they used to assist them with the teaching of pronunciation. Finally, the search engine www.scholar.google.co.uk was used to locate those pronunciation handbooks and manuals that had the greatest number of citations. Overall, 14 ELT PRON manuals and handbooks were examined (see next page):

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[16] Speak Out! is the journal of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) 'Pronunciation Special Interest Group' (PronSig).

Gilbert (2005a) *Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in North American English. Teacher's Resource Book*

Gilbert (1993a) *Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in North American English. Teacher's Resource Book*

Hancock (2003) *English Pronunciation in Use: Self-Study and Classroom Use*

Kelly (2000) *How to Teach Pronunciation*

Cruttenden (2001) *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*

Hewings and Goldstein (1999) *Pronunciation plus – Practice through Interaction*

Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwing's (1996) *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*

Pennington (1996) *Phonology in English Language Teaching*

Fitzpatrick (1995) *A Teacher's Guide to Practical Pronunciation*

Laroy (1995) *Pronunciation*

Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) *Pronunciation*

Underhill (1994) *Sound Foundations*

Lane (1993) *Focus on Pronunciation: Principles and Practice for Effective Communication*

Bowen and Marks (1992) *The Pronunciation Book. Student-centred Activities for Pronunciation Work*

As was done with the books in the previous section (Section 1.21.), the main ideas and arguments in the aforementioned books were drawn together in the form of themes to provide the reader with a comprehensive summary of current thought on the practice of pronunciation teaching. The reader will notice that some of the themes that emerged in this section correspond to (or form part of) the themes identified in the previous section of the thesis. For example, 'Theme 5' (previous section) and 'Theme 2' (this section) both address 'phonological perception and production'. The themes that emerged are presented briefly in this section due to reasons of space (interested readers can see Appendix 1.4 for further information, examples and quotes related to each theme).

Theme 1

Knowledge of Phonetics/Phonology & Awareness of a Variety of Techniques for Teaching Pronunciation

An important theme that runs through ELT PRON manuals refers to the need for teachers to have knowledge of phonetics and phonology with respect to the articulation and function of speech sounds (for example, see Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994 and Pennington, 1996). Teachers should also have awareness of a variety of techniques and procedures for the teaching of pronunciation which can be adapted or implemented based on their learners' needs. As Kelly (2000: 13) puts it: "Teachers of pronunciation need: a good grounding in theoretical knowledge, practical classroom skills and access to good ideas for classroom activities" (: 13). Celce-Murcia et al (1996) agree: "only through a thorough knowledge of the English sound system and through familiarity with a variety of pedagogical techniques…can teachers effectively address the pronunciation needs of their students" (: 11).

Theme 2

Phonological Perception & Production

Another theme that runs through ELT PRON manuals refers to the view that receptive competence in pronunciation should precede productive competence in pronunciation and, thus, teachers should first concentrate on recognition activities and then on production activities (for example, see Fitzpatrick, 1995). For example, Gimson (in Cruttenden, 2001) maintains throughout that correct recognition must precede attempts at production and in Celce-Murcia et al (1996) activities that focus on productive phonology (e.g. 'oral reading of minimal pair sentences') are preceded by activities that focus on receptive phonology (e.g. 'listening discrimination' tasks).

Gilbert's (2005a) *Clear Speech* is also an excellent example of recognition activities (e.g. 'listen and circle the word you hear') being followed by production activities (e.g. 'now practice saying the words you have circled').

Suprasegmentals versus Segmentals

A distinction is drawn between the segmental and suprasegmental level of pronunciation. Here there are two questions to be addressed; first, which level of pronunciation is more important and, second, which level should be taught first. In terms of the first question, traditionally, pronunciation handbooks focused on the segmental level (for example, see Nilsen and Nilsen, 1973 or Trim, 1975) but attention was shifted to the suprasegmental level when CLT began to dominate the scene of language teaching in the mid-to late 1970s[17]; the mastery of suprasegmental aspects was viewed as more important for the comprehensibility of the learners' spoken language (see Brown, 1992: 11). According to Celce-Murcia et al (1996), Gilbert's (1993a) *Clear Speech* is one of the best-known manuals that follows this line of thinking. Interestingly, in the third edition of *Clear Speech* Gilbert maintains her position that suprasegmental features of pronunciation should be given priority but also a great deal of attention is directed to segmentals. So what is the situation today? Celce-Murcia et al (1996) believe that "pronunciation instruction is moving away from the segmental/suprasegmental debate and toward a more balanced view" (: 10) since both segmentals and suprasegemtals "can have a negative impact on the oral communication – and the listening comprehension abilities – of nonnative speakers of English" (: 10). They sum up their view as follows: "Today's pronunciation curriculum thus seeks to identify the most important aspects of both the segmentals

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[17] The reader may wish to consult Celce-Murcia et al (1996: 10-11) for a discussion of this matter.

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and the suprasegmentals, and integrate them appropriately in courses that meet the needs of any given group of learners" (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996: 10). Interestingly, all the ELT PRON handbooks I have analysed address both segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation. So, it seems that they have adopted the 'balanced view' as described by Celce-Murcia et al (1996).

As for the second question, the majority of ELT PRON manuals (see Hancock, 2003; Kelly, 2000; Hewings and Goldstein, 1999; Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Pennington, 1996; Fitzpatrick, 1995; Underhill, 1994; Lane, 1993; Bowen and Marks, 1992) introduce segmental features first. However, there are two manuals that begin with attention to suprasegmental features of pronunciation and then move on to segmental features of pronunciation; Laroy (1995) and Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994)[18]. As for Gilbert's (2005) *Clear Speech*, it begins with attention to vowels, moves on to word stress and intonation and ends with consonants.

Theme 4

Traditional versus Modern Activities

Traditional pronunciation activities are very structured, controlled, mechanical and context-free and typically include 'listen & repeat' tasks, 'minimal pair' exercises, 'vowel shift' exercises, drills and tongue twisters[19]. With the emergence of CLT the non-communicative and mechanical nature of 'traditional' pronunciation activities was heavily criticised and attempts were made to develop pronunciation activities that were 'communicative'. Unfortunately, the term 'communicative' has not been used in a consistent way and can thus mean many different things[20]. Since the term

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[18] See 'Section Two: Demonstration' in *Pronunciation* by Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994).
[19] Nilsen and Nilsen (1973), Trim (1975) and Baker (1982) are excellent examples of manuals that focus on such activities.
[20] See Pennington, 1996: 225-228 for a discussion of this issue.

'communicative pronunciation tasks' is open to various interpretations, any type of activity that is not mechanical may be described as 'communicative'. For example, Pennington (1996) points out that any of the following types of activities can be placed under 'communicative' language practice even though they may not all represent communication in any true sense of the word: 'contextualised' (e.g., repetition of minimal pairs in sentence contexts), 'meaningful' (e.g., choice of correct word in a sentence), 'realistic' (e.g., roleplay of a situation similar to the one faced in real life), and 'real' (e.g., discussion of the students' real-life situation or concerns).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that in all ELT PRON manuals I have examined, efforts have been made to include activities that are more open, contextualised, meaningful and realistic even if they are not all truly communicative. For example, Bowen and Marks (1992) suggest that the "age-old procedure" of "reading out loud dialogues" can be transformed into a communicative task by asking the students "to act out the scene instead of just sitting in their seats" (ibid: 16). As for 'traditional' pronunciation exercises, they have not ceased to exist in manuals; Celce-Murcia et al (1996) propose that "there is room for both types of practice in the communicative classroom as students move from structured to free production" (: 36) and thus, include activities that are very structured, such as 'minimal pair discrimination' as well as activities that are rather open, such as role plays. Similar views are expressed by Hewings and Goldstein (1999)[21], Pennington (1996) and Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) and their manuals comprise 'traditional' (e.g. 'repetition' tasks) as well as 'communicative' activities (e.g. 'games').

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[21] "*Pronunciation Plus* includes these tasks [discriminate+repeat+correct], but also varies the approach and tries to move on quickly to more communicative practice" (Hewings and Goldstein, 1999: vii).

Theme 5

IPA Symbols

Kelly (2000) explains why and how the lack of a one-to-one relationship between spelling and pronunciation poses a great challenge in terms of teaching and learning English and proposes the use of phonemic transcription by teachers and learners as "a way of accurately recording the pronunciation of words and utterances" (: 8). He believes that students should be encouraged to regularly use a good dictionary that includes phonemic symbols and that teachers should do work in class "to help students become more familiar with the dictionary, and to gain confidence in working out pronunciations from the phonetic script" (Kelly, 2000: 126). To this end, his handbook comprises many activities to help with the practise of phonemic symbols such as a modified version of the 'hangman game'[22], in which students nominate phonemes rather than letters. The advantages that the familiarisation with and use of the phonetic alphabet entails for teachers and learners of English are outlined in many ELT PRON handbooks (see for example, Fitzpatrick, 1995; Bowen and Marks, 1992; Celce-Murcia, 1996).

Even though virtually all the authors of ELT PRON handbooks seem to agree that knowledge of the phonemic symbols provides learners with a reliable reference point as well as a means of achieving independence in the practice of pronunciation, they vary a great deal in terms of the use of the phonemic script as part of their recommended teaching activities, tasks or ideas. For example, the phonemic chart is used as the basis for many activities in Bowen and Marks (1992)[23] whereas Hancock (2003) makes rather limited use of the phonemic chart as part of the recommended

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[22] In the original version of the 'Hangman game', players try to guess a word by suggesting letters it might contain.
[23] Bowen and Marks (1992) believe that it can function as a 'pronunciation syllabus' for learners to help them recognise which sounds they can already produce well and to determine which sounds they need to work on and, thus, consider it to be an essential item of the teacher's tool kit.

activities; "it is possible to use this book without knowing phonemic symbols" (Hancock, 2003: 6)[24]. It is interesting to note that Underhill's (1994) handbook is exclusively based on the use of the phonemic chart which is even displayed in the front cover of the book.

Theme 6

Phonological Rules of English

A great number of authors of ELT PRON writers believe that it is useful for learners to master rules for predicting spellings from sounds and vice versa (see for example, Celce-Murcia et al, 1996), "since there are definite spelling patterns in English that can be related to pronunciation" (Fitzpatrick, 1995: 31). Students can become familiar with phonological rules either through *explicit instruction*, i.e. presenting the rules to the learners (see for example, Kelly, 2000: 23) or through *implicit instruction,* i.e. helping learners *figure out* the rules by themselves (see for example, Pennington, 1996: 72-74).

In addition to spelling to sound rules, the category of phonological rules may also expand to include other rules such as stress placement rules; for example, Celce-Murcia et al (1996) argue for the explicit teaching of word stress rules "since stress placement in English words is for the most part a rule-government phenomenon" (: 143) and, also, present guidelines and activities concerning sentence stress as well as rules governing connected speech features. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994: 99-105) present a collection of activities that aim at developing learners' prediction skills for word-stress in English. Gilbert (2005a, 2005b) provides teachers and learners with

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[24] Nevertheless, Hancock (2003) points out that it is useful to learn the phonemic symbols because they make it easier to analyse the pronunciation of words and because they are employed by dictionaries in order to show the pronunciation of words.

simplified rules for various aspects of pronunciation as well as many tasks for the practice of these rules.

Theme 7

Exposure to Authentic Spoken English

The importance of exposing learners to authentic spoken English through listening activities is recognised in ELT PRON handbooks (Kelly, 2000; Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Pennington, 1996; Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994). For example, Pennington (1996: 237) suggests encouraging learners "to listen extensively – e.g. to the radio, television or special tape series – to gain experience with different voice qualities or accents of English". Attention is also directed to problems often associated with this approach to pronunciation teaching and practice; Celce-Murcia et al (1996) point out that in EFL settings, especially those where learners have little opportunity to surround themselves with native input in the target language, "the burden will fall more on the teacher to… ascertain that students have opportunities… to experience samples of the authentic oral discourse of native speakers" (: 17) and "it is impractical for teachers to use such material all the time, as not only one has to find suitable materials, but also to design tasks that go with them" (Kelly, 2000: 21).

Theme 8

The Language Laboratory & Computer Technology

Quite a few ELT PRON handbook writers recommend various ways of practising pronunciation in the language laboratory setting (Gilbert, 2005a; Gilbert, 2005b;

Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Bowen and Marks, 1992). For example, 'dictation' tasks[25] can be done as homework provided that learners have access to a language laboratory (Gilbert, 2005a: 7). It seems that the old-fashioned language laboratory is still valued in pronunciation instruction and practice. Nevertheless, Celce-Murcia et al (1996) point out that, nowadays, the language laboratory often masquerades as a multimedia environment with video viewing or computer work stations, laser disc players, satellite receivers, and other high-tech hardware items stationed alongside the tried but true audio console and student listening booths; "this rebirth of the language lab represents a triumph of technology over method and provides a testimonial to the role instructional technology can play in language teaching" (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996: 311). They go on to exemplify the role they think that the updated version of the language laboratory can play in the teaching and practice of pronunciation, as follows:

> Given the availability of authentic audio material, the lab can provide almost unlimited access to native-speaker discourse in all its permutations (dialect, register, sex, etc.). In addition, the lab can provide students with other desirable conditions: a large amount of practice not possible in the typical classroom environment; an uninhibiting environment for mimicry; a focused opportunity to compare their own production with a model; and (in library-style learning, in which students select and work on their own assignments) learner control of materials, sequence and pace.
>
> Celce-Murcia et al, 1996: 312

Overall, computer technology, and more specifically pronunciation software programs, have a number of advantages to offer in terms of the practice of pronunciation:

> In addition to traditional minimal-pair listening discrimination exercises and digitized sound representations of the basic vowels and consonants, these programs can also function more interactively. Among programs currently on the market are several that allow students to record their utterances and compare a visual display of their own intonation contours with prerecorded native-speaker models, others that present the vocal apparatus via computer animation, and even one in which students can move a figure around a maze by producing sounds of different pitches (Edney, 1990). In short, the major advantages for learners using this medium are (depending of course, on the quality of the program) the added visual feedback; the entertaining, gamelike quality of the programs; and the opportunity to

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[25] Gilbert (2005b) describes the following 'dictation' task: "Listen and write the sentences you hear. Then count the number of syllables in each sentence. You will hear each sentence two times. 1. He works in an interesting business (number of syllables: 9), 2………………………(number of syllables: ……), etc. (: 6).

objectively (via the visual speech displays) ascertain the degree to which students' utterances match a native-speaker model with regard to the targeted feature.

<div align="right">Celce-Murcia et al, 1996: 315</div>

Theme 9

'Reception' (ear-training) Activities

Moving on to examine specific tasks aimed at improving learners' receptive competence in pronunciation, ear-training ('discrimination') exercises between similar-sounding phonemes (and so on) are encountered in the vast majority of ELT PRON handbooks (Gilbert; 2005a; Hancock, 2003; Kelly, 2000; Pennington, 1996; Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Fitzpatrick, 1995; Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; and Bowen and Marks, 1992). For example, in Gilbert (2005b: 15), learners are asked to listen to a selection of sentences and circle the word they hear in order to practise their perception of contrasting vowels in sentences (e.g. Did you say *hope/hop?*). Kelly (2000: 18-19) demonstrates how teachers can use *minimal pairs* (= words or utterances which differ by only one phoneme) to good advantage in the classroom as a way of focusing on sounds which have been causing difficulties for students; he also recommends the use of listening exercises to help learners discriminate between different intonation patterns (see Kelly, 2000: 91). For Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), the primary objective of such activities is "to help learners perceive the differences between the significant sounds of English" (: 128) since the main obstacle to hearing foreign sounds properly is that "in all learning, we can only interpret what is new and unfamiliar in terms of what we know already – that is to say, we will tend to hear the sounds of a new language through the filter of our first language" (: 128).

Theme 10

'Production' Activities (imitation, reading aloud, choral & individual responses)

Moving on to techniques aimed at improving the learners' productive competence in pronunciation, imitation activities are prevalent in many ELT PRON manuals. I ought to point out that writers do not tend to distinguish between 'imitation' and 'repetition' (the two words are often used interchangeably) and the technique which involves the teacher saying a word and getting the learners to repeat it can be referred to as 'drilling in its most basic form'. Kelly (2000) includes 'drilling/ repetition/ imitation' activities for the practice of pronunciation and so do many other authors: Gilbert (2005a, 2005b), Hancock (2003), Hewings and Goldstein (1999), Celce-Murcia et al (1996), Pennington (1996) and Fitzpatrick (1995). For example, Celce-Murcia et al (1996: 147) recommend for students to become comfortable with typical word stress patterns "to repeat lists of words (all of which share a rhythmic pattern)[26] in unison after the teacher, often tapping out the rhythmic pattern or clapping as they practice". While Gilbert (2005a, 2005b) includes traditional 'listen and repeat' activities, she also advocates the use of the 'quality repetition' technique as follows:

> Quality Repetition is based on a neurologically well-founded approach to learning the rhythm, melody, and sounds of language. Used primarily with Music of English activities, this approach depends both on highly varied encouragements to repeat a short chunk of language at fluent speed and on the psychological support of a choral setting. By repeating a short sentence or phrase in chorus, students learn the phrase "like a little song", fixing it in solid memory.
> Gilbert, 2005a: xiv-xv

Furthermore, 'reading aloud' tasks are encountered in quite a few ELT PRON handbooks (for example, see Kelly, 2000 or Bowen and Marks, 1992). Kelly (2000) believes that the 'reading aloud' technique "has its place when it comes to working on

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[26] For example, lists of words with typical two-syllable patterns may be: 'table/ language/ window/ teacher' and 'begin/ arrive/ select/ around'. Please see Celce-Murcia et al, 1996: 147 for further details for this particular activity.

any aspect of pronunciation, and is particularly useful for working on stress and intonation" (: 81).

Teachers may seek choral responses from all learners in class together or individual responses from each learner to help improve the learners' productive competence in pronunciation. The general consensus among authors of ELT PRON handbooks seems to be that items (e.g. minimal pairs or sentences) should be drilled or repeated by learners chorally as well as individually (see Kelly, 2000; Hewings and Goldstein, 1999; Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Pennington, 1996). At this point, I would like to note an exception; Gilbert (2005a: xiii) believes that it is hard "for students to be courageous when called on to recite words or phrases alone" and "such nervousness has an especially negative effect on pronunciation". For this reason, choral repetition should be preferred. Moreover, for a couple of writers choral repetition should precede individual repetition (e.g. Hewings and Goldstein,1999); "choral drilling can help to build confidence, and gives students the chance to practise pronouncing the drilled item relatively anonymously, without being put on the spot" (Kelly: 2000: 16) and "individual drilling… gives the teacher the chance to ascertain how well individuals are able to pronounce the item being drilled" (ibid: 16).

Theme 11

Pronunciation Teaching Techniques & Teaching/ Learners' Needs

A few writers place great emphasis on the fact that decisions pertaining to the use of specific pronunciation techniques (and not only) should be based on an analysis of learners needs in a particular ESL/ EFL context. This view is put very succinctly by Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) as follows:

> Decisions about whether to rely more on analysis or on intuition, whether to favour an analytic or intuitive approach, how to select and order the sounds to be presented, will largely

depend on the specific situation that learners and teachers find themselves in, the goals they define for themselves, and the conditions under which they operate.

The most important question to ask, however, is likely to be who our students are. We need to take the learners' perspective into account with regards to their feelings about pronouncing a foreign language, their needs, and their goals, and to help them appreciate the relevance of pronunciation to real-life language use. Of course these factors should not just determine the teaching of sounds, but of all aspects of pronunciation.

Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994: 150

Similarly, Pennington (1996) promotes a needs-based approach that focuses on the learners' characteristics (e.g. age and proficiency level), the learners' reasons for studying English and the possibilities and constraints of the specific teaching situation (in relation to factors such as class size and time and resources available). Laroy (1995) points out that the learners' age and level need to be taken into consideration when deciding on pronunciation activities to use.

Concluding remarks

As was mentioned previously in this chapter, the themes in this section (and the previous section) formed the basis for the research questions and research instrument of the research reported in this thesis. Let us present two examples in order to illustrate how this was done. First, both theme 9 (previous section) and theme 1 (this section) emphasised the importance for EFL teachers to have acquired knowledge of phonetics and phonology and received training in the teaching of pronunciation. Therefore, the question of whether or not EFL teachers have acquired knowledge of phonetics and phonology and the question of whether or not they have received training in the teaching of English pronunciation are both questions that any worthwhile study in the practice of pronunciation teaching must address. Thus, the study carried out as part of this thesis will reveal whether or not the participants had knowledge of phonetics and phonology and whether or not they had received training in the teaching of pronunciation as indicated in the teachers' questionnaire and

interview responses. Furthermore, it will examine whether or not those teachers that had knowledge of phonetics/phonology and/or had received training in the teaching of pronunciation responded differently in a statistically significant way to those teachers that did not have knowledge of phonetics/ phonology and had not received any training in the teaching of pronunciation. Second, theme 10 (previous section) and themes 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (this section) all dealt with pronunciation teaching techniques as outlined in ELT and ELT PRON handbooks and manuals. Thus, one of the research questions (see 'Research Question 3', next section this chapter) sought to identify the pronunciation teaching techniques employed by EFL teachers in Greece.

1.3 Research Aim & Research Questions

1.3.1 Research Aim

The general purpose of all research is to increase our knowledge or even "to arrive at some kind of knowledge which was not acquired before the investigation began" (Selinger and Long, 1989 cited in Kapralou and Papadaki, 1997: 112). The main purpose of the research reported in this thesis was to obtain a detailed description of the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in the context of the English language classroom in Thessaloniki, Greece. Its central aim is stated below:

<u>Research Aim</u>

To investigate pronunciation in terms of role, status, models, targets and teaching techniques by consulting both teachers and advanced learners in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Thessaloniki, Greece.

1.3.2 The Research Questions

Bearing in mind that research is a systematic attempt to give answers to certain questions, I wish, at this point in the thesis, to present the reader with the research questions that guided this project:

Research Question 1

1a) What is the status and role of pronunciation, as perceived by the teachers and learners, in terms of the development of speaking and listening skills in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Thessaloniki, Greece?

1b) Are there statistically significant differences in the perception of the status and role of pronunciation amongst respondents according to different independent variables?

Research Question 2

2a) What are the pronunciation models and pronunciation performance targets that the teachers set for the learners? Do they differ from those that the learners wish to achieve?

2b) Are there statistically significant differences in the choice of pronunciation models and performance targets amongst respondents according to different independent variables?

Research Question 3

3a) What techniques do the teachers employ for the teaching of pronunciation?

3b) Are there statistically significant differences in the use of pronunciation teaching techniques amongst respondents according to different independent variables?

Even though these three research questions are separate questions and can be investigated individually, they are inextricably linked. The following example will serve to illustrate the interdependency of the research questions that the research reported in this thesis set out to investigate: once an EFL teacher has decided whether or not to make pronunciation instruction an integral part of his/her teaching, he/she needs to decide on a policy to adopt in terms of pronunciation models and targets; and, once he/she has decided on a policy on pronunciation models and targets he/she will need to decide on the activities and techniques to employ for the teaching of pronunciation. Thus, these three partially autonomous and partially overlapping research questions have all been investigated as part of the research reported in this thesis.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the research that the study reported in this thesis draws from and builds upon; it will consider how far and in what ways the relevant literature has addressed the three research questions of the study of this thesis. Attention will be drawn to the most important findings of previous research with respect to pronunciation status, role, models, targets and teaching techniques. The strengths and weaknesses of the empirical investigations covered in this review will be identified. Throughout this chapter, the reader will be informed about what to expect from the research reported in this thesis as well as why this research is original, interesting, important, useful and timely.

.   This chapter is divided into three sections and each section presents the past and current state of play in terms of theory and research concerning the particular topic it deals with. **Section 2.1 'Pronunciation Status & Role'** focuses on the results of empirical investigations into the place of pronunciation in EFL/ESL classrooms; it presents EFL/ESL teachers' and learners' views as to the status and role of pronunciation in different contexts and teaching situations. **Section 2.2 'Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets'** deals with the complex and controversial issue of pronunciation models and performance targets and summarises the two main viewpoints of the debate concerning which pronunciation model to be used for and which target to be aimed at in the context of teaching EFL/ESL. This section also presents the findings of research studies into EFL/ESL teachers' and learners' views on pronunciation models and targets. **Section 2.3 'Pronunciation Teaching Techniques'** looks at empirical research into the use of pronunciation teaching techniques by English language teachers in different parts of the world.

2.1 Pronunciation Status & Role

In the previous chapter, we saw how attention to pronunciation has shifted over time; how attitudes to pronunciation and its position in the EFL/ESL curriculum have varied considerable over the years through the teaching methods employed, the treatment of pronunciation in ELT manuals and handbooks and from the perspective of scholars and experts in the field of second and foreign language teaching. In this section, I will consider the status and role of pronunciation from the perspective of English language learners and teachers. Unfortunately, my quest for such empirical investigations into the perceived status and role of pronunciation has yielded few studies. It seems that the place of pronunciation in ELT has been addressed in various ways within different teaching approaches and methods as well as from many different points of view (as expressed by scholars in the area of second and foreign language teaching) but not so much from empirically based research. For example, there is little information available on teachers' and learners' views on whether or not pronunciation deserves equal treatment to vocabulary in ELT. I will now move on to present the results of those studies that have given a voice to English language teachers and/or learners in terms of the status and role of pronunciation in TEFL/TESL. There is insufficient space here to describe each study in great detail; however, interested readers can turn to Appendix 2.1 for more information on some of the studies presented here.

The studies

Willing (1988)

Willing (1988) investigated the learning preferences of 517 adult ESL learners in Australia by means of a major empirical survey which adopted a questionnaire

format. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items and, in terms of the interests of this

thesis, 3 items were concerned with different aspects of language which need

emphasis, as follows:

I like to study grammar	no	a little	good	best
I like to learn new words	no	a little	good	best
I like to practise the sounds and pronunciation	no	a little	good	best

Willing, 1988: 106-107

The remaining 27 items concerned other pedagogical issues such as different modes

of teacher behaviour. The data obtained were analysed as follows:

> For each of the learning-preference questions (1-30), a general result was calculated by assigning the value 1 to the response 'No', 2 for 'A little', 3 for 'Good', and 4 for 'Best'. An average level of 'preference' on each question was then calculated, based on all 517 respondents.
>
> Willing, 1988: 112

It is striking that the 'pronunciation' item of the questionnaire was not only rated

more highly compared to the 'vocabulary' and 'grammar' items but had the highest

rating of *all* questionnaire items (see Willing, 1988: 116-117); the 'pronunciation'

item "received an overall score of 3.54 and 62% of all learners marked this as 'best'"

(Willing, 1988: 116). Willing (1988) discusses this finding and the implications of

this finding, as follows:

> In the case of questions rated extremely high, responses may be indicating a perception of inadequately met needs (rather than simple personal 'preferences'). There is little doubt, for instance, that 'sounds and pronunciation' constitutes an area of serious concern to learners at present, in AMES [Adult Migrant Education Service]. Learners quite uniformly rated this learning need very highly, to such an extent that it had the highest average of all items on the survey. There is certainly a prima facie case, following the survey data, for AMES to re-examine its emphases and methods of dealing with pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation.
>
> Willing, 1988: 113

The 'vocabulary' item received a score of 3.38 and 47% of learners rated it as 'best'.

Willing (1988: 120) wrote that "where the ultimate objective is successful interaction

with the English-speaking community, vocabulary development soon becomes of

crucial importance" and, thus, interprets the questionnaire result in relation to the

'vocabulary' item finding as an indication that "in the AMES context this is a subject worthy of attention" (ibid: 120). The 'grammar' item received a score of 3.10 and only 39% of learners rated this as 'best'; "grammar as such was not, in fact, of highest concern to the majority of learners" (Willing, 1988: 118).

Nunan (1988)

Willing's (1988) study provided valuable information on the views of AMES learners but included no information on the views of AMES teachers. A further study was conducted in order to obtain the views of AMES teachers so that teachers' and learners' views could be compared. The survey instrument of the latter study was based on ten of the most and least popular student learning activities of the former study; in terms of the interests of this thesis, two of those included pronunciation practice and vocabulary development. 60 teachers completed the questionnaire which required them to rate those activities according to the perceived degree of importance. The "items were rated and scored in an identical fashion to the Willing study. A comparison was then made between the two sets of data" (Nunan 1988: 92). As far as the 'pronunciation' and 'vocabulary' items are concerned, the following emerged:

Comparison of student and teacher ratings of selected learning activities

Activity	Student	Teacher
Pronunciation Practice	very high	medium
Vocabulary Development	very high	high

Nunan, 1988: 92

Overall, it was found that, with the exception of 'conversation practice', "all other activities are mismatched, some dramatically so, in particular *pronunciation practice* [my italics], error correction…" (Nunan,1988: 92). Nunan (1988) draws the following conclusion:

> The data presented above reveal clear mismatches between learners' and teachers' views of language learning. The comparative study reported above demonstrates mismatches in all but one activity investigated, and quite significant mismatches in half of the activities.

It is striking that learners placed greater emphasis on pronunciation practice than vocabulary development whereas teachers placed greater emphasis on vocabulary development than pronunciation practice. In this respect, Willing's (1988) survey and Nunan's (1988) survey are a valuable contribution to the study of teacher and learner attitudes to pronunciation and present evidence of conflict between teachers' and learners' views. Nunan (1991) wrote that "research into the learning strategy preferences of students has consistently shown that mastery of the sounds and pronunciation of the target language is a high priority for most learners" (: 104).

Peacock (1999)

Another study that provides further evidence in terms of differences in teachers' and learners' perspectives was conducted by Peacock (1999). Peacock (1999) investigated the beliefs about language learning of 202 EFL students (Chinese, first-year 'Science', 'Maths' and 'Engineering' students taking the compulsory EFL course 'English Communication Skills') and 45 EFL teachers at the City University of Hong Kong in China. The primary aim of the study was to determine if differences between student and teacher beliefs about language learning affect learners' proficiency in English. Data were mainly collected by means of a 34-item Likert-scale self-report questionnaire, known as the BALLI[27] which explored teachers' and learners' beliefs on a wide range of different pedagogical issues. Let us see how the learners and teachers responded to the item "it is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent pronunciation":

> 52% of students stated that it is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent, while only 13% of teachers did so. These students put much more value on accent than

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[27] The particular questionnaire is known as the BALLI = 'Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory' (See Appendix 2.1 for more details).

did their teachers; and I propose that many EFL teachers around the world assign less importance to good pronunciation than do their students, and that this mismatch between teacher and student priorities leads to student frustration.

Peacock, 1999: 259

The importance of the 'accent' item was found to be very high among learners of English in four other studies that employed the BALLI as their main data-collection instrument, as follows:

97% of Taiwanese subjects (Yang, 1992)
89% of Korean subjects (Park, 1995)
81% of Korean subjects (Truitt, 1995)
78% and 80% of Turkish subjects (Kunt, 1997)[28]

Data taken from Horwitz (1999)

It is certainly interesting to note that speaking with an excellent accent is regarded as an important goal by different groups of learners varying in cultural background and context of learning English.[29]

Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999)

Cenoz and Lecumberri's (1999) investigated the views of 86 first year 'English studies' university students of the Basque country, Spain on the acquisition of the phonetic component of English. The questionnaire data results indicated "that pronunciation is a difficult and important skill for all learners" (Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 3).

Fraser (2000)

Another major study that took place in Australia, albeit more recently (than Willing's and Nunan's (1988) studies) and with an exclusive focus on pronunciation this time,

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[28] The subjects were divided into two EFL samples in Kunt's (1997) study.
[29] Speaking with an 'excellent accent' raises fundamental issues regarding pronunciation goals and standards; such issues will be explored in detail in Section 1.2 (this chapter) and as part of the 'Discussion & Conclusions' chapter of this thesis.

is that by Fraser (2000). Fraser (2000) reviewed the situation of ESL pronunciation teaching across a wide range of contexts in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne by means of informal interviews with teachers, learners, administrators, researchers, teacher trainers and policy makers. One of the aims of Fraser's (2000) report was "to outline the current status of pronunciation teaching, first from the learners' and then from the teachers' point of view" (: 8). At this point, I ought to note that Fraser (2000) frequently uses the term 'oral communication' instead of the term 'pronunciation' and by that she means 'oral communication for ESL learners'. Fraser's (2000) survey revealed that all groups of learners either needed or wished to acquire a good level of pronunciation but their teachers and the programs/courses they followed failed to meet their needs/desires in this area. For example, it emerged that:

> Many ELICOS [English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students] students are particularly keen to acquire good English pronunciation and constantly call for more work on spoken English. The fact that these language centres are generally little able to respond to this call…reinforces the idea…that part of the problem with lack of provision of oral communication skills for ESL learners generally lies in the lack of methods and materials for teachers in this area.
>
> <div align="right">Fraser, 2000: 19</div>

Fraser (2000) concludes that:

> There is a great need for oral communication tuition-but that this need is being met haphazardly. Though the main need may be for oral communication tuition, ESL learners may find themselves… in ESL classes with a teacher who lacks confidence and skill in teaching oral communication, or in a class with a very skilful teacher who lacks time and resources to give attention to that learner's particular needs.
>
> <div align="right">Fraser, 2000: 20</div>

As far as teachers are concerned, Fraser (2000) reports that the majority of the teachers impressed her with "their awareness of their students' problems with oral communication, their belief in the importance of pronunciation as a component of language classes, and their willingness to spend time and effort investigating ways to help" (: 27). On the negative side, it emerged that even though the majority of the teachers interviewed appeared to be very dedicated to their profession and displayed

great concern for their learners' needs, they were unable to provide adequate and effective pronunciation instruction due to a number of reasons (see below):

> Many language teachers choose not to prioritise pronunciation because they lack confidence and/or skill in teaching this subject. This is by no means the only factor. Many teachers are unable to give the attention to pronunciation that they would like to, due to classes being too large and including too wide a mix of students, the length of courses being too short, and the aims of courses being too diverse.
>
> Fraser, 2000: 11

Overall, Fraser's (2000) survey has produced a very important finding; pronunciation constituted an area of great concern not only for learners, as in the case of Willing (1988) study, but also for teachers. However, it is disappointing that even though teachers and learners agreed on the importance of pronunciation instruction, the importance of pronunciation was not reflected in the teachers' practices and/or content of the various programmes/courses. This particular finding leads us to realise that bridging the gap (if there is one) between teachers' and learners' beliefs is not enough and will not necessarily result in meeting learners' needs in this area. Thus, any study that explores teachers' and learners' views on pedagogical issues should not only to be concerned with differences (if any) in teachers' and learners' perspectives but should go a step further; it should consider whether or not teachers' and learners' perceived priorities are reflected in teachers' practises, classroom material and course aims. To this end, the research reported in this thesis discussed the questionnaire results in the course of the interviews conducted once the teachers' and learners' questionnaire data had been analysed.

Waniek-Klimczak (1997)

Waniek-Klimczak's (1997) questionnaire survey of 120 Polish, first year 'English Philology' students at the University of Lodz demonstrated that virtually all students believed pronunciation to be an important aspect of language competence; 99% of the

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students gave a 'yes' response to the question 'is pronunciation important?'(only two out of the 120 respondents wrote 'I don't know')[30].

Sobkowiak (2002)

Sobkowiak (2002)[31] conducted a large-scale study which involved 645 informants; 75% of respondents said they wished they had more pronunciation practice in their teaching institutions (university or teacher training college). Even though the majority of respondents in Sobkowiak's (2002) study wished for more pronunciation practice, the perceived importance of pronunciation was not found to be greater than that of other language areas; 67% of respondents did not believe good pronunciation to be more important than grammar or vocabulary.

Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005)

Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005) investigated Polish 'English Studies' (ES) as well as 'Economics' and 'Sociology' (E & S) university students' attitudes to pronunciation learning by means of a questionnaire. The data provided information on a number of different areas and issues relevant to pronunciation learning; however, I will confine myself to the part of the survey that "investigated the attitudes of the students towards… the importance of pronunciation as a sub-skill" (Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005: 233-234). The relevant questionnaire item is reproduced below:

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[30] The information regarding the results of this study was reproduced from Sobkowiak (2002) and Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005); I did not have direct access to Waniek-Klimczak's (1997) study.
[31] The information regarding the results of this study was obtained from Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005); I did not have direct access to Sobkowiak's (2002) study.

Which features of spoken language are in your case most important for communication?
(rate on the scale 1=most important to 3= least important)
> grammar:
> vocabulary:
> pronunciation:

Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005: 249

It emerged that ES as well as E & S students pointed to vocabulary as the most important aspect; however, pronunciation was also rated very high, as the second most important area for communication, with grammar clearly the least important of the three. (Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005: 241). Furthermore, when the students were asked if they believe pronunciation to be important, both groups said 'yes' (98% in each group) and Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005: 243) found that "regardless of the reference variety choice and the belief as to the possibility of achieving native-like speech patterns, respondents in both groups have declared pronunciation to be very important for them".

A very positive aspect of the studies conducted in Poland is that pronunciation was regarded as an important area of English language learning by the majority of the students that took part in them. However, the relative importance of pronunciation was not as high as one may have expected; in Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak's (2005) study, the perceived importance of pronunciation for communication was found to be lower than that of vocabulary and in Sobkowiak's (2002) study, the perceived importance of pronunciation was not found to be greater than that of vocabulary and grammar.

Kanellou (2001)

Moving on to Greece, no studies that explore EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions as to the status of pronunciation exist. There is only one exception; a decade ago, the author of this thesis carried out a small-scale study into EFL teachers' and learners'

attitudes towards pronunciation in Thessaloniki, Greece. 26 teachers and 23 learners (young adults) participated in the study and data collection methods included questionnaires and interviews. One of the study's aims was to reveal the perceived status of pronunciation in comparison to that of vocabulary and grammar. The relevant questionnaire item is reproduced below:

Which of the following do you think is more important in teaching [32] English?
Please circle accordingly by using the following scale:
0= not important, 1= important, 2= very important

a. Grammar   0   1   2
b. Vocabulary   0   1   2
c. Pronunciation 0   1   2

Kanellou, 2001: Appendix 1

It emerged that 78% of learners regarded pronunciation as a 'very important' area for language learning and 22% regarded it as 'important'. As for the teachers, only 27% regarded it as 'very important' and 73% as 'important'. Kanellou (2001: 36) pointed out that improving pronunciation skills emerged to be an area of great concern for the majority of learners but not for the majority of teachers. Overall, the teachers' were more concerned with the learners' mastery of grammar and vocabulary development; "more than 70% of the teachers believe that grammar and vocabulary deserve a 'very important' place in the language classroom, whereas pronunciation deserves an 'important' one" (Kanellou, 2001: 31). Kanellou (2001) attributed the teachers' greater emphasis on vocabulary and grammar than pronunciation to the teaching approach employed[33]; more than 70% of the teachers claimed to use CLT in the classroom; interestingly, those teachers who claimed to only use the audio-lingual method (23%) viewed pronunciation as important as vocabulary and grammar.

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[32] In the student version of this questionnaire, 'teaching' was replaced by 'learning'.
[33] For information on the relationship between teaching approach/method employed and the status of pronunciation, please refer back to Section 1.1.1, Chapter 1.

Kanellou's (2001) study can be seen as a prelude to the study carried out as part of this thesis. It will certainly be interesting to see whether or not nowadays there are still discrepancies between EFL teachers and learners' beliefs as to the importance of pronunciation in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Re-cap of main findings of studies

I will now concentrate on the main findings of the studies reviewed in this section and what these entail in terms of the research reported in this thesis. Overall, the studies have produced a very important finding; great importance is assigned to pronunciation by EFL and ESL learners in a variety of contexts worldwide (Willing, 1988; Peacock, 1999; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Fraser, 2000; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Kanellou, 2001; Sobkowiak, 2002; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005). However, pronunciation is accorded a less important role by EFL and ESL teachers; evidence of conflict between teachers' and learners' views in this area was observed in the following studies: Willing (1988) and Nunan (1988)[34], Peacock (1999), and Kanellou (2001). And, even when pronunciation was found to constitute an area of great concern for teachers and learners, teachers and courses failed to respond to this need (see Fraser, 2000). Moreover, even though pronunciation was regarded as a very important area by EFL learners, a few studies demonstrated that its relative importance was not as high as one might have been expected; in Kanellou's (2001) study and in Sobkowiak's (2002) study the perceived importance of pronunciation was not found to be greater than that of vocabulary and in Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak's (2005) study, the perceived importance of pronunciation was found to be lower than that of vocabulary.

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[34] I would like to remind the reader that the Nunan (1988) study was a follow up to the Willing (1988) study.

For Levis (2005: 369) it is clear that, currently, pronunciation deserves neither to be unfairly elevated to the central skill in language learning nor to be banished to irrelevance. For pronunciation to begin to be viewed through a different lens, voicing such opinions is important. However, for major changes to take place in terms of its place in the curriculum, there is a great need for large-scale studies into the needs, wishes and expectations of learners of English in relation to pronunciation in different teaching situations and contexts and at both national and transnational levels. Nowadays the general consensus seems to be that teaching that is aimed at meeting learners' needs leads to more effective learning outcomes[35] and a few studies that demonstrate that learners attach great importance to pronunciation exist already. If it is revealed by further, more comprehensive, systematic and recent research that many EFL learners express the view that the practice of pronunciation deserves and equal place to i.e. the development of vocabulary, and, thus, a shift in the status of pronunciation will meet learners' needs and wishes more sufficiently, then its status needs to be enhanced. Against this backdrop, the research reported in this thesis is both important and timely as it represents an attempt to seek to establish a rightful place for pronunciation in TEFL by consulting teachers and learners by means of a large-scale quantitative survey. This research will shed light on the needs and desires of EFL learners in relation to pronunciation in the context of an internationally oriented European city (Thessaloniki) and will deal with questions such as 'which area of language is more important for communication'; its results can perhaps be extended to other EFL student populations in Europe (or, at least, inspire research that will address similar questions in other contexts). Finally, learners' needs will not only

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[35] Please refer back to Section 1.1.2, Chapter 1 for a discussion of this matter.

be explored from the learners' perspective but also from the teachers' in order to address and account for any discrepancies that may emerge.

<u>Evaluation of studies</u>

I will now draw attention to any weaknesses and limitations that pertain to the studies reviewed and examine how these did not apply or were overcome/ minimised in the research reported in this thesis (our study):

1) Half of the studies were carried out a long time ago; (Willing, 1988; Nunan, 1988; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Peacock, 1999). It is legitimate to wonder, for example, if a more recent study on AMES teachers and learners would yield the same results as Willing's and Nunan's (1988) studies. Our study has taken place towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

2) Methodological inadequacies: most of the studies utilised only one method of data collection and/or gathered only one type of data[36]; for example, Willing (1988), Nunan (1988), Waniek-Klimczak (1997), Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) and Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005) employed the questionnaire method and yielded quantitative data. Why this is a limitation will become clearer in Chapter 3 (this thesis) which presents the advantages of employing more than one method of data collection and combining quantitative and qualitative data. Here, it is worth noting that Fraser's (2000) study would have benefited from the collection and analysis of quantitative data in addition to the qualitative data that the interviews yielded. This was a large-scale project whose aims were to review the situation of pronunciation teaching across a range of contexts in Australia, to identify the problems of a great variety of learners with respect to English pronunciation and to

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[36] The only exceptions were Peacock's (1999) study and Kanellou's (2001) study; both used questionnaires and interviews.

make appropriate recommendations; the results would have been more convincing and would have made her case stronger if presented in terms of numbers; for example, it would have been useful to indicate the percentage of teachers that thought that x is important rather than simply stating 'many teachers' or 'the majority of teachers' thought so. This is one of the reasons why the research in this thesis did supplement its quantitative methodology with the collection and analysis of qualitative data. On a different matter, Kanellou's (2001) study suffers from a number of weaknesses that pertain to its methodology[37]. A sample size of around 30 participants may be "held by many to be the minimum number of cases if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data" (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 90); nevertheless, a larger sample (as in the case of our study), and provided that the appropriate sampling procedures have been followed, would have made Kanellou's (2001) case stronger[38]. Also, the use of a five-point Likert scale (as in the case of our study) would have provided a more accurate picture of the relative importance of pronunciation than the three point scale employed in Kanellou's (2001) study[39].

3) A few studies did not focus exclusively on pronunciation (Willing, 1988; Nunan, 1988; Peacock, 1999). Such studies do not offer a detailed discussion on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching within an EFL/ESL context but address it rather superficially; of course, this will not be the case in our study.

4) Many studies explored EFL/ESL learners' views but had no information on teachers' views (Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Sobkowiak,

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[37] Even though the researcher and author of the particular MA dissertation had a basic knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, at the time she lacked a thorough understanding of all the variables, parameters and issues involved in questionnaire construction and the statistical analysis of questionnaire data.

[38] Having said that, we need to bear in mind that this was a small-scale study carried out as part of the Masters Degree in 'Applied Linguistics' pursued by the researcher at the University of Cardiff (2000-2001). Thus, certain limitations due to time and access issues applied to the particular research.

[39] A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different scales as well as the rationale underpinning the scale utilised for measuring teachers' and learners' attitudes in the questionnaire employed in the study reported in this thesis will appear in the 'Methodology' chapter of this thesis.

2002; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005). This is an obvious drawback in an era when comparing teachers' and learners' views on pedagogical issues has become important[40]; in the case of our study, teachers' and learners' views were obtained.

5) In many studies, the learners belonged to a special group of students; that of university students training to become teachers of English (Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberrri, 1999; Sobkowiak, 2002; Waniek-Klimczak, 2005[41]). We need to bear in mind that the views of students who have chosen English as their major field of studies at university level are not necessarily representative of the views of high school EFL students; also, such university students do not comprise the majority of the EFL student population in non-English speaking countries. Furthermore, the learners in Willing's (1988) and Fraser's (2000) studies were all adult ESL learners and the learners in Peacock's (1999) and Kanellou's (2001) studies were all adult EFL students. There is certainly a lack of studies with respect to the views of teenage EFL students (which may be different to those of adult EFL students), and thus, our study is a useful contribution in this area.

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[40] Please refer back to Section 1.1.2 , Chapter 1.
[41] I ought to remind the reader that in Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005), one group of students comprised 'English Studies' students; however, the other group comprised 'Economics and Sociology' students.

2.2 Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets

A question that any EFL/ESL teacher in any teaching situation needs to address is put very succinctly by Dauer (2005), as follows:

> Standard English, the variety that is taught in schools everywhere, is primarily a written language. It is not an accent and has no single agreed upon pronunciation. Therefore, the first question any pronunciation teacher must address is, what accent should I teach?
>
> Dauer, 2005: 243

Indeed, Standard English can be spoken with a variety of regional accents; so, which accent should be adopted as a pronunciation model in the context of the EFL/ESL classroom? The choice of an appropriate pronunciation model for ELT is a complex and controversial issue; for example, the issue of whether or not a native-speaker (NS) model should be used has been debated extensively in the relevant literature and in various settings (ranging from conferences to on-line discussion forums) and has not been resolved yet. Moreover, the issue of whether or not NS competence in pronunciation is an appropriate target for EFL/ESL learners has polarised scholars, researchers and teachers into two groups: those in favour of what might be termed as the 'nativeness principle' and those in favour of what might be termed as the 'intelligibility principle'. The nativeness and intelligibility principles have long influenced and continue to influence pronunciation research and pedagogy to this day. The nativeness principle holds that it is both possible and desirable to achieve native-like pronunciation (NLP) in a foreign language and the intelligibility principle holds that learners simply need to be understandable (see Levis, 2005); "the intelligibility principle recognizes that communication can be remarkably successful when foreign accents are noticeable or even strong" (Munro and Derwing, 1999 cited in Levis, 2005: 370).

The literature on which principle to adhere to and which pronunciation model to adopt in teaching English pronunciation is vast and cannot all be mentioned here. However, a selection of what might be regarded as the most prominent contributions to the discussion concerning pronunciation models and targets will appear in this section. I will confine myself to the two main viewpoints; the NS model as advocated by Gimson (see Cruttenden, 2001) and the sociolinguistic model as proposed by Jenkins (see Jenkins, 2000). I will also present the findings of research studies into EFL/ESL teachers' and learners' views on pronunciation models and targets.

The 'intelligibility' concept

First, I need to explain what is denoted by 'intelligibility' as this term will be used throughout this section and the whole thesis. Unfortunately, providing a definition for 'intelligibility' is a challenge because "much discussion of the construct has suffered from a failure to arrive at a clear consensus" (Field, 2005: 400). Bearing in mind that, there is "no broad agreement on a definition of the term 'intelligibility': it can mean different things to different people" (Jenkins, 2000: 71) and, that, "researchers have employed various definitions of intelligibility", I will make the reader aware of my interpretation of the concept. Since this thesis explores the place and practice of *pronunciation* teaching and, as such, places great emphasis on the acoustic signal of L2 speech, it is sensible to adopt Smith and Nelson's (1985) definition of 'intelligibility' (also endorsed by Jenkins, 2000), and use the term in its narrow sense; that is, in order to denote the recognition of the phonological form of a word or utterance. For a detailed discussion of the concept of intelligibility including the definition provided by Smith and Nelson (1985), interested readers can consult Appendix 2.2.

For Jenkins (2000) 'intelligibility' is the most important level of meaning because it is a prerequisite for successful communication. Given the reciprocal dimension of speech, it is essential for EFL/ESL learners not only to understand but also to be understood. And, since learners cannot be intelligible on their own, it is important to ask 'intelligible to whom?'. As the reader can see, we cannot have a context-independent definition for 'intelligibility'. Generally, it is helpful to distinguish between four kinds of situation[42]: 1. when a non-native speaker (NNS) of English is talking with a NS of English with a standard accent, 2. when a NNS of English is talking with a NS of English with a non-standard accent, 3. when a NNS is talking with another NNS with a different first language (L1) and, 4. when a NNS is talking with another NNS with the same L1. It is interesting to note that Jenkins (2000) is concerned with the productive and receptive intelligibility of speakers' discourse only among NNSs of English. She justifies her position by writing that nowadays NNSs of English outnumber NSs and English is mainly used for international communication rather than for communication with its NSs (Jenkins, 2000.) However, throughout this thesis I will need to take into account all four kinds of situation described above since it is not possible to predict the identity of all potential interlocutors for EFL learners; on the contrary, I can assume that Greek learners will want to be able to interact with NSs of English as well as NNSs just like Wells (2005a: 102) assumed that Polish learners will want to interact with both NSs and NNSs of English.

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[42] The 4 situations were described by Tench (2001) as part of a debate on 'Pronunciation Standards' (SUPRAS – list).

<u>Gimson's position on pronunciation models and targets</u>

I will now move on to present Gimson's view on pronunciation models and targets for ELT as described in the 6th edition of *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* (2001) which has been extensively revised and updated by Alan Cruttenden[43]. There is no space here to do justice to Gimson's contribution in terms of the description and teaching of English pronunciation; however, interested readers can turn to Appendix 2.2 (which also includes additional details in terms of the information presented here).The reader of *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* (2001) is first informed about which pronunciation model has been used and is still used nowadays in ELT and is then made aware of Gimson's stance towards pronunciation models in ELT. According to Gimson, "RP has traditionally been the type of pronunciation taught to learners of English as an L2" (Cruttenden, 2001: 81) and "continues to serve as a model in many parts of the world; if a model is used at all, the choice is still effectively between RP and General American" (ibid, 2001: 81). Received Pronunciation (RP), is described as follows: "the term suggesting that it is the result of social judgement rather than that of an official decision as to what is 'correct' or 'wrong'… the type which was most widely understood and excited less prejudice of a regional kind" (Cruttenden, 2001: 78-79). As for General American (GA), it can be regarded as "that form of American which does not have marked regional characteristics (and is in this way comparable to RP)" (Cruttenden, 2001: 85).

According to Gimson, "the decisive criteria in the choice of any teaching model must be that it has wide currency, is widely and readily understood, is adequately described in textbooks, and has ample recorded material for the learner" (Cruttenden, 2001: 297). Thus, "the more realistic, immediate, solution lies in the

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[43] Alan Cruttenden has "managed to incorporate new findings and developments while preserving the original spirit of the book" (Kaltenboeck, 2002: 432).

choice of one of the main native-speaker forms of English as the basic model, e.g. a representative form of British or American pronunciation" (Cruttenden, 2001: 297). Gimson even considers "the possibility of the selection for geographical reasons of other [native-speaker] forms [of pronunciation] such as Australian" (Cruttenden, 2001: 297). Cruttenden (2001) sums up Gimson's position on the choice of EFL pronunciation models, as follows:

> The position maintained in this book is that General RP remains the best British standard to aim at because it remains the most regionally neutral and, bearing in mind that any target model aimed at by foreign learners is almost certain to be diluted by their own regional characteristics, it seems appropriate that at least the initial target should be regionally neutral. It is also the case that available textbooks (including this one) and the standard pronouncing dictionaries are based on General RP.
>
> Cruttenden, 2001: 298

Moving on to pronunciation performance targets, Gimson states that if a learner attempts to approximate to RP or some other native standard, his/her achievement may lie somewhere between two extremes; "the lowest requirement can be described as one of MINIMAL GENERAL INTELLIGIBILITY…at the other extreme, the learner may be said to achieve a performance of HIGH ACCEPTABILITY" (Cruttenden, 2001: 298-299). Let us now see what these two levels entail in terms of learners' performance with respect to RP:

> High acceptability in RP is defined as a level of attainment in production which is as readily intelligible as that of a native RP speaker and which is not immediately identifiable as foreign, and as a level of receptive ability which allows the foreign listener to understand without difficulty all varieties and styles of RP.
>
> Cruttenden, 2001: 302

> This type of performance [minimal general intelligibility] is one which preserves the chief elements of the RP system and is capable of conveying a message with some ease (in a given context) to a native English listener. It is regarded as essential that the accentual characteristics of English (including rhythmic features and the associated obscuration of weak syllables) should be retained, as well as the ability to produce the common consonant clusters. But it is possible to reduce the segmental inventory of English very considerably and still retain a good level of intelligibility.
>
> Cruttenden, 2001: 307-308

It is not surprising that both levels of speaker proficiency in RP are expressed in terms of a NS listener; after all, they are both the possible outcome of a learner's attempt to

follow a NS model of English pronunciation. Gimson recognises both levels as acceptable performance targets and explains that they serve different learning purposes, as follows:

> The great majority of foreign learners will have a severely practical purpose for acquiring English and will see no great advantage in learning other than to a level of MINIMAL GENERAL INTELLIGIBILITY. Indeed, the learner may derive some advantage from retaining a clearly foreign image in his dealings with other English speakers, e.g. the waiter or the taxi driver, whose interaction in English, is unlikely to need to progress beyond a level of basic intelligibility…
>
> There will, however, be many learners who, for academic reasons or because their work requires them to deal on equal terms with speakers in or from other regions of the world, wish to communicate easily without signalling too blatantly their regional origin; such learners will aim at HIGH ACCEPTABILITY.

Cruttenden, 2001: 299

Jenkins's position on pronunciation models and targets

Let us move on to Jenkins's position in terms of pronunciation model(s) and performance target(s) in ELT, as presented in *The Phonology of English as an International Language* (2000), which is a pioneering empirical study of English as a Lingua Franca Phonology. According to Jenkins (2000), RP and GA do not constitute appropriate models on the following grounds (for additional reasons, see Jenkins, 2000: 15, 204-205):

1) According to Crystal (1995), "less than three per cent of the British population speak RP in its pure form" (: 365). Daniels (1995) goes as far as to refer to RP speakers as the 'phantom speakers of English' because of the unlikelihood of a learner coming into contact with one of them (see Jenkins, 2000: 14). As for GA, "around 33 per cent of the combined population of the USA and Canada speaks with a GA accent or, to put it the other way, around two-thirds of the population do not" (Jenkins, 2000: 204).

2) RP has changed over time and since there are clear distinctions between the speech of older and younger RP speakers "there is a risk of equipping learners with old-fashioned pronunciation." (Jenkins, 2000: 15).

Here, I would like to point out that even though RP and GA are not used extensively among NSs of English, they are easily understood by NSs and NNSs alike. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning, the efforts made to cater for and describe the changes that RP has undergone over time by J.C. Wells; see, for example, Wells's (2008) *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* which includes results of pronunciation preference polls in terms of younger and older speakers.

Jenkins (2000) does not only reject RP and GA but questions and argues against the use of all NS models for learners of English. Let us follow the rationale that underpins her position as it emerges from her own description of the changes that have taken place and have had an influence on ELT worldwide:

> Until fairly recently… learners wished primarily to be able to communicate effectively with native speakers of English, who were considered by all to be the owners of the language, guardians of its standards, and arbiters of acceptable pedagogic norms. This was the situation regardless of the status of English as a 'foreign' or 'second' language, respectively EFL (taught to those for whom English had no internal function in their L1 country) and ESL (taught either to those for whom English had no internal function in their L1 country or to those who had emigrated to English L1 countries). In order to achieve their goal, it was considered essential for these 'non-native speakers' to approximate as closely as possible to the native standard, particularly with respect to a single prestige accent, Received Pronunciation (RP)…
>
> However, in recent years worldwide political and commercial developments[44]… [metamorphosed English] from a foreign language into an international one. Its most frequent use outside the L1 countries (the 'English as a Native Language', or ENL, countries like the UK, the USA, Canada, and Australia) and the ESL countries is between speakers *neither* [her italics] of whom learnt it as an L1. Thus, it differs crucially from other foreign languages such as Spanish, Japanese, and so on, which continue to be learnt predominantly for communication with their L1 speakers, usually in the L1 country.
>
> Jenkins, 2000: 5-7

Jenkins (2000: 1) states that "for the first time in the history of the English language, second language speakers outnumber those for whom it is the mother tongue, and

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[44] "This is not the place for a detailed account of events and, for such, the reader is referred to the works of Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1994), and Crystal (1997)" (Jenkins, 2000: 5-6).

interaction in English increasingly involves no first language speakers whatsoever"

and maintains that English is "an international language owned by all who use it" (:

11). Since, nowadays, English is primarily used for communication among NNSs of

English[45] and is to be viewed as an 'international language' (EIL)/'lingua franca'

(ELF) rather than a 'foreign language' (EFL), questions regarding appropriate

pronunciation models and targets ought to be raised and explored. Jenkins (2000)

describes this issue very eloquently:

> In view of these worldwide transitions in the function, contexts of use, and ownership of
> English, it was inevitable that people would ultimately begin to question traditional EFL
> pronunciation goals. The two main issues at stake were, and still are, first, the extent to which
> it is relevant to try to instil L1 pronunciation norms into learners who are rarely likely to
> communicate with an L1 (especially an RP) speaker of English; and second, how to promote
> international intelligibility in the face of the vast expansion in the number of EIL varieties and
> their speakers.
>
> <div align="right">Jenkins, 2000: 11</div>

Jenkins (2000) approaches pronunciation models and performance targets only from

the perspective of NNSs of English unlike Gimson, who views NSs as having an

important role to play in the matter. According to Jenkins (2000: 221) "it is no longer

relevant for learners to approximate to 'NS' accents; they need not even concern

themselves primarily with their intelligibility for 'NS' listeners, nor with their own

ability to understand the latter. Their pronunciation goal is, above all, one of

international intelligibility". She maintains that her approach to pronunciation

pedagogy derives essentially from a concern for the sociolinguistic factors involved in

the use of ELF (Jenkins, 2000: 195). For example, NNSs of English may not try to

eradicate their L1 accent when conversing in English as a means of preserving their

L1 identity; at the same time though, they would not like their L1 accent to impede

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[45] Jenkins (2000) provides information on the actual numbers of English language speakers worldwide,
as estimated by Crystal: "Crystal suggests that if one accepts a criterion of 'reasonable competence',
there may be as many as 1,350 million second language speakers compared to around 337 million first
language speakers." (1997: 60-1 cited in Jenkins, 2000: 1).

intelligibility[46]. Jenkins (2000) claims that her pronunciation syllabus, the Lingua Franca Core (LFC), can fulfil "the dual needs of international intelligibility and local identity" (: 233). As such, it is legitimate to refer to the LFC as a 'sociolinguistic' model. However, Jenkins (2000) does not see the LFC as a model: "I prefer not to describe my approach in terms of a 'model' at all but rather in terms of a range of EIL varieties" (: 131). Nevertheless, I will be referring to the LFC as a model for practical reasons; so as to emphasise that it can function as an alternative to NS models.

Since it is redundant for EIL learners to conform to NS norms, no NS model can serve as an appropriate pedagogic model. Jenkins (2000) recommends the replacement of L1 pronunciation models by a phonological 'core' for EIL: "we can establish some sort of pronunciation core of intelligibility such that exists among L1 varieties of English and then set about finding ways to encourage speakers to adjust their speech in its direction as and when necessary" (: 21). Jenkins (2000) proposes a pedagogical core of phonological intelligibility for speakers of EIL, the LFC, as follows:

> This [the LFC] has been established by means of prioritizing those pronunciation features identified in my interlanguage (ILT) data (two studies, an experiment, and a corpus of field observations) as impeding mutual intelligibility.
>   My phonological core… is an attempt – with EIL primarily in mind – to scale down the phonological task for the majority of learners, by leaving to the individual teacher's discretion and to later acquisition outside the classroom the learning of peripheral details, and focusing pedagogic attention on those items which are essential in terms of intelligible pronunciation. This kind of prioritizing seems to me not only to be far more relevant in EIL communication, but also to be far more realistic in its likelihood of meeting with classroom success.
>
> <div align="right">Jenkins, 2000: 123</div>

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[46] For a detailed discussion on the sociolinguistic rationale that underpins Jenkins's pronunciation syllabus, the Lingua Franca Core, the reader may wish to consult the section entitled 'The sociolinguistics of EIL phonology' (Jenkins, 2000: 202-207) as well as the section entitled 'The social psychology of EIL phonology' (ibid, 2000: 207-212) in Jenkins's (2000) book *The Phonology of English as an International Language*.

Jenkins's (2000) LFC is grounded in RP and GA but focuses only on those features which were found to be crucial for comprehension between NNSs of English[47]; most consonant sounds, appropriate consonant cluster simplification, vowel length distinctions and nuclear stress. "However", she continues, "when fine tuning the LFC, I took two other phenomena into account: firstly the teachability-learnability distinction, and secondly the role of phonological universals." (Jenkins, 2000: 132).

At this point, it is worth noting that the LFC has not been the only attempt to provide teachers and learners of English with a core of essential pronunciation features; for information on other phonological cores, i.e. Gimson's (1978) 'Rudimentary International Pronunciation' and Jenner's (1989) 'Common Core', interested readers can consult Appendix 2.2.

The debate on pronunciation models and targets & the value of this research

The LFC has opened a great debate on pronunciation models and targets; according to Szpyra-Kozlowska (2005: 151), it is "one of the most hotly debated and controversial recent proposals in the area of English pronunciation pedagogy". Indeed, it has divided scholars, researchers, phoneticians, applied linguists and teachers into two camps; those that support the LFC and those that object to the LFC. In other words, there are those who argue that NS models should no longer be used in teaching English pronunciation (and as point of reference against which to judge English language learners' pronunciation) and embrace the LFC. For example, Keys and Walker (2002: 298) write that they "feel strongly in favour of the general principles that are contained in Jennifer Jenkins's work". McKay (2002: 28) maintains that "a

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[47] Please see the section entitled 'Features of the Lingua Franca Core' of Jenkins's (2000) book (: 134-157) for a detailed description of the elements that make up the Lingua Franca Core.

native-speaker norm in English language research and pedagogy is not relevant in many contexts in which English is used as an international language" and considers Jenkins's (2000) work to be "one of the most balanced discussions of how to resolve" the conflict "between the need to preserve international intelligibility and respect for the desire of some bilingual users of English to preserve their own identity" (McKay, 2002: 71). And, there are those who reject the LFC and argue for the relevance of NS models and the importance of attempting to approximate to NS norms. For example, Sobkowiak (2005: 144) writes that "in my whole teaching career I have not met a Pole who would not like to sound like a native, or who would fear to step on this 'road of no return' leading him to perfect his English accent" and Wells (2005a: 102) points out that his "own aspiration in learning languages is NS-like proficiency… if it were suggested that I should not even aim so high, I should feel short-changed". As this thesis is going to print, this debate continues to be one of the liveliest debates in the context of ELT[48].

It seems to me that scholars can carry on using books, journal papers or conference halls to present different theories on which pronunciation model(s) or target(s) to adopt and argue for the superiority of one model over another for an indefinite period of time and, still, not arrive at a general consensus. However, since "currently pronunciation theory, research, and practice are in transition" (Levis, 2005: 377), this is the time to put the debate of scholars on-hold; it is time to 'get our hands dirty', to carry out actual research, to find out what happens in EFL/ESL classrooms and obtain teachers and learners' views on pronunciation models and targets. After all, language policies cannot be formulated in a theoretical vacuum; decisions about which pronunciation models to follow and which targets to aim at must be based on

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[48] Dziubalska-Kowałczyk and Przedlacka (2005) 'English Pronunciation Models: A Changing Scene' includes a selection of papers in favour of the LFC as well as papers in favour of NS models.

actual evidence in the form of EFL learners' needs and wishes and teachers' views

and classroom practices. Thus, I agree with Timmis (2002) view, reproduced below:

> the question of whether students should conform to native-speaker norms of English, in an era when English is increasingly used in international contexts, is one which has been keenly debated in recent years… however, it is not a debate in which the voice of students and classroom teachers have been heard.
>
> Timmis, 2002: 240

Thus, while bearing in mind the two main different viewpoints on the debate on

pronunciation models and targets (i.e. Gimson's NS model and Jenkins's

sociolinguistic model), one of the aims of this research was to discover which

pronunciation models and targets are followed in TEFL in Greece and whether or not

they are appropriate in relation to the contexts in which the learners intend to use

English. Thus, the learners were asked in which context(s) they anticipate to use

English so that we could decipher who the interlocutors would be and make

appropriate recommendations as to models to be adopted and targets to be aimed at.

Furthermore, the aim was also to compare teachers' and learners' views with respect

to pronunciation models and targets to see if there is a gap between what the teachers

do and what the learners want. For example, they were asked to choose between

'native-speaker competence' and 'accented international intelligibility' as targets for

the learners' pronunciation and, also, to justify their choice. The results that the

particular question will yield may serve to bring out any differences in the opinions of

teachers and learners and may also shed light on why such differences may exist. The

next step will be to try to understand which views are more appropriate in the light of

current thinking and developments in terms of the use of English as well as the

teaching and learning of English worldwide and suggest how those that hold 'wrong'

views may be convinced to see things differently. Hopefully, this research will set a

precedent other researchers will follow and apply to different teaching situations.

Definitions for 'Inner Circle', 'Outer Circle' & 'Expanding Circle'

Before moving on to the results of research studies into teachers' and/or learners' attitudes to pronunciation models and targets, I would like to briefly explain what the terms 'inner circle', 'outer circle' and 'expanding circle' (coined by Kachru in 1985 to illustrate the various roles English serves in different countries worldwide) mean as they will be used throughout the thesis. Seidlhofer (2003) describes Kachru's (1985) circles very succinctly as follows: "we can say that English is a first language in the Inner Circle, an additional language in the Outer Circle, and a foreign language in the Expanding Circle" (: 9). Of course, the EIL proponents/LFC supporters would disagree with the use of the term EFL; nevertheless, this term is still used by scholars, researchers, language teachers and learners in a variety of contexts worldwide (from journal papers to ELT job advertisements) and I will be using it throughout this thesis. Interested readers can see Appendix 2.2 for Kachru's (1985) definitions.

The studies

Here I will begin with studies conducted in the late 1990s and will then move on to studies conducted in the first decade of the 21st century. The reader will notice that as we move to more recent studies, attention is directed towards the issue of EIL and its perceived influence on English language pedagogy. Overall, I will refer to studies carried out in different parts of the world; nevertheless, I will conclude my review by focusing on studies that have taken place in Greece since this is also the location of the research reported in this thesis.

Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999)

Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) investigated the views of 86 first year 'English studies' university students of the Basque country, Spain on the acquisition of the phonetic component of English. The questionnaire data revealed that the participants believed that "the best way to acquire phonetic competence is to establish contact with native speakers of English" (Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 11). If contact with NSs is viewed as an important factor in the acquisition of English pronunciation, we can assume that those learners were in favour of NS models and targets. As far as the learners' attitudes towards different English accents are concerned, the following emerged:

> Learners are… aware of the different degree of difficulty of English accents, and they seem to rate this according to their own experience and their contact with the accent. Accents in the British Isles are considered easier than American accents, and this pattern corresponds to the popularity that English courses in the south of England and Ireland enjoy in the Basque Country and also with learning materials in which RP is used as a model. Learners hold more favourable attitudes towards those accents closer to their experience; British and Irish are rated more favourably than American accents.
>
> Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 12

Dalton-Puffer et al (1997)

132 'English Department' students of Vienna University in Austria were asked to evaluate three native accents of English (RP, near RP and GA) and two Austrian non-native accents of English (an 'Austrian-British' accent and an 'Austrian-American' accent in response to the modified matched-guise test[49]. NS accents were preferred to NN ones and "more specifically, the RP speaker was rated best, the OEBr [the speaker of 'Austrian-British' English] last and the other three in between (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997: 125). It emerged that the subjects of the study displayed a

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[49] The present study used a modified matched guise methodology, the 'verbal guise' method (Cooper, 1975: 5; Teufel, 1995: 75). Instead of one speaker assuming different guises, several speakers were used on the stimulus tape.

preference for the NS variety, i.e. RP, with which they had become familiar in school

or through travel:

> The responses showed that British English, traditionally preferred in Austria, is still the most popular model: more than two-thirds of the respondents attempt to learn British English and its standard accent – RP. This orientation towards British English is, of course, supported by the British Isles' geographical closeness to Austria. While about 30 percent of the respondents have already spent more than one month in the UK, only 17 percent have been to the USA, and a mere 4 percent to Canada, Australia or other English-speaking countries further afield.
> Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997: 115

Dalton-Puffer et al (1997) concluded that "due to traditional preferences and present

models offered at schools, the preferred accent is mostly RP. For pronunciation

teaching this means that the norms put up by English teachers in Austria are also

widely accepted by their students" (: 126). Nevertheless, it must be noted that the

researchers did not seek directly the teachers' views on this matter; no teachers

participated in the study they conducted.

Waniek-Klimczak (1997)

As part of a questionnaire survey of 120 first year 'English Philology' university

students in Poland, only 43% said that the goal of pronunciation teaching should be

the achievement of NLP. RP was chosen as the accent that was nicer and easier to

understand by the majority of respondents; 81% would like to speak with an RP

accent and the remainder would like to speak with a GA accent[50]. The discrepancy

between the students' answers to the question of 'which accent they would like to

speak' and 'what are the most important goals in pronunciation teaching' was

interpreted as a sign of the students' judgement as to the possibility of reaching the

goal of a native-like accent.

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[50] The information regarding the results of this study was obtained from Sobkowiak (2005: 139) and Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005: 131) as I did not have direct access to the particular study.

Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005)

Nearly a decade later, Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005) investigated Polish 'English studies' (ES) as well as 'Economics and Sociology' (E & S) university students' preferences and aims in relation to English pronunciation. Both groups (ES and E & S students) "showed a strong preference for British English as a model for speech development" (Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005: 229). Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005) attributed the students' greater preference for British English over American English as a model for their speaking to their English language learning experience so far (which was similar in both groups). However, when the students were asked whether they believed that speaking like NSs of the selected variety was possible in their case, the majority of ES students said 'yes' (81%) whereas only 43% of E & S students said 'yes'[51](Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005: 241-242). Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005: 229) concluded that E & S students are less concerned with native-like speech patterns because they "expect to use English for international communication more often than for communication with native speakers".

Janicka et al (2005)

As part of yet another questionnaire survey on pronunciation models and targets conducted in Poland, 240 'English Philology' university students were asked: 'which accent are you taught, British or American?' and 'would you as a teacher teach a specific pronunciation? What would it be? Why?' (Janicka et al, 2005: 253). It emerged that:

(1) IFA[52] students are strongly in favour of a native-like model of pronunciation

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[51] A further 44% of the E & S students' gave 'I don't know' answers.
[52] The students were referred to as IFA from Polish 'Instytut Filologii Angielskiej'.

(2) Achieving a native-like accent is extremely high on the respondents' priority list (nearly all the subjects claimed to aspire to a near-native accent)

(3) The respondents would impose an American or British standard on their prospective students

Janicka et al, 2005: 258

According to Janicka et al (2005: 257), the key finding of the questionnaire was that "almost all subjects declared voluntarily that the model must be native-like… the learners do see the need and insist on adopting a native-like model". The students' motivations behind their choice of a native-like model are diverse, from purely emotional, attitudinal and aesthetic to entirely practical. For example, "a vast majority of students believe that native-like pronunciation is an integral part of foreign language competence" (Janicka et al, 2005: 287).

Matsuda (2003)

Matsuda (2003) carried out a case study[53] of Japanese secondary school students' attitudes to English pronunciation models and targets and also examined their beliefs in relation to EIL matters (i.e. the ownership of English). It emerged that students perceived British English and American English as the standard varieties and, also, the varieties they wanted to acquire (and preferred those varieties to i.e. an outer circle variety such as Singapore English): "58% strongly agree and 26% agreed with the statement "I want to pronounce English as American or British people do"; 10% disagree and only 3% strongly disagreed" (Matsuda, 2003: 489). As for students' attitudes to a Japanese accent of English, she wrote:

> It seems that the idea of the Japanese variety of English was acceptable at the abstract level, but not at the personal level; they believed it should be accepted, especially since it is unavoidable, but they personally would rather not have it, and people should not be encouraged to speak it.

Matsuda, 2003: 493

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[53] The study took place at a private senior high school in Tokyo, Japan and one class consisting of 34 students was selected for the study. 31 students completed a questionnaire, 10 students participated in in-depth interviews and the researcher observed English classes for 36 hours. Also, 4 English teachers were interviewed.

A very interesting finding of the study was that even though the students perceived English as an international language in the sense that it is being used internationally, they did not believe it belongs internationally (see Matsuda, 2003: 483). Matsuda (2003) pointed out that students primarily saw 'English' as American and British entities and 'English speakers' as the speakers of those two varieties (: 490). As Matsuda (2003) put it:

> The students believed that…English is the property of native English speakers (Americans and British, more specifically), and the closer they follow the native speakers' usage, the better… The Japanese variety of English was perceived as either Japanese or incorrect English that deviated from the "real" English of native speakers.
>
> Matsuda, 2003: 493

Timmis (2002)

Timmis (2002) explored EFL learners' and teachers' attitudes to the question of conforming to NS norms in the areas of pronunciation and grammar in the context of EIL. 400 learners from 14 different countries and 180 teachers from 45 different countries participated in the questionnaire survey of Timmis's (2002) study[54] and were asked to indicate their preference between two pronunciation targets: 'native-speaker competence' (NSC) and 'accented international intelligibility' (AII); Timmis (2002) invented two quotations in order to represent these two pronunciation targets and make them clear and understandable to all respondents (the quotations will not be reproduced here as they appear in the next chapter of this thesis[55]). 67% of all students expressed the desire to achieve NSC in pronunciation whereas only 27% of all teachers expressed the desire for their students to achieve this target. Timmis (2002) noted that "it appears that there is a greater tendency among teachers than among students to regard 'accented international intelligibility' as the most *desirable*

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[54] The student questionnaire was also supported by 15 interviews.
[55] See Section 3.2 'The Research Instrument', Chapter 3 where I explain how Timmis's (2002) quotations were modified in order to be used in the questionnaire administered to the participants of the research reported in this thesis.

outcome" and, concluded that "teachers seem to be moving away from native-speaker norms faster than students are" (: 248). Timmis (2002) interpreted the findings of the student data as follows:

> There is still some desire among students to conform to native-speaker norms, and this desire is not necessarily restricted to those students who use, or anticipate using English primarily with native speakers. More tentatively, we can suggest that while the main motivation of the majority of students is the ability to communicate, the rather traditional idea of 'mastering a language' survives, at least among a minority.
>
> Timmis, 2002: 248

When looking at the teachers' answers more closely, Timmis (2002) found that "many teachers were choosing what they regarded as the more *realistic* rather than the more *desirable* outcome" (: 243). For example, one teacher who had actually opted for AII wrote that NSC is preferable but since it is impossible to achieve in reality, AII can be a good standard. I wonder if, in some way, it was made clear to teachers that they should make a choice based on what they desire and not on what they expect, whether the study would have yielded different results.

Kanellou (2001)

Moving on to research in the context of ELT in Greece, Kanellou (2001) carried out a small-scale study into 26 EFL teachers' and 23 learners' attitudes towards the acquisition of English pronunciation. As part of the questionnaire data it emerged that teachers and learners agreed on the selection of RP as a model of pronunciation; 88.5% of teachers used RP as a pronunciation model and 82.6% of learners wished to be taught RP. Only 11.5% of the teachers opted for GA along with only 17.4% of the learners. Kanellou (2001) attributed the teachers' and learners' preference for RP over

GA to the geographical closeness of Greece and Britain[56]. It was also revealed that many participants viewed RP as more prestigious than GA (Kanellou, 2001: 52).

However, there was disagreement between teachers and learners in terms of pronunciation targets; 78.3% of learners wished to acquire NLP whereas only 38.5% of teachers regarded this as a desirable target. It was argued that the learners' preference for NLP stemmed from their desire to identify with the target culture since every year, hundreds (if not thousands) of Greek college or university graduates arrive in Britain in order to pursue undergraduate or postgraduate degrees at British Universities or to seek employment there. Thus, it made sense for learners to be pronunciation conscious and express the desire to speak with a native-like accent. On the other hand, it was found that teachers' unwillingness to opt for NLP, was associated with a lack of confidence and skill in this area. For example, as one of the teachers interviewed put it: "my pronunciation is not perfect and thus I do not feel comfortable asking my students to aim for native-like pronunciation in English" (see Kanellou, 2001: 53).

Sifakis and Sougari (2005)

Sifakis and Sougari (2005) explored the pronunciation beliefs and practices of 421 Greek EFL teachers; they examined teachers' beliefs about the importance of NS accents and their role in pronunciation norms and tried to establish the extent to which Greek EFL teachers take an EIL perspective with respect to the ownership of English and whether or not they hold stereotypical attitudes towards inner-circle varieties.

By means of a questionnaire survey, teachers were asked to choose one among four possible answers placed on a continuum ranging from 'extremely' (= 1) to 'not at

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[56] Many Greek teachers of English had travelled to Britain for leisure, work or training purposes and many Greek learners of English intended to study at a British university.

all' (= 2) in response to the question 'Do you think it is important for your learners to acquire a native-like accent?' Sifakis and Sougari (2005) commented on the results, as follows:

> First, those teachers who indicated that they believe in promoting a native-like accent do so because they believe that learners need to communicate with NSs and because they believe that a native-like accent will help NNSs develop confidence (ASR = 6.0). Both of these reasons support a NS norm-bound perspective. Second, those teachers who considered native-like accents as only "fairly" important identified intelligibility as a more important goal (ASR = 5.9). This result leads to a paradox. A significant number of teachers who had a norm-bound perspective also believed that promoting intelligibility in communication is of great value. Nonetheless, although all teachers felt that native accents were important as accent models, only a very small number of respondents saw an intelligible accent as an appropriate model.
>
> Sifakis and Sougari, 2005: 477-478

Teaching context appeared to be a significant predictor of teachers' attitudes; primary level-teachers believed that attaining a native-like accent is very important (ASR = 2.4), whereas upper-secondary level teachers considered improving their learners' pronunciation (ASR = 2.6) less important. "This result appears to reflect a norm-bound teaching orientation in the earlier stages of education but a diminishing focus on accent as learners get older" (Sifakis and Sougari, 2005: 476-477).

As for the teachers' views with respect to the ownership of English in the context of EIL, the results[57] were as follows:

> More than 70% of the respondents said that English belongs either to NSs or to people with NS competence: 50% selected "the native speakers (independently of nationality)"; and 23% said that "anyone fluent enough to speak the language without major problems" was a rightful owner. Very few took an EIL perspective: Only 8% chose as owners "speakers of the language (independently of problems)" and 2% chose bilingual speakers ("those whose mother tongue is another language, but have grown up using English as well").
>
> Sifakis and Sougari, 2005: 480

Sifakis and Sougari (2005) conclude that "when asked about their current pronunciation practices, teachers seem to hold a strongly norm-bound perspective and to focus on teaching standard NS pronunciation norms" (: 481) and claim that "teachers' NS norm-bound perspective can be understood against the backdrop of

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[57] The teachers' responses showed no significant differences among the teachers at the three levels (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary).

modern Greece as a traditional monolingual society" (: 482). I will not dwell on this issue here as it will be addressed later on in this thesis.

Sifakis and Sougari (2003)

Here I would like to present a finding regarding which NS accents to be used in ELT in Greece by an earlier study of Sifakis and Sougari as reproduced in Hannam (2005)[58]: "Sifakis and Sougari (2003) found that 54% of Greek English teachers questioned felt their students should acquire a Standard British accent and 7% a Standard American accent, whilst only 6% felt that an EL2 (Greek) accent was appropriate" (Hannam, 2005: 3).

Hannam (2005)

Hannam (2005) used a focus-group format and in-depth interviewing in order to investigate Greek EFL teachers' attitudes towards NS and NNS pronunciation varieties. Her study was a small-scale one which took place in Thessaloniki, Greece. All EFL teachers considered "RP to be more suitable and easier to use in the language classroom, partly due to the availability of pre-produced samples" (Hannam, 2005: 5). Overall, the teachers were very critical of the 'Greek English' accent, "with only 50% saying they would be happy using this accent as a model – some felt the accent was "too Greek" and that it required moderation" (Hannam, 2005: 5).

Batziakas (2008)

Batziakas (2008) conducted a cross-sectional qualitative research study based on semi-structured interviews with Greek EFL school teachers and students of all

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[58] As this thesis is going to print it has not been possible to obtain direct access to the particular study.

educational levels in order to discover if teachers are aware of what the construct of ELF calls for (and if are they willing to take it on board) and whether or not it serves the students' school and social needs. Batziakas (2008) includes only a couple of interview excerpts and very little information on the emerging themes that seemed to answer the research questions of his study[59]. As far as the teachers are concerned, Batziakas (2008) found that they "follow wholesale the norms which exist in the textbooks, with the result of the marks to be awarded according to an imaginatively homogenous native model". As for the students, he wrote:

> …students were very sceptical towards the externally imposed and unrealistic native norms, and were rather embracing the English which they themselves experienced without thinking that it is problematic, in so far as they saw that it can actually cause or potentially cause no problem at all.
>
> Batziakas, 2008

He provides the following interview excerpt in order to illustrate this finding:

> English? What is English? Or rather what's perfect English?.... But do I have to make myself understood and to put forward my meaning, not withstanding the infelicities of my accent, grammar and vocabulary? Yes!"
> [Student B, 3rd grade upper high school] in Batziakas, 2008

Re-cap of main findings of studies

The studies reviewed in this section have produced important results with respect to English language learners' and teachers' views and practices in terms of pronunciation models and targets. The use of NS models (RP and GA) is common practice among EFL teachers (Dalton-Puffer et al 1997; Kanellou, 2001; Sifakis and Sougari, 2003; 2005; Hannam, 2005 and Batziakas 2008) and EFL learners express a clear preference towards NS models in a variety of contexts worldwide (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Kanellou, 2001; Matsuda, 2003; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005). From the two models,

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[59] His study is not as yet a published one but has been presented as a paper to a conference; Batziakas (2008) has made the contents of the paper available for access on the internet.

namely RP and GA, RP appears to be the favourite one (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Kanellou, 2001; Sifakis and Sougari, 2003; Hannam, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005). Learners tend to view a foreign accent of English negatively, despite the fact that the particular foreign accent is the result of the influence of their L1 (Dalton-Puffer et al; Matsuda, 2003). Interestingly, there was a greater tendency among EFL learners to consider native-like competence in pronunciation as an appropriate goal than among EFL teachers (Kanellou, 2001; Timmis, 2002). Finally, it is striking that despite the emergence of EIL (which has raised questions as to the ownership of English and the teachers' and learners' adherence to NS norms), NSs are still viewed as the owners and custodians of the English language and native-like pronunciation is still the goal in a variety of contexts and teaching situations worldwide (see Timmis, 2002; Matsuda, 2003; Sifakis and Sougari, 2005).

It will be interesting to see the extent to which our study will yield similar results. Moreover, "investigating attitudes towards pronunciation is a fairly recent development in Greek ELT" (Hannam, 2005) and to this day few studies have been conducted in this area in Greece; this adds to the importance and necessity of our research.

<u>Evaluation of studies</u>

Let us now draw attention to any limitations and weaknesses of the studies reviewed.

1) Some of the studies referred to in this section were carried out a long time ago. For example, in Dalton-Puffer et al;s (1997), EFL Austrian learners displayed a negative attitude towards their own non-native accent of English and I wonder if the study would produce a different result if carried out more recently; if it was conducted

nowadays that Jenkins and her supporters have expressed, perhaps stronger than ever before, the need for users of EIL to express their identity through the preservation of their L1 accent.

2) Methodological inadequacies/limitations: many studies utilised only one method of data collection[60] (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberrri, 1999; Janicka et al, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005). A number of studies were small scale studies (case studies with a limited number of participants) and, thus, their findings need to be approached with caution; that they may not be representative of the wider population the sample was drawn from (Matsuda, 2003; Hannam, 2005; Kanellou, 2001). Finally, while Timmis's (2002) study and Sifakis and Sougaris's (2005) study are highly commendable in many respects, questions are raised as to the representativeness of their samples (see Appendix 2.2 for a discussion on this matter).

3) A major shortcoming of previous research in this area is that most studies did not address teachers' as well as learners' views; out of the 12 studies reviewed, 5 studies dealt with learners' views (Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005 and Janicka et al, 2005) and 3 studies with teachers' views (Sifakis and Sougari, 2003, 2005; Hannam, 2005). Of course, it goes without saying that greater effort is required on the part of the researcher to acquire teachers' as well as learners' views but, nevertheless, it is worth doing so because it provides a clearer picture and understanding of a particular teaching situation; teachers and learners are the protagonists in any classroom and you cannot have one without the other. Furthermore, it is important to discover whether or not

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[60] For an example as to why this is a limitation, please see Section 2.1, this chapter.

there is a gap between teachers beliefs' and learners' beliefs because such a gap may result in negative learning outcomes (for example, see Peacock, 1999)[61].

4) In half of the studies that presented learners' views, the learners were university students studying English philology (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Janicka et al, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005[62]). The data on EFL primary and high school learners is probably scarce due to time and access issues; for example, it is certainly easier for a researcher, who is often an academic at a particular university, to investigate university students' attitudes rather than to leave the university setting, liaise with EFL school teachers and administer questionnaires in their classrooms. This is disappointing as the majority of the EFL student population in expanding circle countries does not comprise university students with a special interest in the English language and the views of such students cannot necessarily be seen as representative of the views students studying English for general purposes. Furthermore, the majority of the students in the studies described above are prospective teachers of English which raises the question of whether or not their views would be closer to those of EFL teachers rather than EFL learners. Perhaps, it would be best to view such participants as neither belonging to the learners' nor the teachers' camp; they could easily form a category of their own; that of prospective EFL teachers.

Great care has been taken in order for the disadvantages and limitations of previous studies to be overcome or minimised in our study. Thus, our study obtained EFL teachers' as well as learners' views on pronunciation models and targets, the learners were high school students, quantitative as well as qualitative data were

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[61] Please refer back to Section 1.1.2, Chapter 1 for further details.
[62] I ought to remind the reader that in Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005), one group of students comprised 'English Studies' students; however, the other group comprised 'Economics and Sociology' students.

collected, two research methods were employed and, finally, a large sample of participants was obtained through the method of random sampling. None of the studies reviewed in this section fulfilled all the aforementioned criteria.

2.3 Pronunciation Teaching Techniques

So far in this thesis, I have examined the ways in which the area of English pronunciation instruction has been addressed by various language teaching methods/approaches (Section 1.1.1). I have also surveyed different ways for teaching pronunciation as proposed by and outlined in ELT and in ELT PRON manuals and handbooks (Section 1.2.1) This section will consider how and the extent to which pronunciation teaching techniques have been addressed in research studies. Unfortunately, questions such as 'which pronunciation teaching techniques do the teachers use?', 'why those and not others?' and 'which ones are the most popular in terms of frequency of use?' cannot be answered satisfactorily as there is little or no information available on these issues. Indeed, to this date and to my knowledge, there is no large-scale quantitative survey in a TEFL context which presents teachers with the most widely documented pronunciation teaching techniques in the relevant literature, asks them to identify which ones they use, how often they do so and why.

The studies

The main reason why this dimension of pronunciation instruction has been overlooked (or completely ignored) is that there has been a tendency for research to concentrate on the use of a specific pronunciation teaching method/technique (rather than a wide range of methods or techniques) and its effectiveness in a particular teaching situation. Indeed, there are some studies that have been carried out to this end; see Strange and Dittman (1984), Chela Flores (1993), Mathews (1997) and Quijada (1997). Interested readers can turn to Appendix 2.3 for more information on the aforementioned studies. According to Lightbrown and Spada (2006: 106) "few studies have investigated the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction"; even fewer

studies have provided information on the variety of pronunciation teaching techniques employed by EFL teachers or the frequency of use of those techniques. Nevertheless, there are two studies worth mentioning in this respect; Fraser (2000) and Breitkreutz et al (2001).

Fraser (2000)

As part of Fraser's (2000) study on the situation of pronunciation teaching across a range of contexts in Australia, it was revealed that ESL teachers varied widely in the methods they used to teach pronunciation. Fraser (2000) states that:

> Some [ESL teachers] believe strongly in the 'old school' methods of drilling sounds, words, and dialogues (Baker 1981). Some prefer to give instruction in the phonological rules of English, including stress placement, spelling to sound rules, intonation patterns, etc. according to a range of different methods (eg. Zawadski, 1996; Kenworthy, 1987, Bowen and Marks, 1992; Carter and McCarthy, 1997; Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Rogerson and Gilbert, 1990). Others like to work mainly through listening to authentic materials (Burns and Joyce 1997). Still others question the need for explicit instruction on pronunciation at all, and concentrate on giving help with culturally appropriate interactions (cf. Liddicoat and Crozet 1997). Most teachers use a mix of these methods, to suit whatever need they see arising.
>
> <div align="right">Fraser, 2000: 29</div>

While this particular research finding is useful and interesting in the sense that it gives us an indication as to the pronunciation teaching techniques used by teachers to address the needs of adult ESL learners[63] in Australia, it does not tell us how many teachers endorsed one technique or rejected another (and why) and which techniques were preferred over others (and why).

Breitkreutz et al (2001)

Breitkreutz et al (2001) gathered information by means of a questionnaire survey on the pronunciation teaching practices of ESL teachers and program co-ordinators in

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[63] The learners of the study included migrants and refugees, longer term immigrants, NNS jobseekers, NNS prisoners, NNS workers, NNS university students, NNS TESOL students and ELICOS students. Fraser's (2000) survey was based on informal interviews with teachers, learners, administrators, researchers, teacher trainers and policy makers. For more information, refer back to Sections 2.1 & 2.2.

Canada. Respondents were asked if they agreed that 'drilling minimal pairs is the best way to teach pronunciation'; 16% agreed, 59% disagreed and the remaining 25% were not sure (Breitkreutz et al, 2001: 55). Only 27% of respondents indicated the use of language labs (with tape-recorders) and more than half of the respondents[64] indicated the use of computer labs for pronunciation instruction and practice (Breitkreutz et al, 2001: 54). The researchers noted the respondents' dissatisfaction with the fact that computer software is heavily segment-focused in nature and recommended that "software programs focus on more than segmental aspects of English" (Breitkreutz et al, 2001: 59). The remainder of the questionnaire dealt with other issues such as the 'age-related limitation on the acquisition of native-like pronunciation' (ibid: 55). Overall, the study provided important information regarding the use of three pronunciation teaching methods; the language laboratory, pronunciation software programs and drilling activities; pronunciation software featured as the most widely used method in Canadian ESL programs. However, it did not address a wide range of pronunciation teaching techniques as documented in ELT and/or ELT PRON manuals. Furthermore, I would like to note that out of the 174 questionnaires that were distributed, only 67 (39%) were returned (Breitkreutz et al, 2001). The reader can turn to the 'Methodology' chapter of this thesis for information as to the problems associated with low response rates and which steps were taken in order to ensure a much higher response rate for the questionnaires used in our study.

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[64] That is, 54% of respondents who taught small ESL programs, 47% of respondents who taught medium ESL programs and 54% of respondents who taught large ESL programs. ESL program size was classified as small (5 or fewer classes), medium (6-10 classes) or large (more than 10 classes).

Kanellou (2001)

Finally, I would like to draw the reader's attention a relevant questionnaire question

(reproduced below) in Kanellou's (2001) study:

> Your teaching of pronunciation in the language classroom is:
> (Please tick appropriately):
> a. Explicit. Students are asked to perform oral activities (e.g. 'choral' or 'individual' imitation) and are taught pronunciation rules
> b. Implicit. Students are expected to 'pick up' the correct pronunciation of vocabulary items in the process of learning grammar, lexis, etc.
> c. Both explicit and implicit.
> d. Other (please specify):

<div align="right">Kanellou, 2001: Appendix 1</div>

It emerged that only 31% of teachers incorporated explicit attention to pronunciation

as part of the English language lesson; the remainder opted for implicit attention to

pronunciation. Kanellou (2001) concluded that "the fact that only 31% of teachers

choose to teach pronunciation explicitly indicates how strongly the majority of

teachers disfavour the audio-lingual method" (: 47). This view alludes to Fraser's

(2000: 33) statement that "pronunciation was so strongly associated with the 'drill and

kill' methods that it was deliberately downplayed… in the communicative method".

Nevertheless, Kanellou (2001) found that some of the teachers who avoided teaching

pronunciation explicitly would be prepared to do so, if they had easy access to

pronunciation exercises that would not be rejected as 'too traditional' within the

framework of CLT. Kanellou (2001: 49) wrote that "teachers should seek to develop

stimulating pronunciation exercises within the framework of the communicative

approach" and includes examples of pronunciation exercises that could be viewed as

more 'modern' and 'communicative'.

Nevertheless, Kanellou (2001) questions whether or not all EFL teachers are

in the position to cover sufficiently the learners' needs in the area of explicit

pronunciation instruction; "it might be the case, that although learners should be

provided with explicit instruction on pronunciation, not all teachers are capable of doing so" (: 50). An EFL teacher's ability to provide explicit pronunciation instruction is a very important matter and pertains to issues such as whether or not he/she has received training in the teaching of pronunciation; unfortunately, Kanellou (2001) did not gather any information on this. However, the research reported in this thesis, has obtained information on EFL teachers' training in the teaching of pronunciation and knowledge of phonetics. Such information may prove useful when accounting for pronunciation teaching techniques used (or not used) as part of the English language lesson.

Theoretical and practical value of this research

Our research can be viewed as the first major attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of EFL teachers' use of pronunciation teaching techniques. The teachers that participated in the large-scale quantitative survey of this study were presented with the most popular pronunciation teaching techniques (as documented in current ELT PRON manuals) by means of a self-completion questionnaire and were asked to identify which ones they used and how often they did so. It will be interesting to see the extent to which the pronunciation teaching techniques described in ELT PRON manuals have been employed by EFL teachers in Thessaloniki, Greece. In this way, it will be possible to examine if the teachers' practices are in line with current thinking in ELT pronunciation pedagogy. And if, for example, it emerges that one or more of the listed pronunciation teaching techniques are not employed at all, it is important to discover and consider the reasons why this is the case. Thus, the teachers' endorsement or rejection of specific pronunciation teaching techniques (as well as their preference for particular pronunciation teaching techniques over others) was

discussed in interviews that took place after the questionnaire data had been collected and analysed. Such research findings will have theoretical importance as they will demonstrate whether or not there is a gap between what is written in ELT PRON handbooks and what is done in EFL classrooms. They may also have practical value as communication between materials' writers and their readers may be encouraged. Overall, the results of our study should appeal to a wide range of potential readers; ELT handbook and materials writers (and publishers), EFL teachers (novice and experienced ones), English language teacher trainers, English language testers, curriculum developers, theoreticians and researchers in the field of phonology and/or ELT and university students in 'Applied English language and linguistics'.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction & Rationale for Study Design

Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of the rationale behind the research methodology and research methods[65] chosen to accomplish the study's purpose. **Section 3.1 'Research Setting & Participants'** provides an overview of the structure of the Education System in Greece as well on the place and role of English language instruction within this system and any English language learning opportunities in the private sector. It also describes the city in which the research has taken place, the population upon which the research was focused and the procedure followed to obtain a representative sample of that population[66]. **Section 3.2 'Research Instrument'** focuses on the conception and construction of the questionnaire employed in this study and provides information on a number of issues; what the questions that compromise the questionnaire were based on, the process followed and guidelines adhered to in writing the questionnaire questions, how the contents, structure and overall appearance of the questionnaire were pilot tested and the steps taken to increase the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. **Section 3.3 'Procedure'** describes the final pilot, which submitted the questionnaire responses to statistical analyses and assessed the reliability of the questionnaire items, and, also, the step by step procedure of the main study and addresses any 'ethical' matters that had to be dealt with, such as informed consent and respondents' anonymity. Finally, **Section 3.4 'Interviews'** examines the preparation and trialling of the interview guide as well as the piloting and actual conduction of the interviews of this study as a follow-up to

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[65] It is important to distinguish between *methodology* and *method*. 'Methodology has a more philosophical meaning, and usually refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research' (Blaxter et al, 2001: 59). A research strategy denotes 'a general orientation to the conduct of social research' (Bryman, 2004: 19) whereas a research method is a tool or technique used to generate and/or analyse data (Schwandt, 1997: 91)

[66] 'The *sample* is the group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation and the *population* is the group of people whom the study is about'(Dornyei, 2007: 96).

the questionnaires. Overall, this chapter provides a detailed account of all the methodological procedures followed and even the exact wording of the questions presented to respondents have been included (the teachers' and learners' questionnaires are reproduced in the appendices of this thesis). It is worth noting that replication is one of the criteria for the assessment of quality of any survey (see Babbie, 1990 and Bryman, 2004) and, thus, spelling out clearly the procedures followed in this study so that they can be replicated by other researchers is important.

Survey research approach

The decision to adopt a survey design was based on the following reasons:

First, "surveys are useful for gathering factual information, data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, behaviour and experiences" (Weisberg et al, 1996 cited in Cohen et al, 2007: 207); the main aim of this study was to obtain teachers' and learners' *views* on the role and status of pronunciation, teachers' and learners' *attitudes* towards pronunciation models and targets and teachers' *preferences* and *practices* in terms of pronunciation teaching.

Second, surveys are excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes in a large population (Babbie, 1998). "A *survey* [his italics] design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From sample results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population" (Creswell, 2003: 153). In our study a sample comprising 47 EFL teachers and 327 learners was used to make inferences about the

characteristics, attitudes, beliefs and practises of a population consisting of hundreds of EFL teachers and thousands of EFL learners[67].

Third, a major advantage of the survey approach is its wide and inclusive coverage: "A survey, in principle, should take a panoramic view and 'take it all in'" (Denscombe, 2003: 6). Thus, the survey approach is particularly suited to this study, which can be viewed as the first major attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in the context of EFL in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Fourth, "surveys may vary in their level of complexity from those that provide simple frequency counts to those that present relational analysis" (Cohen et al, 2007: 204). In this respect, surveys are useful in that they typically (or usually) generate numerical data, gather data which can be processed statistically, ascertain correlations and manipulate key factors and variables to derive frequencies (Morrison, 1993: 38-40 cited in Cohen et al, 2007: 206). Bearing in mind the research questions of our study, the need for methods and instruments which involve numerical data, statistical analysis and inference is obvious[68].

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are most popularly associated with the use of surveys (Mackey and Gass, 2005; Brown, 1988; Denscombe, 2003). Brown (2001 cited in Dornyei, 2003: 6) defines questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". The self-completed, written

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[67] The need for careful sampling so as to obtain a representative sample of the target population is explored and demonstrated in Section 3.1.3 'Population & Sampling Procedure', this Chapter.
[68] For example, consider RQ1b) 'Are there any statistically significant differences in the perception of the status and role of pronunciation among respondents according to different independent variables?'

questionnaire that respondents fill in by themselves was utilised as a means to collect data for this research for the following reasons:

First, questionnaires are "low cost in time and money" (Gillham, 2000a: 10). If, for example, the data for this research were to be collected by means of face-to-face interviews, interviewer time and interviewer travel costs would have been impossible for the researcher to handle.

Second, questionnaires can ensure respondents' anonymity and eliminate interviewer bias; "there is much evidence to show that different interviewers get different answers" (Gillham, 2000a: 7). Indeed, the standardization of questions serves to enhance the reliability[69] of the research; by presenting all the respondents with exactly the same set of questions in the form of a questionnaire, "one step has been taken to ensure that differences in answers can be attributed to differences in respondents" (Floyd Fowler, 2002: 81) rather than to differences in the stimuli to which respondents were exposed[70].

Interviews

Once the questionnaire data had been collected and analysed, interviews were conducted with a sample of the teachers that had participated in the study. The need for brevity and relatively simple questions as far as questionnaires are concerned result in data that are "necessarily thin and don't help you understand or explore answers" (Gillham, 2000b: 10). Moreover, this method is "unsuitable for probing deeply into an issue" (Moser and Kalton, 1971 cited in Dornyei, 2003: 10). Indeed,

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[69] Reliability, is an important criterion for the assessment of the quality of quantitative research and according to Babbie (1998: 274) "survey research is generally… strong on reliability" due to the standardised nature of the research instrument.

[70] There are further steps to be taken in order to maximise the reliability of the research instrument such as piloting the questions that comprise the questionnaire; these are explored in Section 3.2 'Research Instrument', this chapter.

the interview data assisted the researcher with the interpretation of the questionnaire data; many of the statistical patterns that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire data were better understood and explained by means of the interview data. Also, in the course of the interviews, teachers' views were sought on matters such as that of the current debate on pronunciation models and targets in the context of EIL, which required questions that were by nature 'open' and yielded extended responses. Furthermore, if the questionnaire survey yields unexpected results, these cannot be usually interpreted on the basis of the questionnaire data "and there are always some unexpected results!"(Dornyei, 2007: 170-171). For example, while the questionnaire data provided information on the frequency of use for all pronunciation teaching techniques, the interview data shed light as to why specific techniques were preferred over others.

Mixed research methodology

In the present study aspects of quantitative (QUANT) and qualitative (QUAL) research paradigms were integrated at the level of data collection as well as at the level of data analysis; at the level of data collection, interviews were preceded by questionnaires and, at the level of data analysis, the qualitative data that had been gathered by the questionnaires were quantified by means of content analysis.

Dornyei (2007) describes in detail the most important advantages of adopting a 'mixed methods research' design and, interestingly, they all apply to our research: first, 'by using both QUAL and QUANT approaches researchers can bring out the best of both paradigms, thereby combining quantitative and qualitative research strengths' (: 46). For example, while qualitative research often employs convenience and, consequently, unrepresentative samples, this did not apply to the selection of the

interview participants in our study; sampling bias was cancelled out because interview participants were selected on the basis of the results of the initial representative sample that participated in the questionnaire survey. Second, a better understanding of a complex phenomenon can be gained by converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data: "words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words" (: 46). For example, the words of interviewees were used to explain the statistical patterns that had emerged from the questionnaire data. Third, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods make the final results appealing to and acceptable for a larger audience than those of a study that employs only one method; "a well-executed mixed methods study has multiple selling points and can offer something to everybody, regardless of the paradigmatic orientation of a person" (ibid: 46).

It must be noted that the success of a 'mixed methods research' approach depends on the expertise of the researcher. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) raise the issue of how well-versed any given researcher can be in both quantitative and qualitative research methodology and this issue leads to a critical question: "Can more harm than good be done when researchers are not adequately trained in both methods? This is a realistic danger because the vast majority of researchers lack methodological skills to handle both QUAL and QUAN data" (Dornyei, 2007: 44). Fortunately, this problem did not pertain to the design and execution of the particular study as the researcher had received extensive training and had experience on the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies[71].

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[71] The researcher has received training on the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods (as well as on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data' as part of her MA in Applied Linguistics (Cardiff University, U.K) and also by attending one module on QUANT and one module on QUAL methodology for a whole semester as part of her PhD studies. She has also taught QUANT and QUAL research methodology to BA 'English language and communication studies' students as a part-time lecturer (Kingston, University, U.K).

3.1 Research Setting & Participants

3.1.1 Thessaloniki, Greece

Our research has taken place in Thessaloniki, Greece. Greece, officially known as the Hellenic Republic, is located in the southeast of Europe. The official language of Greece is Modern Greek and is spoken by 99% of the population[72]. Greece has a total population of 10.787.690[73].

Moving on to describe how many of the residents in Greece are migrants, it is worth pointing out that the view of Greece as a relative homogeneous country in terms of culture and ethnicity was dominant until the late 1980s and may even apply to this day (Triandafylidou, 2002 cited in Gogonas, 2010: 2). Greece has displayed a reluctance to acknowledge the existence of minorities within its territory which can be seen as the result of the fact that most of them have been identified with territorial claims by neighbouring countries with which geo-political relations have always been tense (Rozakis, 1996 cited in Gogonas, 2010: 5). The presence of illegal immigrants and the fact that data concerning legal immigrants are held by several ministries (with no synthesis being made of the different datasets due to poor communication among them) make it difficult to provide an exact number for migrants in Greece (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). Nevertheless, concentrated efforts have been made to provide estimates for the number of migrants in Greece using information on the flows of migrants and legalisations exercises (see Tsimpos, 2001 or Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). Labrianidis et al (2004: 5) arrive at an 'estimate of the total stock of resident migrants between 800.000 and 1 million' and Gogonas (2010: 2) points out that "although there are no completely reliable data sources about the exact number of foreigners in

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[72] http://www.indexmundi.com/greece/demographics_profile.html accessed on 05.07.2007.
[73] http://greece.greekreporter.com/2011/07/25/results-for-greeces-population-are-out accessed on 05.07.2007.

Greece, many calculations converge on a figure between 600.000 and 800.000 people".

As for the likely number of migrant pupils in Greek schools, according to the Institute of Intercultural Education of the Greek Education ministry (IPODE, 2006), there were 140.000 migrant pupils enrolled in Greek schools during the school year 2004-05, accounting for almost 10% of the overall school population[74]. No data are available as to the nationalities of those pupils for the school year 2004-05; however, "during 2002-03, 72% of the migrant pupils were from Albania" (Gogonas, 2010: 7). Indeed, the majority of immigrants in Greece are nationals of neighbouring Balkan States, predominantly Albanians (see Labrianidis et al, 2004). The two largest urban centres in Greece, Athens and Thessaloniki, attract the vast majority of migrants (Labrianidis et al, 2004: 6); the greatest cluster of immigrants is found in Athens, 17% of the city's total population and Thessaloniki has the second largest reaching 7% of the city's total population (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). Given this information and the estimates from the previously mentioned sources, it is expected that between 5% and 10% of the learners participating in our study will be migrant pupils.

Athens is the capital of Greece and also the largest city in the country; Thessaloniki is the second largest city, with a population of 1.006.730[75], and is often referred to as 'simprotevousa', the literal translation into English being 'co-capital'. Thessaloniki is Greece's second major economic, industrial, commercial and political centre, and a major transportation hub for the rest of south-eastern Europe. A number of famous events and festivals, such as the 'Thessaloniki International Film Festival' and the 'Thessaloniki International Trade Fair', take place in Thessaloniki every year. Thessaloniki is regarded as the cultural and educational centre of northern Greece and

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[74] See Gogonas (2010: 7) for more information.
[75] According to the preliminary results of the 2011 Census.

also became Europe's Cultural Capital for the year 1997 (Skabardonis, 2004: 11).

Overall, Thessaloniki can be described as an internationally oriented European city

which represents the urban settings of Greece. This is the city in which our research

has taken place. Interested readers can see Appendix 1.3 for more additional

information on Thessaloniki, Greece (and the issue of migrants in Greece).

3.1.2 English Language Teaching & Learning in Greece

The Greek educational system

Education in Greece is compulsory for all children 6-15 years old; namely, it includes Primary (Dimotiko) and Lower Secondary (Gymnasio) Education. Children are admitted to Dimotiko (= Primary School) at the age of six and attend it for 6 years. Then, they attend Gymnasio (= Junior High School) for 3 years. The majority of students opt to continue with their studies beyond Gymnasio. Post-compulsory education consists of two school types: Academically-oriented Senior High Schools (Lykeia) and Technical Vocational Education Schools (TEE). The duration of studies in both Lykeia and TEE is 3 years[76].

ELT in the Greek educational system

According to Kachru's (1985) circles[77], Greece belongs to the expanding circle, which means that, in the Greek context, English is a foreign language, or, to be more precise, the default foreign language selected by the state for the pupils (Crystal, 2003 cited in Sifakis & Sougari, 2005: 471). According to the official guidelines of the Greek Pedagogical Institute[78], English is introduced to the syllabus of all Dimotika from the 3rd grade onwards and is taught in the subsequent 3 years as well. English is also taught during the 3 years of Gymnasio and the 3 years of Lykeio or TEE[79].

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[76]Information obtained from the official website of the 'Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs' http://archive.minedu.gov.gr/en_ec_page1531.htm accessed on 01.08.2007.

[77] Please refer back to Section 2.2, Chapter 2 for a definition of Kachru's circles.

[78] 'The Pedagogic Institute of the Ministry of Education of Greece is equivalent to the English DFES. It is responsible for the educational laws and guidelines, such as the curriculum development, syllabus design, materials selection etc.' (Batziakas, 2008: 2).

[79] 'Η διδασκαλία της Αγγλικής Γλώσσας στην Υποχρεωτική Εκπαίδευση'.(= The teaching of English in compulsory education). http://www.pi-schools.gr/lessons/english/aps_agg.php accessed on 01.08.2007.

ELT in the private sector

What is interesting about the learning of English in Greece, perhaps making the situation unique in the European context, is that it does not *really* take place during official school hours. The vast majority of primary and high school students attend English language lessons at *frontistiria Aglikon*[80] (private English language schools) in addition to their regular school. As Stergis (2007) puts it: "it is highly unlikely to find somebody nowadays who does not send their children to a 'frontistirio' to learn English". 'Frontistiria' are privately owned businesses and have a long tradition in Greece; it has been common practice for decades for parents to supplement their children's state education with extra lessons at those schools. According to Stergis (2007) "private ELT in Greece has managed to be the only private field in Europe to have penetrated the population on a mass basis, before any government initiative for privatization was taken". Pupils go to the local state school in the morning and to the frontistirio in the afternoon[81]. There are hundreds of private English language schools all over Greece; the majority of them are found, quite predictably, in Athens and Thessaloniki[82].

[80] http:// www.tefl.edu.gr/faq.htm, http:// www.tesol-ua.org/tefl-courses/greece/greece.htm, http://ww.onlinetefl.com/tefl-jobs-abroad/tefl-jobs-in-greece.html, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Greece. All accessed on 01.08.2007.
[81] English language lessons typically take place at the frontistirio between 3pm and 10pm from Monday to Friday (http://ww.tesol-ua.org/tefl-courses/greece/greece.htm accessed on 01.08.2007).
[82] http://youcanteachenglish.com/teach-english-in-greece/ accessed on 01.08.2007.

ELT in state schools versus ELT in private language schools

Here, I will embark on a comparison between ELT in state schools[83] and ELT in frontistiria in order to explain why ELT in the private sector is more prominent and powerful in Greece.

1) *Certificate of competence in English:* Competence in English is considered by students, their parents and prospective employers to be an essential skill because English is seen as the key to communication with the European Union and the world[84]. The majority of Greeks share the notion that they "should learn English no matter what it takes" (Tziava, 2003: 5). One of the main ways to demonstrate competence in English is the acquisition of an English language certificate. In state schools[85], students "do not receive any certificate of attendance so they do not have a document that certifies their level of competence [in English]" (Tziava, 2003: 6). In the frontistirio, the focus is on the acquisition of such a certificate and each level of instruction is equivalent to the Cambridge University and/or Michigan University exams' syllabus; for example, there is an FCE class which corresponds to the 'First Certificate of English' exam distributed by Cambridge University (Tziava, 2003: 6).

2) *Learning English at an early age & hours of English language instruction:* The final two years of Lykeio are devoted to students' preparation for the entry exams to higher education in Greece. Thus, "learners and/or their parents are anxious to finish with English (as they put it) before the learners start their two-year preparation for the extremely competitive Greek university entry examinations" (Gabrielatos, 2002: 1).

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[83] The Ministry of Education exercises centralised control over state schools, by prescribing the curriculum, appointing staff and controlling funding. Any private primary and high schools also fall under the mandate of the Ministry, which exercises supervisory control over them. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudcation_in_Greece accessed on 01.08.2007.

[84] http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-background-greece.htm accessed on 01.08.2007.

[85] In state schools, students are assessed by term-exams and receive the results in their report cards at the end of each term.

The great pressure to sit for and succeed at the CPE or ECPE[86] by the age of 15 or 16 (so that students can abandon the study of English and focus on their Greek studies) entails that they should start learning English at the age of 5 or 6. Thus, they begin learning English at frontistiria rather than wait to do so at the age of 8 or 9 in state schools; Nikolaou (2003) claims that 86% of the students he investigated had started learning English at a private language school (cited in Tziava, 2003: 6). It is also worth noting that students are taught English for 3 hours per week in state schools whereas they are taught English for 6-8 hours in frontistiria. Thus, by the time students who study at frontistira enter Gymnasio, they have reached an intermediate level in English and most of them succeed in passing the FCE exams before continuing their studies in Lykeio (Kokka, 2011).

3) *Problematic situation for ELT in state schools:* The fact that ELT in state schools is considered to be inadequate and is viewed negatively by students (and their parents) is no secret and has been the case for a long time. State school teachers have to deal with an imposed curriculum, heterogenous groups of learners, overcrowded classes, conservative textbooks and defective and inadequate audio-visual equipment whereas teachers that work in frontistiria handle small, homogenous classes and have access to modern audio-visual equipment (Thompson, 2001; Doukas, 2005). Rigas (1998) investigated the situation for ELT in Greek state schools and concluded that students' attitudes towards and evaluation of English lessons in state schools are generally negative. The problematic situation for ELT in state schools is always addressed at the conventions of the Panhellenic Association of State School Teachers of English (PEKADE) which take place annually as well as in conferences; for example, a conference entitled 'Learning English in the Greek State School: Utopia or Reality'

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[86] CPE = 'Certificate of Proficiency in English exam' by Cambridge University.

was held in Athens in May, 2007. For more information on the situation of ELT in state schools, see Appendix 3.2.

Private English language schools and this research

So far it has been demonstrated that students (and their parents) value ELT at frontistiria far more than ELT at state schools; they also completely rely on the former for the students' attainment of proficiency in the use of English. Since this is the case in Greece, it made sense for the research reported in this thesis to focus on EFL teachers working at frontistiria and EFL learners studying at frontistiria.

3.1.3 Population & Sampling Procedure

<u>The population</u>

The population upon which this research was focused includes the following members:

1) *All the EFL teachers who work in private English language schools (frontistiria) in Thessaloniki, Greece.*

2) *All the 'pre-lower', 'lower', 'advanced' and 'proficiency' level EFL students* (B2, C1 and C2 levels) *who study at frontistiria in Thessaloniki, Greece.* See Figures 3.1, 3.2 (next page) for a description of the class division system employed by frontistiria and the correspondence of those classes to the 'Common European Framework' levels.

It is important to note that the Cambridge University EFL exam system is the most widely known and respected in Greece (Mendonca, 2006). Virtually all students sit the FCE exam (which most people still refer to by its old name 'Lower', hence the terms 'pre-lower' and 'lower' class) and many go on to sit the CPE exam. The population of our study included those students who were in the final months of preparation for the FCE exam and those who had passed the FCE exam and were studying towards the CPE exam. It was decided to exclude any students below the 'pre-lower' level (B2 level) to ensure that the students participating in the survey would be old enough to comprehend the questionnaire and respond appropriately. Also, having had quite a few years of experience in learning English put them in a rather privileged position in terms of offering valuable insights for this research. Figure 3.1 (next page) includes information on students' age in relation to frontistiria 'classes' and state school grades.

Figure 3.1

Correspondence between EFL classes at frontistiria & state school grades

Frontistiria	State Schools (primary & secondary)	
English Language Level	*School Grade*	
Pre-Junior Class	1st grade of primary school	(children aged 6 or 7)
A Junior	2nd grade of primary school	(aged 7 or 8)
B Junior	3rd grade of primary school	(aged 8 or 9)
A Senior	4th grade of primary school	(aged 9 or10)
B Senior	5th grade of primary school	(aged 10 or 11)
C Class	6th grade of primary school	(aged 11 or 12)
D Class	1st grade of gymnasio	(aged 12 or 13)
E/ Pre-Lower Class	2nd grade of gymnasio	(aged 13 or 14)
Lower Class	3rd grade of gymnasio	(aged 14 or 15)
Proficiency A/ Advanced	1st grade of lykeio	(aged 15 or 16)
Proficiency B	2nd grade of lykeio	(aged 16 or 17)

The above chart illustrates the state school grade that *usually* corresponds to the particular EFL frontistirio class. For example, if a 3rd grade Gymnasio student fails to pass the FCE exam he/she may be allocated to his/ her frontistirio 'Lower class' once again for the next academic year; this means that he/she will be attending the 'Lower class' as a 1st grade lykeio student the second time around.

Figure 3.2

The Common European Framework (CEF) levels and their correspondence to certificates awarded by Cambridge University and Michigan University[87]

		CEF levels	Cambridge	Michigan
A1	Beginners	(Breakthrough)		
A2	Pre-intermediate	(Waystage)	KET	
B1	Intermediate	(Threshold)	PET	HAU/ BCCE
B2	Upper-intermediate	(Vantage)	FCE	ECCE
C1	Advanced level	(Competent)	CAE	HAU/ ALCE
C2	Proficient User	(Good)	CPE	ECPE

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[87] Information taken from *ELT News*, July-August, 2003.

Please see below for an explanation of the abbreviations for each one of the English language certificates awarded by Cambridge and Michigan University.

Cambridge University

KET   Key English Test

PET   Preliminary English Test

FCE   First Certificate in English

CAE   Certificate of Advanced English

CPE   Certificate of Proficiency in English

Michigan University & HAU (Hellenic American Union)

BCCE   Basic Communication Certificate in English (HAU)

ECCE   Examination for the Certificate of Competence in English

ALCE   Advanced Level Certificate in English (HAU)

ECPE   Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English

Sampling procedure

If appropriate sampling procedures are followed carefully, "sample surveys can provide very accurate estimates about the populations they portray" (Babbie, 1990: 66). *Probability* sampling is "the most respected and useful method [in survey research]" (Babbie, 1990: 68). Its basic principle is that "a sample will be representative of the population from which it is selected if all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected in the sample" (Babbie, 1990: 71) and, thus, "random selection is the key to this process [of selection]" (ibid: 75). The method of *stratified random* sampling, which is a combination of random sampling with some form of rational grouping and is particularly effective for research with a specific focus (see Dornyei, 1997), was followed in order to arrive at a probability sample for this study. Stratified random sampling entails the division of the

population into groups, or 'strata', so that a random sample of a proportionate size is selected from each group (see Dornyei, 2007: 97). This is how it was done:

A list of all private language schools in Thessaloniki was readily available as part of the 2008 'Yellow Pages' Phone Directory for Thessaloniki, Greece. This list provided the sampling frame[88] for the study. The following information was included: frontistirio name (or frontistirio owner name), frontistirio address and a contact number. A few had to be omitted from the list as they did not offer any English language instruction; they offered Italian, for example. A further few were omitted because they *only* offered 'English for specific purposes' classes; these were 'English for academic purposes' mainly aimed at lykeio graduates or university graduates who wished to pursue an undergraduate or postgraduate degree abroad and/or 'Business English' for professionals. Of course, such classes were also present in some of the frontistiria that participated in our study; however, such classes were excluded from the study. The aim was to collect data from learners studying 'English for general purposes' since such learners comprise the majority of the EFL student population in Greece. An effort was also made to include in the sampling process any non-listed English language schools. Thus, a few language schools that were not included in the phone directory but were found through the use of internet search engines as well as through 'word of mouth' were added. The final list comprised a total of 204 English language schools.

It was decided to divide all schools into two groups: 'southeast' and 'northwest' schools. Thessaloniki has been traditionally divided into 'southeast' and 'northwest' Thessaloniki. There are differences as to the socio-economic status of the residents of southeast Thessaloniki and those of northwest Thessaloniki: southeast

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[88] The 'sampling frame' is defined as 'the list of all units in the population from which the sample will be selected' (Cohen et al, 2007: 87).

Thessaloniki is home to the middle-class and the city's most affluent residents whereas northwest Thessaloniki has always been associated with the industry and the working class (due to its proximity near factories and industrial activities). There are also differences as to the overall number of residents and the composition of the population in terms of migrants: more than half of the city's population live in southeast Thessaloniki and the remainder live in northwest Thessaloniki[89]. There is also a greater concentration of migrants in northwest Thessaloniki than there is in southeast Thessaloniki. Moreover, since there is at least one frontistirio in each neighbourhood and there is a tendency among students to attend lessons at their local frontistirio, it made sense to divide all language schools into those two groups. Overall, 60 schools were allocated to the 'northwest' category and 144 schools to the 'southeast' category[90].

The next issue that had to be dealt with concerned the size of the research sample. According to Dornyei (2007: 99), a range of between 1% and 10% of the population is usually mentioned in the methodological literature as the magic sampling fraction, with a minimum of about 100 participants. For our research, 9 frontistiria were chosen at random from the 144 frontistiria that belonged to the 'Southeast Thessaloniki' group (that is, 6.2%) and 4 were chosen at random out of the 60 that belonged to the 'Northwest Thessaloniki' group (that is, 6.6%). Overall, 13 out of the 204 English language schools located in Thessaloniki (that is, 6.3%) participated in our study. All EFL teachers employed by those schools and all 'pre-lower', 'lower', 'advanced' and 'proficiency' level students of those schools participated in our study.

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[89] Information obtained from http://en.wikipedia.org./wiki/Thessaloniki accessed on 01.12.2008.
[90] The schools located in the city center were allocated to the 'southeast' category as 'today southeastern Thessaloniki has in someway become a natural extension of the city center. (See link provided in previous footnote).

3.1.4 The Research Sample

This section provides detailed information on the profile of the research participants as obtained from the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis and presentation of those results; continuous variables[91] were summarised using means[92] with standard deviations[93] and discrete variables[94] were displayed as frequencies and percentages.

The teachers

The research sample consisted of 47 teachers. Table 3.3 shows that the teachers' age ranged from 20 to 61 years (M = 36.27, S.D = 10.157) and their teaching experience varied from 2 to 35 years (M = 12.84, S.D = 8.800).

Table 3.3
Teachers' age & teaching experience

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	47	20.00	61.00	36.2766	10.15682
Teaching Experience	47	2.00	35.00	12.8404	8.79977

Females constituted nearly 90% of the sample (Table 3.4). This is not surprising as TEFL is a female-dominated profession; "TEFL quite clearly has a majority of women teachers around the world"[95] (Brown, 1989: 171). This is also the case in Greece (see Mattheoudakis and Nicolaidis, 2005; Nicolaidis & Mattheoudakis, 2008)

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[91] If a variable can take on any value between two specified values, it is called a 'continuous' variable; otherwise it is called a 'discrete' variable (http://stattrek.com/Lesson2/DiscreteContinuous.aspx accessed on 13.11.2008).
[92] The mean is "the average of the scores" (Dornyei, 2007: 214). It is a measure of 'central tendency' which is sensitive to all the scores about it; it takes account of the values of all the scores unlike the *median* which takes account only of the value of the score at the middle position of the distribution (Hinton, 2004: 8-9).
[93] "The standard deviation gives us a measure of spread about the mean… the 'standard' distance of a score from the mean in this set of data" (Hinton, 2004: 16).
[94] All 'qualitative' variables (also known as 'categorical' variables) are discrete.
[95] Professor Gillian Brown explains in this interview how "the people at the top [of TEFL] tend to be men, whereas the people who do most of the day-to-day teaching work tend to be women" (: 171).

and, thus, the sample's representativeness was not undermined by the large proportion of females.

Table 3.4
Teachers' gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid[96]	Male	5	10.6	10.6	10.6
	Female	42	89.4	89.4	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Moving on to teachers' academic and professional qualifications, they were divided into 'teaching-related' and 'non-teaching-related' English Language Qualifications. For example, a Master's degree (MA) in ELT was allocated to the 'teaching-related qualifications' category whereas a Bachelor's Degree (BA) in Psychology was allocated to the 'non-teaching-related qualifications' category. It is worth noting that those who hold the CPE can obtain 'eparkeia' (= a teaching permit) from the Greek Ministry of Education for TEFL[97]. The CPE does demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English (and is therefore recognised in Greece for English teaching purposes); however, it is a test of language competency rather than a teaching qualification[98] and since it contains no teaching-related content it had to be allocated to the 'non-teaching-related' English language qualifications category. The reason behind the decision to divide teachers' qualifications into these two categories was twofold: first, the great variety of different qualifications would have made it impossible to check whether or not statistically significant differences in teachers' responses could be attributed to the possession of certain qualifications over others and, second, it would be interesting to see if the teachers who held 'teaching-related'

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[96] 'Valid' here refers to all those teachers who answered the particular question. The question of 'gender' was relevant to all teachers and all of them replied.
[97] http://www.cambridgeesol.org/recognition/faq.html#2 accessed on 08.01.2009.
[98] http://www.hau.gr/?i=hau.en.exams_ecpe accessed on 08.01.2009.

English language qualifications responded differently in a statistically significant way to those who held only 'non-teaching-related' ones. It is striking that 40% of the teachers only held 'non-teaching-related' English language qualifications (Table 3.5); these teachers either had English as an L1 or held the CPE. For a more detailed analysis of teachers' qualifications, interested readers can see Appendix 3.3.

Table 3.5
English language 'teaching related' qualifications

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	'Teaching-related' qualifications	28	59.6	59.6	59.6
	'Non-teaching-related' qualifications	19	40.4	40.4	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Teachers were also divided into two categories according to the level of learners they taught: those that taught learners who were studying towards obtaining the FCE (or the ECCE) and those that taught learners who already possessed the FCE and were studying towards the CPE (or the ECPE). The first category is denoted by '-Lower' and covers 'pre-lower' and 'lower' level students. The second category is denoted by 'Lower+' and covers 'advanced' and 'proficiency' level students. Table 3.6 shows that 36.2% of teachers taught '-Lower' learners whereas 63.8% of teachers taught '-Lower' as well as 'Lower+' learners.

Table 3.6
Proportion of teachers' at each teaching level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-Lower	17	36.2	36.2	36.2
	Both ('-Lower' 'Lower+')	30	63.8	63.8	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

No teacher was found to only teach 'Lower+' learners. This is not surprising as the number of –Lower classes is greater than the number of Lower+ classes in all schools; all learners sit the FCE (and/or ECCE) exam but not all go on to sit the CPE (or ECPE) exam.

In terms of the teachers' L1, 76.6% had Greek as their L1 and the remaining 23.4% had English (Table 3.7). 41.7% of those who had Greek as their L1 had lived in an English-speaking country for a year or longer (Table 3.8). The most frequently recorded reason for their stay in an English-speaking country was the attendance of an undergraduate or postgraduate course at a university there. The majority of those who had English as their L1 claimed to speak with a standard English accent (63.6%); see Table 3.9 for information on the categories that emerged regarding teachers' accents.

Table 3.7
Teachers' L1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greek	36	76.6	76.6	76.6
	English	11	23.4	23.4	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.8
Teachers whose L1 is Greek
(have lived in an English-speaking country)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	21	44.7	58.3	58.3
	Yes	15	31.9	41.7	100.0
	Total	36	76.6	100.0	
Missing[99]	System	11	23.4		
Total		47	100.0		

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[99] 'Missing' here denotes those teachers who had English as an L1 and were thus excluded from the statistical analysis of the particular question.

Table 3.9
Teachers whose L1 is English

(accent)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	British Standard	2	4.3	18.2	18.2
	American Standard	3	6.4	27.3	45.5
	Other Standard (Australian)	2	4.3	18.2	63.6
	American Regionally Influenced	2	4.3	18.2	81.8
	Other Regionally Influenced[100]	2	4.3	18.2	100.0
	Total	11	23.4	100.0	
Missing[101]	System	36	76.6		
Total		47	100.0		

Let us move on to teachers' acquisition of phonological knowledge and experience of training in the teaching of pronunciation. Table 3.10 shows that nearly half of the respondents (48.9%) had never attended a course/module in English phonetics. Nevertheless, those that had attended one (51.1%) rated it as 'very useful' (M = 2.21 on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1= 'extremely useful' and 5= 'not at all useful') in terms of preparing them for the teaching of pronunciation in class (Table 3.11).

Table 3.10
Teachers' attendance of course/module in English phonetics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	23	48.9	48.9	48.9
	Yes	24	51.1	51.1	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

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[100] One teacher described their accent as 'British-Australian' and another as 'South African partially British'.

[101] 'Missing' here denotes those teachers who had Greek as an L1 and were thus excluded from the statistical analysis of the particular question.

Table 3.11
Teachers' ratings of course/module in English phonetics in terms of 'usefulness'
(1= 'extremely useful', 5 = 'not at all useful')

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
usefulness of phonetics course	24	1	4	2.21	.977

Moreover, the majority of teachers (72.3%) had never received any specific training in the teaching of English pronunciation (Table 3.12). Those that had received training in the teaching of pronunciation rated it as 'very useful' (M = 2.18 on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1= 'extremely useful' and 5= 'not at all useful') in terms of their teaching of pronunciation in class (Table 3.13).

Table 3.12
Teachers' training in the teaching of English pronunciation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	34	72.3	72.3	72.3
	Yes	13	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.13
Teachers' ratings of training in the teaching of English pronunciation in terms of 'usefulness' (1 = 'extremely useful', 5 = 'not at all useful')

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
usefulness of pronunciation course	11	1	4	2.18	.874

If we take into consideration that nearly half of the respondents possessed 'non-teaching related' English language qualifications, the findings pertaining to teachers' attendance of phonetics courses and pronunciation training should not be surprising.

The learners

The research sample consisted of 327 learners. Table 3.14 shows that the mean age of the respondents was 16 years (S.D = 3.752) and the mean number of years of learning English was 7 (S.D = 1.701).

Table 3.14
Learners' age & years of learning English

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	325[102]	12.00	40.00[103]	16.4862	3.72520
Years of learning English	314	3.00[104]	17.00	7.3169	1.70108

Females constituted nearly 63% of the sample (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16
Learners' gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	122	37.3	37.3	37.3
	Female	205	62.7	62.7	100.0
	Total	327	100.0	100.0	

Just as teachers were divided into two main categories according to the level of learners taught, learners were also divided into two main categories according to their level of English: those that were studying towards obtaining the FCE (or ECCE) and those who possessed the FCE and were studying towards the CPE (or ECPE). The first category is denoted by '-Lower' and includes 'pre-lower' and 'lower level' learners. The second category is denoted by 'Lower+' and includes 'advanced' and

[102] Two of the respondents did not write in their age in the space provided.
[103] There was only one participant who was 40 years old. Virtually all learners were teenagers and the vast majority were aged 13-17.
[104] There were only two participants who claimed to have been learning English for 3 years; one of them was the 40-year-old male (see footnote 17).

'proficiency' level learners[105]. Table 3.17 shows that 63.6% were '-Lower' learners and 36.4% were 'Lower+' learners. It was expected that '-Lower' learners would outnumber 'Lower+' learners because while all students sit the FCE exam, not all of students go on to sit the CPE exam. Thus, there are fewer classes for 'Lower+' learners than classes for '-Lower' learners in all schools.

Table 3.17
Proportion of learners at each level of English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-Lower	208	63.6	63.6	63.6
	Lower+	119	36.4	36.4	100.0
	Total	327	100.0	100.0	

The vast majority of learners (91.7%) had 'Greek' as their L1 (Table 3.18). The other L1s were Albanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Armenian, Romanian and Polish. This is not a surprising finding as it was expected that between 5% and 10% of learners were going to be migrant pupils[106].

Table 3.18
Learners' L1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Greek	300	91.7	91.7	91.7
	Other	27	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	327	100.0	100.0	

The number of learners in the schools of the private sector that did not have Greek as an L1 reflects the trend regarding the presence of migrants in state schools; this is not

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[105] Students studying towards CPE are allocated either to an 'advanced class' or a 'proficiency' class. However, In some frontistiria, the term 'advanced class' is not used and students are allocated either to 'proficiency class A' or 'proficiency class B'. Thus, it made sense to include 'advanced' and 'proficiency' level learners in the same category.
[106] Please refer back to Section 3.1.1, this chapter for more details.

surprising as virtually all pupils attend state school in the morning and private English

language school in the afternoon[107].

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[107] Please refer back to Section 3.1.2 , this chapter for more information on this matter.

3.2 The Research Instrument

The general consensus among writers of methodological handbooks on questionnaire construction seems to be that the development of a questionnaire that will yield worthwhile data is a difficult task and, thus, one that should not be embarked upon lightly (Gillham, 2000a; Babbie, 1991; Gorard, 2003; Floyd Fowler, 2002; Denscombe, 2003). Unfortunately, many research questionnaires lack careful planning and fail to produce reliable and valid data; "no single method has been so much abused" (Gillham, 2000a: 1). Dornyei (2003: 3) believes that "*most* questionnaires applied in second language (L2) research are somewhat *ad hoc* instruments, and questionnaires with sufficient (and well-documented) psychometric reliability and validity are not easy to come by in our field", due to insufficient awareness of the theory of questionnaire design and processing among researchers.

This section will provide adequate information regarding the development of the questionnaire of this study in order to allow readers to make their own assessment in terms of its quality. It will mainly focus on the teachers' questionnaire as the learners' questionnaire was closely modelled on the former. Interested readers can see Appendix 3.4 for the chronological sequence in terms of the steps taken and procedures followed in constructing the questionnaire.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Content

The first step in preparing the questionnaire was to seek to specify its content because without any explicit content specifications, it is impossible to decide what limit to put on the range of questions to be included or to ensure that the coverage of relevant issues is comprehensive; "vague content specifications can pose a serious threat to the validity and reliability of the instrument" (Dornyei, 2003: 31). It was decided to use the themes that had emerged from the review of current ELT, AL and ELT PRON manuals and handbooks (Chapter 1) to guide the development of the questionnaire, as those themes provided a comprehensive summary of current thought on the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in ELT. All themes are reproduced in Box 3.19 (next page) as well as in Appendix 3.4. The themes that emerged from the review of ELT PRON manuals either corresponded to/or formed part of some of the themes from ELT and AL manuals (Box 3.19). A further 'theme', which addresses the relationship language teaching methodology and the place and practice of pronunciation teaching in the EFL curriculum[108], was added to this list of themes.

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[108] For a detailed discussion of this theme please refer back to Section 2.1, Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Box 3.19
The themes that emerged from the review of ELT, AL & ELT PRON handbooks

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Theme 1

The Place & Role of Phonology in L2 Listening

Theme 2

Accents of English & Listening Comprehension

Theme 3

The Place of Pronunciation in L2 Speaking

Theme 4

Pronunciation & Intelligibility

*Theme 5 (*also, *Theme 2* of ELT PRON manuals)

Phonological Perception & Production

Theme 6 (also, *Theme 3* of ELT PRON manuals)

Suprasegmentals versus Segmentals

Theme 7

Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets

Theme 8 (also, *Theme 11* of ELT PRON manuals)

Pronunciation Syllabus & Teaching/ Learning Needs

Theme 9 (also, *Theme 1* & *Theme 5* of ELT PRON manuals)

Phonological Knowledge & IPA Symbols

Theme 10 (also, *Themes 6, 7, 8, 9, 10* of ELT PRON manuals)

Pronunciation Teaching Methods & Activities

Theme 11

The Relationship between Language Teaching Method & the Role of Pronunciation in the Curriculum

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 I then proceeded to examine how each theme could be used to generate questionnaire questions. For example, *theme 8* could be addressed by asking teachers if they engaged in needs analysis in order to determine the contents of the pronunciation syllabus. However, the particular question could pose a threat to the validity of the data; it would be easy for respondents to guess that 'yes' is the desired response and feel inclined to provide it even if it is not true[109]. It was decided to ask the particular question in the course of the interviews as it would be easier for the interviewer to check the accuracy of responses. Thus, it emerged that certain questions were more suited for the interviews. Once the process of drafting potential questions for each theme was completed, those provisional questions were evaluated and revised according to the research supervisor's suggestions. The final questionnaire questions were grouped into nine topics; each comprised a section in the questionnaire (Box 3.20 displays the section headings). Some of the themes were linked together in one topic, hence the lower number of the topics. In order to ensure that all themes were addressed in the questionnaire, an alignment check, similar to the one recommended by Cox (1996), was conducted (see Appendix 3.6).

Box 3.20
Questionnaire topics

I.	Language areas
II.	Teaching methods
III.	Contexts of use of English outside the classroom
IV.	Speaking ability
V.	Listening comprehension
VI.	Pronunciation areas
VII.	Pronunciation models and performance targets
VIII.	Pronunciation teaching
IX.	Profile

---

[109] The phenomenon of respondents' guessing the desirable/ acceptable/ expected answers and providing them in an attempt to please the researcher is well-documented in the relevant literature and is referred to as "social desirability (or prestige) bias" (Dornyei, 2003: 12).

The final version of the teachers' questionnaire (the one used in the main study) is reproduced in Appendix 3.7. For a closer look at the rationale for each section of the questionnaire as well as the questions it comprises and how it addresses one or more of the aforementioned themes (Box 3.19), interested readers can see Appendix 3.8.

3.2.2 The Questions

Having explored what the sections and questions that compromise the questionnaire were based on, I will move on to describe the process followed and the guidelines adhered to in writing the questionnaire questions.

Using existing questions

The strategy of borrowing questions from established questionnaires, provided that the sources are acknowledged, is common practice among researchers and highly recommended (Sudman & Bradburn, 1983; Gorard, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Dornyei, 2003 – for more information, see Appendix 3.9). This method was employed for the development of the questionnaire items that address pronunciation performance targets; the particular section was largely based on Timmis's (2002) 'pronunciation' question. Timmis (2002) conducted two parallel questionnaire surveys which explored students' and teachers' attitudes to the question of whether or not learners of English should conform to NS norms. In terms of pronunciation, he included the question displayed in Box 3.21 in the teachers' questionnaire. The 'Student A' quotation was invented to represent native-speaker competence (NSC) and the 'Student B' quotation to represent accented international intelligibility (AII) (Timmis, 2002: 242).

Box 3.21
Timmis's (2002) teachers' questionnaire; the 'pronunciation' question

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Student A: 'I can pronounce English just like a native speaker now. Sometimes people think I am a native speaker.'

Student B: 'I can pronounce English clearly now. Native speakers and non-native speakers understand me wherever I go, but I still have the accent of my country.'

Please underline one answer.

Would you prefer your students to be like Student A or Student B?

Student A   **Student B**   No preference

Problems were encountered in the analysis of the teachers' responses to the particular question. Most teachers opted for Student B; however, it was found that:

> On closer inspection… it seems that, despite the wording of the question, many teachers were choosing what they regarded as the more *realistic* rather than the more *desirable* outcome. Many teachers qualified their choice in this sense, and one teacher who had actually opted for Student B wrote: 'Of course Student A is preferable but in reality it is impossible to achieve so student B can be a good standard.'
>
> Timmis, 2002: 243

To avoid encountering this particular problem in our study the following questions were devised: one that distinguishes between teachers' desires and expectations and another one which asks them to choose what is more important to them (NSC or AII) and, also, to justify their choice (see Box 3.22).

Box 3. 22
Teachers' questionnaire; 'Pronunciation models & performance targets' section

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1 a) Ideally, <u>how close would you like</u> your students' accent to come to a native-like model?

Please tick one box only using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely close; 5= not at all close)

      1   2   3   4   5

b) In practice, <u>how close do you expect</u> your students' accent to come to a native-like model?

Please tick one box only using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely close; 5= not at all close)

      1   2   3   4   5

2 a) Which is more important, in your opinion?

To raise students' pronunciation to… *(please tick one box only)*

the level of native speakers so that people will think they are native speakers

to a level at which native and non-native speakers can understand them perfectly well, although they still have the accent of their country

b) Please give a brief reason for your answer

………………………………………………………………………………

Types of questions

Closed questions provide respondents with ready-made response options to choose from, usually by encircling one of them or by placing a tick in the appropriate box. On the other hand, open questions are accompanied by some blank space for respondents to write in their answer (Dornyei, 2003: 35, 47). It was decided that the majority of the questionnaire should be closed-ended ones for a number of reasons. Closed questions are relatively easy to score for; it is certainly easier and quicker for respondents to put a tick next to their preferred option than to produce free writing. Moreover, if the questionnaire were to mainly comprise open questions, which are more demanding in terms of respondents' time and effort, the overall number of questions would need to be significantly reduced, and, thus, it would not be possible to address all 11 themes (for further reasons, interested readers can see Appendix 3.9).

As for open questions, Gorard (2003: 104) wrote that they are best used in two situations: where it is already clear how the responses will be analysed or where the responses will be used not to create a statistical pattern, but to help explain it. The questionnaire used for this study included a limited number of open questions and only in the aforementioned situations. For example, the open question in Box 3.22 provides an opportunity to shed light on the reasons behind the respondents' choice of particular pronunciation performance targets (for more information on open questions, see Appendix 3.9).

Returning to closed questions, there are several options at the researcher's disposal; 'scaled responses' (often referred to as 'rating scales') and 'selected responses' were the ones most frequently employed in the questionnaire.

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Scaled responses

Scaled responses require respondents to make an evaluative judgement of the target by marking one of a series of categories organised into a scale. The various points on the continuum of the scale indicate different degrees of a certain category; this can be of a diverse nature, ranging from various attributes (e.g. frequency) to intensity (e.g. very much → not at all) and opinion (e.g. strongly agree → strongly disagree). The points on the scale are subsequently assigned successive numbers and, thus, computer coding becomes a very simple task (Dornyei, 2003: 36).

In this study's questionnaire, the respondents were required to mark their responses on a five-point scale ranging from 'always' (1) to 'never' (5) and from 'extremely' (1) to 'not at all' (5), depending on the type of the question. The decision to use a five-point scale was largely based on the fact that this type of scale features in the majority of questionnaires (Gillham, 2000a; Dornyei, 2003). Thus, it was felt that the task of the respondents would be greatly assisted by presenting them with a type of scale that many of them would be familiar with. Moreover, the use of five levels seems more natural to most people than any other number of levels[110]. There are researchers (e.g. Cox, 1996 and Dornyei, 2003) who prefer using scales with an even number of points "because of the concern that certain respondents might use the middle category ('neither agree nor disagree', 'not sure', or 'neutral') to avoid making a real choice, that is, to take the easy way out" (Dornyei, 2003: 37). Fortunately, it has been demonstrated that the inclusion or exclusion of the middle category does not affect the relative proportions of those actually expressing opinions and thus does not modify the results significantly (Nunnally, 1978; Robson, 1993 cited in Dornyei, 2003: 38). For this research, it was decided to adopt the view expressed by Cohen et

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[110] Nakas, C. (Lecturer in Statistics, University of Thessaly, Greece). 19.01.2008. Personal communication.

al (2007: 327) "if respondents wish to sit on the fence and choose a mid-point, then they should be given the option to do so" (: 327).

A question that plagued the researcher was which words or phrases to use in order to label each point on the scale to ensure that equal intervals are maintained between adjacent choices. For example, in the case of a frequency scale, labels such as 'often' and 'regularly' are very ambiguous because "respondents will operate with different frames of reference when employing them" (Bryman, 2004: 152-153). Since the use of descriptors that are semantically equidistant presents a great challenge for the questionnaire developer (Cox, 1996: 58), it was decided to label only the two end points of each scale and leave the other points with no descriptions. Indeed, it is common practice among researchers to label only the two end points of the scale as in many cases a numerical identification of the remaining points is sufficient (for an example, see Llurda and Huguet, 2003 or Garrett and Shorthall, 2002).

Selected responses

This type requires respondents to mark – depending on the question – one or more options. The simplest type is the one where only two response options are offered (e.g. please tick: Male   Female). This type of question, often described as a dichotomous question, provides a clear, unequivocal response and it is possible to code responses very quickly since there are only two categories of response. A dichotomous question is also useful as a funnelling or sorting device for subsequent questions (Cohen et al, 2007: 322-323). For an example of this type of question, see Q4a, 'Profile' Section, Appendix 3.6). The other type follows a multiple-choice format; there is a list of alternatives to choose from (for an example, see Qe, 'Profile' Section, Appendix 3.7). Like dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions can

be quickly coded and quickly aggregated to give frequencies of response (Cohen et al, 2007: 323).

Question guidelines & principles

A very important guideline to be followed in the construction of closed-ended questions is to ensure that the response categories are exhaustive; that is, they include all the possible categories that might be expected (Babbie, 1991: 128). This guideline is very important because "closed questions may be irritating to respondents when they are not able to find a category that they feel applies to them" (Bryman, 2004: 150). Furthermore, the content validity of the instrument is threatened if the list of categories provided for each closed question is not comprehensive, exhaustive and representative; "content validity addresses whether or not the appropriate content is in the instrument" (Cox, 1996: 35) and, unless, the content validity of the instrument used for this study is established, it cannot be argued that the questionnaire measures what it is intended to measure. Thus, questions along the lines of 'are the items on the list the most appropriate ones?' and 'have any important elements been overlooked?' need to be addressed.

To ensure that all possible answers are catered for, Cox (1996: 35) recommends the content of closed-ended questions to be cross-referenced to those elements reported in the relevant literature in order to determine whether or not there is a match. Nevertheless, this process may yield excessively long lists of possible answers. A possible solution is to include those answers or elements that are identified by the relevant literature as the most important or popular ones and add an 'Other' category. The inclusion of an 'Other' category is recommended by many research methodologists (Bryman, 2004; Gillham, 2000; Dornyei, 2003; Gorard, 2003; Babbie, 1991) and this was the approach adopted by the researcher for this study. For

example, for the question in Box 3.23, in addition to the two most popular English accents (RP and GA) an 'Other' category was added. 'Other' was followed by 'please specify'[111] to cover for the large number of other accents (see Box 3.23).

Box 3.23
Teachers' questionnaire

1. Which pronunciation model do you follow in your teaching?
Please tick all those that apply
British English standard accent
American English standard accent
Other *(please specify)*: ………………..

For additional procedures followed to establish the content validity of the questionnaire, interested readers can see Appendix 3.9.

Designing a question for a survey instrument is designing a measure, not a conversational inquiry; the answers that will be provided will be of interest not intrinsically but because of their relationship to something they are supposed to measure (Floyd-Fowler, 2002: 76). "Good questions are reliable (providing consistent measures in comparable situations) and valid (answers correspond to what they are intended to measure)" (ibid: 76). So far we have looked at the steps taken to establish the content validity of questionnaire items; "the degree to which a measure covers the range of meanings included within the concept" (Babbie, 1991: 134). We will now proceed to describe the steps taken to increase the *reliability* of the questionnaire items (the extent to which respondents in comparable situations would answer the questions in similar ways) as well as their *validity* (the extent to which they elicit accurate information).

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[111] 'Please specify' is referred to by Dornyei (2003: 48) as a 'clarification' question and belongs to the category of 'specific open questions'.

There are a number of techniques available for measuring the reliability of questionnaire items (such techniques will be dealt with later on in this chapter). As for methods for maximising reliability, these "are pretty straightforward. Ask people only questions they are likely to know the answers to, ask about things relevant to them and be clear in what you are asking" (Babbie, 1991: 131). In our study, great emphasis was given to the respondents' competency to answer the questions included in the questionnaire as well as to the questions' relevance and clarity. For further information on this, interested readers can see Appendix 3.9.

It is worth noting that one can measure with perfect reliability and still not be measuring what one wants to measure (Floyd-Fowler, 2002: 88-89). The extent to which the answer given is a true measure and means what the researcher wants or expects it to mean, in other words, the validity of answer(s) presents a great challenge for the researcher; "when people are asked about subjective states, feelings, attitudes, and opinions, there is no objective way of validating the answers. Only the respondent has access to his or her feelings and opinions" (Floyd-Fowler, 2002: 89). Nevertheless, there are ways to help and encourage people who complete questionnaires to do so accurately, honestly and correctly; as Floyd-Fowler (2002: 77) puts it: "when answers are good measures, it is usually the result of careful design". Thus, in writing the questions for this questionnaire, certain rules, as outlined in relevant methodological handbooks, were adhered to; for example, *highbrow questions* must be avoided as misunderstandings may occur (Cohen et al, 2007) and all questions must be *clear and unambiguous* (Bryman, 2004; Dornyei, 2003; Wray et al, 1998; Babbie, 1991; Smith, 1988). Furthermore, each question was followed by specific instructions as to how respondents should go about answering it. These instructions were printed in italics in order to be separated from the rest of the text and

attract the respondents' attention. Simple, specific and complete instructions play a very important role in helping respondents understand what is required of them and make appropriate selections (Bryman, 2004; Dornyei, 2003; Cox, 1996), and, thus, reduce the likelihood of instances that have to be treated as missing data. (See Appendix 3.9 for further information on this matter).

3.2.3 The Design of the Questionnaire

Having explored the drafting of the questions that comprise the questionnaire which "are the heart of the matter" (Gillham, 2000a: 35), I will proceed to discuss the design of the questionnaire, which is the second key stage in questionnaire construction (Gillham, 2000a). The visual appearance of the questionnaire received a great deal of attention because "the respondent's attitude toward a questionnaire is often determined at first glance by *how the form looks,* not *what it contains*" (Cox, 1996: 13). A carefully designed document will increase the motivation of respondents to complete it appropriately. Dornyei (2003: 19) goes as far as to declare that: "over the past 15 years I have increasingly come to the belief that producing an attractive and professional design is half the battle in eliciting reliable and valid data".   Thus, the questionnaire must look easy, attractive and interesting rather than complicated, unclear and boring (Cohen et al, 2007: 338).

Layout order of questionnaire items

In the interests of clarity and logic, it is useful to break down the questionnaire into sections with appropriate section headings; "this will also indicate the overall logic and coherence of the questionnaire to the respondents, enabling them to 'find their way' through the questionnaire" (Cohen et al, 2007: 338). As we have already seen, the questions were grouped into nine topics; within these topics the questions led themselves logically from one into another. Grouping together all questions pertinent to a single topic and then moving on to the next topical set is important "because questions that follow a logical sequence are always easier to answer than questions having no coherent order" (Smith, 1988; 228).

So, which topic or set of questions should come first? The general consensus among research methodologists is that a questionnaire should commence with easy-

to-answer questions that will entice the respondent to continue with the task of completing the questionnaire (Wray et al, 1998; Denscombe, 2003; Dornyei, 2003; Cohen et al, 2007). Thus, the 'Language Areas' section (see Appendix 3.7) seemed the most appropriate one to include at the beginning of the questionnaire and other more difficult or time-consuming questions appeared later on in the questionnaire.

And, which set of questions should come last? According to Denscombe (2003), Dornyei (2003), Gorard (2003) and Cox (1996), factual questions (often referred to as 'personal' or 'classification' questions) should be placed at the end. Introducing such questions very early in the questionnaire may cause respondents to wonder why this information is needed and can have an adverse effect on their willingness to co-operate. The sensitive nature of these questions can make them appear intrusive; even "an apparently innocuous question about age might be offensive to some respondents" (Cohen et al, 2007: 327). Interestingly, in Greek culture, it is considered impolite to ask women their age. Thus, the 'Profile' section appeared last in the questionnaire and all the 'Profile' questions were preceded by a brief explanation as to why this information was needed, as follows: "finally, in order to help us to better interpret and classify your answers, could you please tell us a little bit about you & your language teaching background?"

Length

Opinions are divided as to how long is too long for a questionnaire: Gorard (2003: 100) recommends "eight core pages as a maximum", Gillham (2000: 39) believes that "four to six pages is the usual tolerance maximum" and Dornyei (2003: 18) states "I have always tried to stay within a 4-page limit". The differences in opinion are due to the fact that there is no rule about the number of pages a questionnaire should contain;

it makes more sense for its length to depend on the kind of issues/topics it investigates, the complexity of the questions it includes, the time it requires to be completed and the circumstances under which it is administered.

In terms of our questionnaire, every effort was made to include only those items that were crucial to the research. The final version of the Teachers' Questionnaire was seven and a half pages long and the Learners' Questionnaire was five pages long. The pilot study participants took an average of fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. The estimated fifteen-minute completion time was regarded as reasonable by the teachers and school principals of the schools that participated in the study. Interested readers can see Appendix 3.10 for further information on the design of the questionnaire.

3.2.4 Learners' Questionnaire

The Learners' questionnaire is almost identical to the teachers' except for slight changes in the wording of questions and the omission of questions that only applied to teachers (e.g. 'Teaching Methods').

The Learners' questionnaire was translated into Greek so that the learners would understand it better and complete it faster. In translating the questionnaire into Greek the technique of back-translation, as recommended by Gorard (2003: 101), was also applied; "in this, the translated version is translated back into the original language by a third person as a check on the preservation of the original meaning". The particular task was assigned to a friend of the researcher, who holds an M.A in translation studies, and any discrepancies that emerged were discussed and resolved. The English version of the questionnaire appears in Appendix 3.11 and the Greek version appears in Appendix 3.12.

3.2.5 Questionnaire Piloting

The general consensus among authors of methodological handbooks is that pre-testing a questionnaire is crucial to its success (Cohen et al, 2007; Mackey and Gass, 2005; Bryman, 2004; Dornyei, 2003 & 2007; Floyd Fowler, 2002; Gillham, 2000a). Pre-testing can be achieved by means of a small-scale trial of the proposed questionnaire which is usually referred to as a 'pilot test'. The purpose of the pilot test is to ensure that the questions work as intended and that the questionnaire functions well as a whole. Thus, pilot tests provide the researcher with the opportunity to identify and overcome any problems that may emerge prior to the administration of the questionnaire to the participants of the main study. As Dornyei (2003: 63) puts it: "trial runs allow the researcher to collect feedback about how the instrument works and whether it performs the job it has been designed for. Based on this information, we can make alterations and fine-tune the final version of the questionnaire". Therefore, the teachers' and learners' questionnaires were pilot-tested (and subsequently revised) at various stages of their development; twice prior to the final pilot study and one final time at the final pilot study. This section concentrates on the pilot tests conducted prior to the final pilot study; the final pilot study will be dealt with in Section 3.3 'Procedure'.

Participants

According to Bryman (2004: 160), "the pilot should not be carried out on people who might have been members of the sample that would be employed in the full study" and recommends finding "a small set of respondents who are comparable to members of the population from which the sample for the full study will be taken". This tenet is also endorsed by Gillham (2000) and Dornyei (2003; 2007). On the other hand, Floyd Fowler (2002: 114) suggests pre-testing the questionnaire "with a group of potential

respondents" and Cohen et al (2007: 343) recommend "using a group of respondents who are drawn from the possible sample but who will not receive the final refined version". The pilot tests for this study were conducted on samples of people who did not belong to the target population the instrument had been designed for (but were very similar to the members of that population). This was done to avoid compromising in any way the representativeness of the sample selected for the main study by placing any limitations on the sampling procedure to be followed.

Thus, the researcher initially identified individuals who had the appropriate characteristics from her circle of relatives, acquaintances and former colleagues[112]. These individuals helped her identify others who also had the required characteristics and, thus, could be included in the samples to be used for the pilot-tests. For example, the group of people that participated in the first pilot test of the teachers' questionnaire included five EFL teachers who had worked in different language schools in Thessaloniki for a number of years; at the time of the pilot test, three of them only offered private one-to-one English language lessons and the remaining two were based in a different city and worked at a language school there. All five teachers had had experience in teaching learners of all levels. A different group of people was selected for the second pilot test of the teachers' questionnaire. As for the group of people that participated in the first pilot test of the learners' questionnaire, it consisted of three 'pre-lower' and four 'lower' level EFL learners; all seven learners were taught privately by one of the teachers of the group of people that participated in the first pilot test of the teachers' questionnaire and all the learners used to attend lessons at English language schools. A different group of learners was selected for the second pilot test of the learners' questionnaire.

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[112] 'Former colleagues' refers to EFL teachers working in Thessaloniki, Greece since the researcher has worked as an EFL teacher in Thessaloniki, Greece for a year (2001 – 2002).

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<u>Procedure</u>

The two pilot-tests of the teachers' questionnaire took place at the researcher's home and the two pilot-tests of the learners' questionnaire took place at two (different) teachers' homes. The procedure adopted for the pilot tests of the questionnaire for this study was similar to the one recommended by Dornyei (2003), as follows:

> Ask them to go through the items and answer them, and then to provide feedback about their reactions and the answers they have given. The best method to conduct this phase is for you to be present while they are working: this way you can observe their reactions (e.g. hesitations or uncertainties) and can note and respond to any spontaneous questions or comments.
>
> Dornyei, 2003: 66

All four pilot-tests were conducted in the researcher's presence. At each pilot test, the participants were given an earlier version of the questionnaire that was used for the main study and were asked to complete it. Extra time was allocated for the researcher to lead a discussion about the participants' experience of completing the questionnaire. Box 3.24 summarises the issues that were addressed as part of that discussion.

Box 3.24
Issues addressed at the pilot-tests of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires

1) Whether the instructions were clear and adequate
2) Whether the layout was clear
3) Whether the questions were clear (e.g. were there any ambiguities or difficulties in the wording of the questions?)
4) The types of questions and their format (e.g. open, closed, rating scales)
5) The adequacy of the response categories provided for the closed questions and multiple-choice items of the questionnaire
6) Which questionnaire items were too difficult, too complex or too remote from the respondents' experience
7) The overall appearance and attractiveness of the questionnaire
8) The time and mental effort required for completing the questionnaire (whether the questionnaire was too long or too difficult or vice versa)

Adapted from Cohen et al, 2007: 341; Floyd- Fowler, 2002: 114

Each pilot raised a number of issues that were addressed in subsequent versions of the questionnaire. Interested readers can see Appendix 3.13 for more information on this matter.

A final note

Oppenheim (1992: 48 cited in Cohen et al, 2007: 341) states that everything about the questionnaire should be piloted; nothing should be excluded, not even the type face or the quality of the paper. To this end, the aim of the discussion that followed each pilot test of the questionnaire for this study was to gain feedback on every aspect of the questionnaire; even the quality and colour of the paper it was printed on. For example, at the first pilot test of the teachers' questionnaire, the participants were presented with two versions of the same questionnaire; one had been printed on white paper of standard quality and the other had been printed on ivory paper of excellent quality. Newell (1993) describes a colleague who had always produced documents on thick, beige paper because she believed that it made the questionnaire more attractive and pleasant to handle (cited in Dornyei, 2003: 21). However, all the pilot test participants of this study expressed their preference for the white paper of standard quality; the ivory paper of the superior quality was thicker and heavier and thus, made the questionnaire look longer. We have already discussed the importance of producing a questionnaire that *is* not too long; the questionnaire should also not *look* too long.

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Final Pilot

While the pilot-tests described in the previous section were mainly used for correction and improvements purposes in terms of the content, structure and overall appearance of the questionnaire, in the final pilot study, described in this section, we will see how we went a few steps further. Babbie (1990: 226) recommends conducting a pilot study that is "a miniaturized walk through of the entire study" and that it should differ from the final survey 'only in scale, with fewer cases studied (and less time used)". Babbie's (1990) recommended guidelines and procedures as to conducting and evaluating pilot studies in terms of sampling, the administration of the research instrument and the processing and analysis of data were used as a guide for the final pilot study of our research.

The final pilot study took place in two schools at the end of January/ beginning of February, 2008. One school was selected from the 'Southeastern Schools' group and the other one was selected from the 'Northwestern Schools' group[113]; 7 teachers and 75 learners participated. I will refer to the final pilot study rather briefly as it was virtually identical to the main study (see next section). The final pilot-study questionnaires contained all the intended questions in the wording, format and sequence that pretesting had indicated were best for the final study. All questionnaires were administered in exactly the same way as in the main study and the data were entered and analyzed in exactly the same way as planned for the final research; numerical data were submitted to various statistical analyses[114] (including

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[113] Please refer back to Section 3.1.3 for more information on this.
[114] Detailed information regarding the procedures followed for the analysis of quantitative data is found in the 'Results' chapter of this thesis.

Cronbach's alpha[115] for internal consistency so that those items with low reliability would be removed) and qualitative data were analysed by means of content analysis[116].

Once all the final pilot study results were analysed, it was decided to include the data from the final pilot study in the data of the main study. Using pilot study data as part of the main study data is a practice acknowledged by research methodologists provided that certain important conditions are met. Dornyei (2003: 69) states that "if the final piloting phase did not result in major changes, it may be possible to use at least some of the obtained data for the purpose of the 'real' investigation". Mackey and Gass (2005: 44) write that "sometimes pilot studies can result in data that might be useable for the main study" and "if they [researchers] do not encounter problems with their pilot testing, they can use the data for their main study as long as it is collected in exactly the same way".

As far as this research is concerned, the manner in which the data were collected and analysed in the final pilot study and the main study were exactly the same. Furthermore, the analysis of the pilot study questionnaire data revealed that all questionnaire items worked properly. For example, the range of responses elicited by each item was satisfactory; this is important because including items that are endorsed by almost everyone or by almost no one are difficult if not impossible to process statistically since statistical procedures require a certain amount of variation in the scores (Dornyei, 2003: 68-69). As for the internal consistency of the multi-item scales present in the questionnaire (which was calculated using SPSS software), enough

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[115] The Cronbach alpha provides a coefficient of inter-item correlations, that is, the correlation of each item with the sum of all the other relevant items, and is useful for multi-item scales. This is a measure of the internal consistency among the items (not, for example, the people). (Cohen et al, 2007: 148).
[116] Detailed information about the procedures followed for the analysis of qualitative data is found in the 'Results' chapter of this thesis.

consistency was recorded to give credibility to the results[117]. It is important to note that the questionnaire used in the final pilot study and the one used in the main study were identical, the only exception being the transformation of one open-ended question into a closed-ended question (see Appendix 3.14 for information on this).

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[117] For more information on the Cronbach Alpha values as well as on which Alpha figures are considered to be acceptable, please see Section 4.7, Chapter 4.

3.3.2 Main Study

This section describes the process followed in order to collect the questionnaire data and addresses any ethical issues that pertained to the collection of the data.

Procedure

The directors and/or school principals of the chosen schools were contacted by phone to inform them about the purpose of the study and to seek their permission for their schools to take part in the study; all directors/school principals agreed and some even expressed great interest in the research[118]. The secretary of each school provided the researcher with a schedule of the dates and times of all English classes. During school breaks the director/school principal or secretary introduced the researcher to the school's teachers and once the break was over, the researcher went to one class at a time to administer the questionnaires. All the teachers were very helpful and usually allowed the researcher to enter the class within 10 minutes of the beginning of the lesson. This was important because if, for example, the researcher was to enter the class towards the end of each lesson there was a twofold risk; first, students might be tired and 'looking forward' to the end of the lesson (and, consequently, not pay much attention to the questionnaire) and second, there might not be enough time to complete the questionnaire or the students may feel pressured to do so very quickly (and, perhaps, rather carelessly).

Each teacher introduced the researcher briefly to their class and then the researcher informed the students about the purpose of the research, what was required of them (to complete a questionnaire) and addressed issues such as anonymity and

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[118] A couple of school principals offered the researcher a cup of coffee to discuss the research in greater detail and a few directors invited the researcher to their offices once the questionnaires had been completed in order to give her their own opinion on the matters under investigation.

voluntary participation. Once this was done the researcher administered the consent forms for the teacher and students to read and sign and once these were collected, the questionnaires were administered. All EFL students were encouraged to respond to all questions while bearing in mind only the situation for ELT at the private sector; this matter had to be clarified as virtually all EFL students that participated in the study attended English language lessons both at school and the frontistirio. The students and their teacher usually required 15 minutes to complete the questionnaires and once they were completed they were returned to the researcher who thanked all the participants for their co-operation and left the class. All the questionnaire data were collected over a period of 3 months: February, March and April, 2008[119].

Questionnaire response rate

The reason behind the researcher's decision to administer the questionnaires herself and have them completed in her presence (rather than posting them) was based on the fact that the low response rate to postal questionnaires is well-documented in the methodological literature (see Babbie, 1998 or Bryman, 2004) and has been experienced by many researchers; for example, the response rate after one original and one follow-up mailing of the questionnaires in Flowerdew's (1999a) survey was 31%[120]. Non-response can lead to a sample-to-population validity problem because only "research findings that are generalisable beyond the confines of sample data… have external validity" (Smith, 1988: 184). In the case of our research, the fact that all

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[119] The researcher had to visit some schools more than once as not all 'pre-lower', 'lower', 'advanced' and 'proficiency' classes took place on the same day.
[120] Mangione (1995 cited in Bryman, 2004: 136) regards postal questionnaire response rates of 30% as unacceptable.

questionnaires were administered by the researcher during class hours and completed in the researcher's presence ensured a response rate of virtually 100%[121].

Overall, 48 completed teachers' questionnaires and 343 completed learners' questionnaires were collected. The next step was for the researcher to check each questionnaire individually and enter the data into SPSS[122]. During that stage, 1 teacher's questionnaire and 16 learners' questionnaires[123] had to be excluded from the study. The particular teacher must have failed to see pages 6 and 7 of the questionnaire as he/she turned the pages, which resulted in quite a few missing answers[124]. As for the learners, the excluded questionnaires were due to a variety of reasons; 1) students that did not seem to take the research seriously and gave answers just for 'fun'; e.g. *Age:* '82 years old', 2) students who expressed their dislike of learning English (writing in e.g. 'I don't want anything, I hate English') and proceeded to give similar answers to a variety of questions 3) students that gave the same score, e.g. '5' to all scaled responses but subsequent qualitative data answers did not agree with that and, 4) students that left many responses to questions blank. Nevertheless, even after the exclusion of those completed questionnaires, 98% of the teachers' research sample and 95% of the learners' research sample participated in the study.

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[121] Only two students chose to not participate in the study (for reasons unknown to the researcher) and, of course, there was always the chance that a student (or two) might have been absent from class due to e.g. reasons of illness (nevertheless, this likelihood was greatly decreased by the fact that from March onwards the 'flu season' comes to an end.)
[122] SPSS is a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
[123] These were 1 or 2 from each language school.
[124] The whole 'Pronunciation Teaching' section was left blank and most of the 'Profile' Section questions.

Ethics

Permission was initially gained verbally by school directors/principals to have access to schools during class hours for the research to take place. Furthermore, permission was sought from each individual participating in the study by means of signing a written consent form prior to completing the survey questionnaire (see Appendix 3.15 for the teachers' consent form and Appendix 3.16 for the learners').

Students' age

An issue that had to be addressed as part of this research was whether or not additional consent should be obtained in the case of those students under the age of 16. As Dornyei (2007: 71) puts it: "the question here is to decide who has sufficient authority in such cases: the legal guardian (for example, parent), the children's teacher(s) or both". Dornyei (2007) recommends the following course of action as far as minors are concerned in educational studies conducted within schools:

> It is my view that unless there exist legal requirements stating otherwise and if the research is neither aimed at sensitive information nor involves extensive participant engagement (for example, a relatively neutral anonymous questionnaire), permission to conduct the study can be granted by the children's teachers.
>
> Dornyei, 2007: 71

It was decided to follow the strategy suggested by Dornyei (2007), albeit with slight variations, in the case of our research. The researcher liaised with the Research Ethics officer of the School of English, Communication and Philosophy (ENCAP), Cardiff University (U.K.)[125], who expressed the following opinion: Greek law should be followed, as long as no sensitive personal data is collected and that the data collected in an anonymous form – so that no one could be traced – and that the class teacher as 'proxy guardian' is happy about it and that the teacher and the students are briefed

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[125] The School Research Ethics officer has ultimate responsibility for the ENCAP ethics policy and all decisions made under its auspices.

about the purpose of the data.[126] All this applied to this research and, thus, permission to conduct the research was obtained from each school director/principal, the students' teachers and, also, from each student (see Appendix 3.17, for more information).

Informed Consent[127]

Each teacher and learner was given a consent form to sign prior to the completion of the questionnaire (see Appendices 3.15 and 3.16). The consent form contained the following elements:

1) *Purpose of Study*: in order to ensure that teachers' and learners' answers to the first questionnaire questions would not be influenced in anyway by the focus of the particular research on 'pronunciation' it was decided not to mention 'pronunciation' at all in the consent form. Thus, a brief statement about the purpose of the study focusing on the fact that the researcher was interested in obtaining teachers'/learners' opinions on the 'teaching and learning of English' and the 'development of listening and speaking skills' as part of her PhD study was provided. The guidelines outlined by Babbie (1990) were followed:

> (1) You should reveal nothing about the purpose of the study that is likely to affect the reliability of the responses. (2) At the same time, you should tell respondents whatever you can about purposes when such information is not likely to affect responses. (3) Explanations of purpose should be general rather than specific. (4) You should never offer fictitious reasons for the study.
>
> Babbie, 1990: 344

2) *Promise of anonymity*: "a respondent can be considered anonymous when you yourself cannot identify a given response with a given respondent" (Babbie, 1990:

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[126] Andrew Edgar, ENCAP School Research Ethics Officer, communication via email 'Ethics', 25.01.2008.
[127] "Beginning with the Nuremberg Code (1949), the notion of informed consent has become a cornerstone of ethical practice in research involving human subjects" (Mackey & Gass, 2005: 26).

342). The main argument to support this practice is that "anonymous respondents are likely to give answers that are less self-protective and presumably more accurate than respondents who believe they can be identified" (Kearney et al, 1984 cited in Dornyei, 2003: 24). In order to ensure the respondents' anonymity, the signed consent forms were kept separately from the completed questionnaires and all participants were informed about this prior to the completion of the questionnaires.

3) *Emphasis on voluntary participation*: it was made clear that potential participants did not have to participate if they did not want to; furthermore, every effort was made for potential participants to feel free from undue pressure or coercion.

4) *Attempt to elicit integrity*: it was emphasised that there are 'no right or wrong answers' and respondents were encouraged to answer as honestly as they could.

Finally, it is important to note that the researcher was responsible for ensuring participant comprehension of the consent form; to this end, the teachers were given consent forms in English whereas the learners were given consent forms translated into Greek (see Appendix 3.18 for the Greek version). Indeed, as far as L2 learners are concerned, "it may be necessary to provide a translation of the consent document in the learners' language" (Mackey & Gass, 2005: 31).

Finally, all school principals were informed that they would receive a summary of the survey results for them to share with the teachers and learners of their schools once the research had been completed and reported.

3.4 Interviews

Interview data were obtained to supplement the questionnaire data. This section describes the type of interview used, who the participants were and the procedure followed to obtain the interview data.

3.4.1 Type of Interview

It was decided to conduct one-to-one, face-to-face interviews with a number of the research participants. The 'one-to-one' interview, which involves a meeting between one researcher and one participant, was preferred over the 'group/focus group' interview type because it is easier to arrange and easier to control (see Denscombe, 2003: 168).

Also, to give the interviewees the opportunity to justify their questionnaire responses, to provide explanations as to the statistical patterns that emerged from the analysis of questionnaire data and to discuss in detail matters that were relevant to the particular research but did not appear in the questionnaire, the 'semi-structured interview' type was chosen. Dornyei (2007) defines 'semi-structured interviews' as follows:

> Although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner. In other words, the interviewer provides guidance and direction (hence the '-structured' part in the name), but is also keen to follow up interesting developments and to let the interviewee elaborate on certain issues (hence the 'semi-' part).
>
> Dornyei, 2007: 136

The 'semi-structured' interview type suited the purposes of this particular research for a number of reasons; on the one hand, the choice of interview topics as well as the wording and sequence of interview questions were determined in advance and, thus, allowed for comparability among interviewees' responses and facilitated the analysis of the interview data. On the other hand, there was a degree of flexibility as to the

number and kind of questions asked (through the use of prompts and probes) and, thus, the interviewee could further elaborate on issues raised in the course of the interview and, thus, provide in-depth responses to certain questions (or even introduce topics or issues not previously considered by the researcher).

3.4.2 Participants

Selection process

The researcher contacted 7 out of the 13 language schools that had participated in the questionnaire survey in order to enquire about whether or not any of their teachers would be available for an interview[128]. As the reader may recall the questionnaire survey participants were divided into groups according to certain characteristics such as their L1[129]. In order to ensure that all different 'groups' were adequately represented in the research sample, the interviewees were selected on the basis of such information[130]. Overall, 12 out of the 47 teachers (25%) that had participated in the questionnaire survey were interviewed.

Interviewees' profile

Table 3.25 includes information as to the interviewees' age and teaching experience. 3 teachers were in their 20s, 5 in their 30s, 1 in his 40s, 2 in their 50s and 1 in his 60s.

Table 3.25
Teachers' age & teaching experience (years)

	N	Minimum	Maximum
Age	12	27	63
Teaching Experience	12	4	37

Figure 3.26 includes information on the interviewees' gender, L1, level of learners taught, qualifications held, attendance of phonetics courses and pronunciation training. Out of those teachers who had English as an L1, 2 teachers were from

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[128] One teacher had to be excluded because she was on maternity leave.
[129] Please refer back to Section 3.1.4, this Chapter.
[130] Such information was provided by the secretary of each school.

Britain, 1 teacher was from the U.S.A, 1 from South Africa and another one from Australia.

Figure 3.26
Teachers' other Characteristics

Gender: 10 female (83%)   2 male (17%)

First Language: 7 Greek (58%)   5 English (42%)

Level of Learners taught: 3 '-Lower' (25%)   9 '-Lower'/'Lower+' (75%)

Teaching related English Language Qualifications: 6 Yes (50%) 6 No (50%)

English Phonetics Course: 5 Yes (42%)   7 No (58%)

Pronunciation Training: 2 Yes (17%)   10 No (83%)

3.4.3 Research Instrument

Interview guide:

According to Dornyei (2007: 137), "a good interview guide requires careful planning followed by some piloting" to "ensure that the questions elicit sufficiently rich data"; the interview guide ensures that the domain is properly covered and nothing important is left out by accident and, also, offers a list of useful probe questions to be used if needed (Dornyei, 2007: 137). In devising the interview guide for this study, the steps recommended by Dornyei (2007), Gillham (2000b) and Cohen et al (2007) were followed.

Deciding on the content of the interview guide proved to be a relatively simple task as it was mainly based on the results of the questionnaire data. Interviewees were going to be presented with a number of the statistical patterns that emerged from the questionnaire data and would be asked to comment on those and offer an explanation; they would also be given the opportunity to say whether or not those results reflected their own views and practices. Furthermore, questions on topics that were addressed as part of the themes (see Chapter 1) or as part of the studies reviewed (see Chapter 2) but could not be covered as part of a questionnaire were included.

Nearly all the questions included in the interview guide were open-ended ones; 'open-ended items' have been succinctly defined by Kerlinger (1970 cited in Cohen et al, 2007: 357) as "those that supply a frame of reference for respondents' answers, but put a minimum restraint on the answers and their expression". Open-ended questions have a number of advantages, as outlined by Cohen et al (2007), and therefore were chosen for this particular stage of this research:

> …they allow the interviewer to probe so that she may go into more depth if she chooses, or to clear up any misunderstandings;…to make a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes….[they] can also result in unexpected or unanticipated answers which may suggest hitherto unthought-of relationships or hypotheses.
>
> Cohen et al, 2007: 357

Since the aim was to elicit in-depth responses from the interviewees and even to discover issues or factors not previously anticipated, open-ended questions were fit for this purpose.

Trialling and piloting

Once a list of interview questions was compiled, the list was sent to the research supervisor who suggested a couple of questions to be added. Then, the trialling of the interview questions began; the interview questions were tried out on two EFL teachers[131] who have never worked in any of the schools that participated in the study reported in this thesis. They helped the researcher decide on the most appropriate sequence of the questions and change the wording of the questions where necessary. The final refined version of the interview guide was sent to the research supervisor for approval and once his approval was obtained a pilot interview was conducted. Gillham (2000b: 56) describes "piloting proper" as "a dress rehearsal which includes all the elements of the real thing" and suggests that "you use people who are representative of the group you are researching but not *from* [his italics] that particular group". Just like it was done with the trialling process; a friend of the researcher, who was an EFL teacher but had never worked in any of the schools that participated in this research, was chosen. This pilot interview gave the researcher the opportunity to ensure that she was satisfied with the content and structure of the interview guide, to further refine the interview questions, to check on the duration of the interview and last, but not least, it gave her a greater sense of confidence and security prior to embarking on the next stage; the real interviews. The fact that the interview schedule was trialled and piloted carefully greatly assisted the analysis of the interview data.

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[131] One of the teachers was the researcher's cousin and the other was a good friend of the researcher.

3.4.4 Procedure

Time & Place

The researcher contacted each teacher by phone in May, 2011[132] and arranged to meet with him/her for an interview. All 12 interviews took place during the last week of May, 2011 and the first week of June, 2011. For a discussion of the timetable spacing between the interviews, interested readers can see Appendix 3.19.

According to Denscombe (2003: 173), "the researcher needs to try to get a *location for the* interview [his italics] in which they will not be disturbed, which offers privacy, which has fairly good acoustics and is reasonably quite". He recognises that "this can prove to be a pretty tall order in places like busy organisations, schools" (Denscombe, 2003: 172) but, nevertheless, states that "at least the desirability of such a venue should be conveyed to the person arranging the interview room" (ibid: 172). This recommendation was followed along with his suggestion to arrange seating so that the interviewer and the interviewee are at a 90 degree angle to each other as "this allows for eye contact without the confrontational feeling arising form sitting directly opposite the other person" (ibid: 173). The interviews went smoothly with few interruptions; for example, there was one interruption during a particular interview by the school principal knocking on the door to coming in to greet the researcher and ask how everything was going. Overall, all interviews took place in a nice, friendly and relaxed atmosphere and in a relatively quiet room. As far as background noise is concerned, this only proved to be a problem only on one occasion; when an interview was conducted in a classroom of a school

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[132] Prior to the interviews, the following had to be done a) the questionnaire data were entered into SPSS, analysed statistically and reported to the research supervisors, b) the questionnaire results were discussed with the supervisors and additional statistical tests were carried out, c) the researcher went on maternity leave for a year and d) the interview guide was compiled, trialled and piloted. Thus, there was a long interval between the administration of questionnaires and the conduction of interviews in this study.

facing a busy high street – the windows had to be kept open as it is very hot in Greece in June. Fortunately, the researcher was able to hear everything that had been said when she played the audio-files once the interviews had ended.

Interview duration

The vast majority of the interviews lasted approximately 45-50 minutes. There was one that lasted only 30 minutes and another one which lasted 70 minutes. The first one had to come to an end due to a late night staff meeting taking place at the particular school (and which the interviewee had to attend) and the last one took longer than expected because the interviewee had a great deal to contribute to the discussion, perhaps because his teaching experience spanned 3 decades.

Language

All interviews were conducted in English. 3 Greek EFL teachers, at first, hesitated about being interviewed in English but were convinced to do so once they were assured that they could switch to Greek anytime during the interview. Only one interview was conducted in Greek as the particular teacher told the researcher that she was worried about how 'her English was going to sound'. It was a shame that the particular interview took place in Greek as once the audio-recorder was switched off the researcher heard her interviewee speak on the phone in English very fluently!

Recording

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. This method gave the researcher the opportunity to concentrate all her attention on the interviewee rather than having to break eye contact in order to write things down; there is no doubt that "note-taking

disrupts the interviewing process" (Dornyei, 2007: 139). Furthermore, it enabled her to "avoid having to make snap judgements about what to note down and what to omit" (Wray et al, 1998: 182) which could result in bias "because the interviewer may unconsciously emphasise responses that agree with her expectations and fail to note those that do not" (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 283).

The method of 'audio-recording' is considered to be "the standard method of capturing interview data" (Denscombe, 2003: 176) and "offers a permanent record and one that is complete in terms of the speech that occurs" (ibid: 175). Interested readers can see Appendix 3.20 for information as to why this method was preferred over 'video-recording'. According to Denscombe (2003: 176): "most people ease up after and initial period of hesitancy and, when used sensitively, the audio tape does not pose too much of a disturbance to most interview situations". The researcher found the former statement to be true; perhaps, it helped that at the beginning of each interview the interviewees were assured that they could ask the researcher to turn off the recorder at any time during the interview.

Conducting the interview

Here I will describe the process followed in conducting each interview. After greeting the interviewee, the researcher explained once again (and in greater detail compared to the phone-conversation prior to the interview) the purpose of the interview. Then, she gave a copy of the relevant questionnaire results (see Appendix 3.21) and informed the interviewee that he/she would be asked to refer to specific parts of this copy throughout the interview in order to offer his/her interpretation of those results. At that point, the researcher emphasised how important their contribution would be in this respect (see Appendix 3.23 for an example of what the researcher said).

The researcher also explained to them why she wanted to audio-record the interview; so that she would have an accurate record of the conversation and to avoid having to write things down. She also promised him/ her that all the information and responses the interviewee would give would be kept confidential; his/her actual name and identifying information would not appear in any part of the written report of the thesis. At that point, she gave the interviewee two copies of the consent form to read and sign (the form appears in Appendix 3.23).

Then the researcher would begin by asking a couple of general questions about the interviewee's attitudes towards the teaching of English pronunciation and would move on to cover the questions included in the interview guide (the interview guide appears in Appendix 3.24). Throughout the interview she would ask open-ended questions about specific topics or matters and once she had a response, she encouraged the interviewee to elaborate where necessary or cover aspects of the answer that had been omitted (see Appendix 3.25 for more information on this).

As the end of the interview approached and in order to signal that the interview was drawing to a close, the researcher would either summarise the interviewee's responses (provided there was sufficient time to do this) or simply emphasise that this was the last question she was going to ask them. Then she would give them the chance to raise any points that they thought should be covered or ask any questions they would like[133].

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[133] For example, she would say something along the lines of 'well, thank you so much. This has been so useful. I've got all the information I needed. I am wondering, is there anything you'd like to add or is there anything you'd like to ask me before we finish the interview?'

Chapter Four

Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires. **Section 4.1 'Methods of Analysis'** describes the quantitative methods employed in order to summarise and analyse those results and **Section 4.2 'Independent Variables'** explains which independent variables were utilised in the analysis of the results. **Section 4.3 'Results for Research Question 1 (RQ1)', Section 4.4 'Results for Research Question 2 (RQ2)'** and **Section 4.5 'Results for RQ3 (RQ3)'** take each research question in turn and provide the results of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires that are directly related to it. **Section 4.6 'Additional Findings'** presents additional questionnaire results that may be relevant in the analysis of the RQ1 and RQ2 questionnaire results. Finally, **Section 4.7 'Reliability Analysis Results'** includes information on the reliability analysis results of the questionnaires (Cronbach's Alpha).

Overall, the questionnaire results are presented briefly in this chapter; they will be analysed further in the 'Discussion & Conclusions' chapter along with explanatory comments derived from the teachers' interview data.

4.1 Methods of Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used for presenting the RQ1a, RQ2a and RQ3a results; continuous variables[134] were summarised using means[135] with standard deviations[136] and discrete variables[137] were displayed as frequencies and percentages. In order to uncover any statistically significant differences in the responses between teachers and learners for RQ1a and RQ2a, chi-square tests and independent t-tests were conducted. These tests were also used in order to answer RQ1b, RQ2b and RQ3b; they were carried out to reveal any statistically significant differences in the responses of the teachers and learners according to the different independent variables of this study.

The *chi-square test* "provides a means of determining whether a set of observed frequencies deviate significantly from a set of expected frequencies" (Colman & Pulford, 2006: 38). For example, it can tell us whether or not there is a significant relationship between the choice of pronunciation models and the gender of the respondents, and if there is one, we can find out how the observed frequencies are different from the expected frequencies.

The *t-test* is the statistical test that "is most often used to establish the significance of a difference between the means of two samples of scores" (Colman & Pulford, 2006: 50). The *independent samples t-test* is undertaken "when the samples are unrelated, with different participants in each sample" (Hinton et al, 2005: 107), for example, teachers' and learners' scores on the perceived importance of pronunciation.

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[134] If a variable can take on any value between two specified values, it is called a 'continuous' variable; otherwise it is called a 'discrete' variable (http://stattrek.com/Lesson2/DiscreteContinuous.aspx accessed on 13.11.2008).

[135] The mean is "the average of the scores" (Dornyei, 2007: 214). It is a measure of 'central tendency' which is sensitive to all the scores about it; it takes account of the values of all the scores unlike the *median* which takes account only of the value of the score at the middle position of the distribution (Hinton, 2004: 8-9).

[136] "The standard deviation gives us a measure of spread about the mean… the 'standard' distance of a score from the mean in this set of data" (Hinton, 2004: 16).

[137] All 'qualitative' variables (also known as 'categorical' variables) are discrete.

On the other hand, the *paired samples t-test* is used with related samples (= the same participants in each sample), for example, teachers' scores on the perceived importance of pronunciation and teachers' scores on the perceived importance of vocabulary. For this study, the paired samples t-test was employed in order to determine whether or not there were any statistically significant differences among the teachers' perceived status and role of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation for RQ1a and whether or not there were any statistically significant differences among the teachers' frequency of use of the chosen pronunciation teaching techniques for RQ3a. The same test was employed in order to test for statistically significant differences among the teachers' perceived status and role of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation for RQ1a.

T-tests versus ANOVAS

The reader may wonder why the t-test was used instead of the analysis of variance (ANOVA). T-tests and ANOVAS belong to the same school of thought; they are grounded in the same statistical theories. However, the analysis of variance allows for multiple comparisons to be made within one test whereas the t-test can only calculate the difference between two sample means. Thus, many t-tests may need to be performed for all possible comparisons to be made in a particular study and "the more t-tests we perform on the data the more likely we are to make a Type I error [accept a result as significant when it occurred by chance] (Hinton, 2004: 113). On the other hand, the analysis of variance is a more complex procedure to perform compared to the t-test and its results are not as easy and straightforward to interpret as those of the t-test. For example, the ranking of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of the participants' perceived importance, which is an extremely important objective of

this study, would have been more difficult to see if the analysis of variance had been adopted. The reader may wonder whether or not the accuracy of the questionnaire results has been sacrificed for practical reasons on the part of the researcher and for the benefit of a reader who may not be familiar with rather complicated statistical procedures. This is not the case for this research; while this study was designed with t-tests in mind, as they would serve its purposes more adequately and satisfactorily than ANOVAS, it was ensured that the t-tests would yield equivalent results to those of ANOVAS. Thus, the alpha level was adjusted for multiple comparisons (when multiple t-tests had to be performed), a procedure that makes the t-tests mathematically equivalent to the analysis of variance and yields identical results to those of the analysis of variance[138]. For this study the Bonferroni adjustment was employed. The Bonferroni adjustment is used when there are multiple outcome measures and there is concern about the possibility that a statistically significant result will actually be the result of pure chance. The Bonferroni correction uses an adjusted alpha level equal to the original alpha level (usually 0.05) divided by the number of outcome measures. The control of Type I error rate in this study was done as follows: the original alpha level used (0.05) was divided by the number of times a variable was used in a comparison, setting the family-wise error error rate at $a^*=0.05$.

Rating scales; semantic labels

Scales were used for many of the questionnaire items and only point 1 and point 5 of each scale were given semantic labels for the respondents to see. It was important not to label each point of the scales used in the questionnaire as while we can be confident that the interval between the numbers '1' and '2' is the same/equal to the interval

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[138] For further information on this matter, the reader may wish to consult Hochberg & Tamhane (1987).

between the numbers '3' and '4', we cannot be confident, for example, that the interval between the semantic labels 'always' and 'often' is the same/equal to the interval between the labels 'sometimes' and 'rarely'[139] . However, for ease of reference (throughout this chapter and the next chapter), a semantic label was given for each point in the scales used in the questionnaire, as follows:

'Frequency' scale

1= always   2= often   3= sometimes   4= rarely   5 = never

'Closeness', 'Importance' and 'Difficulty' scales

1= extremely   2= very   3= quite   4 = not so   5 = not at all
(For example, point 2 of the 'importance' will be referred to as 'very important'.)

Also, for ease of reference scores of (close to) points 1 and 2 of a scale will be referred to as being on the top side of the particular scale and scores of (close to) points 4 and 5 as being on the bottom side of the particular scale. Scores of (close to) point 3 will be referred to as being at the mid-point of that scale. Also, scores of (close to) points 1 and 2 will be referred to as high scores and scores of (close to) points 4 and 5 as low scores (that is, high and low in terms of e.g. importance).

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[139] Please refer back to Section 3.2.2, Chapter 3 for a discussion on this matter.

4.2 Independent Variables

In Section 3.1.4 'The Research Sample', we saw that research participants could be divided into groups according to certain characteristics (e.g. gender). Later on in this chapter, we will examine whether or not there were any statistically significant differences among different groups of participants in their questionnaire responses.

Independent variables used for further testing

Here, I will identify which characteristics of the participants were utilised as independent variables[140] in the analysis of the questionnaire results. Box 4.1 displays those independent variables; the independent variables are referred to as *factors* and the categories of independent variables are referred to as *conditions.* These variables were chosen according to a. *the aims of the research* (for example, it will be interesting to see if the teachers who have received training in the teaching of pronunciation responded differently to those who have not received any), b. *the data collected* (for example, whether or not there were sufficient numbers of participants in each group to allow for further statistical testing) and, c. *the findings of previous research in the field* (for example, statistically significant differences in respondents' answers are often attributed to gender).

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[140] These are the variables for which the experimenter selects the values in advance. "The experimenter controls the values of the independent variables and the samples are selected so that they differ on these values" (Hinton, 2004: 76). On the other hand, the dependent variable is "the variable we measure and on which we obtain the scores" (ibid: 76).

Box 4.1
Independent variables

Factors	Conditions
Teachers	
Gender	Males, Females
English Language Qualifications	Teaching-related, Non-teaching related
Teaching Level	-Lower, Lower+
L1	Greek, English
Course in English Phonetics	Yes, No
Pronunciation Training	Yes, No
Learners	
Gender	Males, Females
Level of English	-Lower, Lower+
L1	Greek, Other

Independent variables excluded from further testing

Box 4.1 does not include the *age* variable. Researchers often collect information about participants' age, divide participants into two or more groups according to their age and test for statistically significant differences among different age groups. However, Chen et al (2007: 3495) state that "dichotomizing age is known to result in the loss of efficiency, lower reliability and statistical power, and higher type I[141] and type II errors[142]". They explain how the disadvantages of dichotomization are related to the fact that it does not make use of within-category information and provide evidence against forcing individuals

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[141] Type I error is defined as "the error of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true. The risk of this occurring is set by the significance level" (Hinton, 2004: 355). The null hypothesis is "a prediction that there is no relationship between the independent and dependent variables" (ibid: 352).
[142] Type II error is defined as "the error of accepting the null hypothesis when it is false" (Hinton, 2004: 355).

into groups such as 'younger' and 'older'[143], "which is widely perceived to simplify analyses and facilitate presentation and interpretation of findings" (ibid: 3495). They conclude that the results following such groupings "often distort the reported relationship no matter at what point cut on age is made" (ibid: 3495). According to many different sources (Royston et al 2005; MacCallum et al, 2002; Streiner, 2002; Vargha et al, 1996; Greenland, 1995; Maxwell & Delaney, 1993; Ragland, 1992; Zhao & Kolonel, 1992 and Cohen, 1983), converting continuous variables into categorical variables (by grouping values into two or more categories) is not advisable. Thus, in addition to the *age* variable, the *teachers' experience of teaching English (in years)* and the *learners' experience of learning English (in years)* were excluded from further testing. Also, the information collected regarding *whether or not the teachers who had Greek as an L1 had lived in an English speaking country* and the *accent of the teachers who had English as an L1* were not used for further testing as independent variables. The number of participants in the groups that each variable yielded was not sufficient for statistical purposes. Furthermore, the *teaching methods* factor had too many conditions and was, thus, impossible to use for further testing (see Table 4.2, next page).

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[143] Personally, I have found groupings into 'younger' and 'older' participants in various reports very useful; nevertheless, in the case of our study, the number of teachers was rather small and the age gap between 'older' and 'younger' learners very small.

Table 4.2
Teaching methods

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	CLT+Audio-lingual+Grammar-Translation	14	29.8	29.8	29.8
	CLT	9	19.1	19.1	48.9
	CLT+Audio-lingual	5	10.6	10.6	59.5
	CLT+Direct Method	5	10.6	10.6	70.1
	Grammar-Translation	4	8.5	8.5	78.6
	CLT+Grammar-Translation	2	4.3	4.3	82.9
	CLT+Audio-lingual+Direct-Method	2	4.3	4.3	87.2
	all	2	4.3	4.3	91.5
	CLT+Grammar-Translation+Direct Method	1	2.1	2.1	93.6
	Grammar-Translation+Direct Method	1	2.1	2.1	95.7
	Audio-lingual+Grammar-Translation	1	2.1	2.1	97.8
	Other/s	1	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Statistically significant relationships between independent variables

The chi-square test was undertaken in order to uncover any statistically significant relationships between the independent variables chosen for further testing, as follows:

Teachers

There was a highly statistically significant relationship between teaching qualifications and attendance of phonetics courses; significantly more teachers who had 'teaching-related' English language qualifications had attended a phonetics

course as part of a University Degree compared to those who had 'non-teaching-related' English language qualifications, χ^2 (1, 47) = 20.973, $p < 0.001$ *(*adjusted alpha is set at 0.01 here)[144] (Figure 4.3). It goes without saying that such a finding is far from surprising.

Figure 4.3
Teachers' qualifications & attendance of phonetics courses
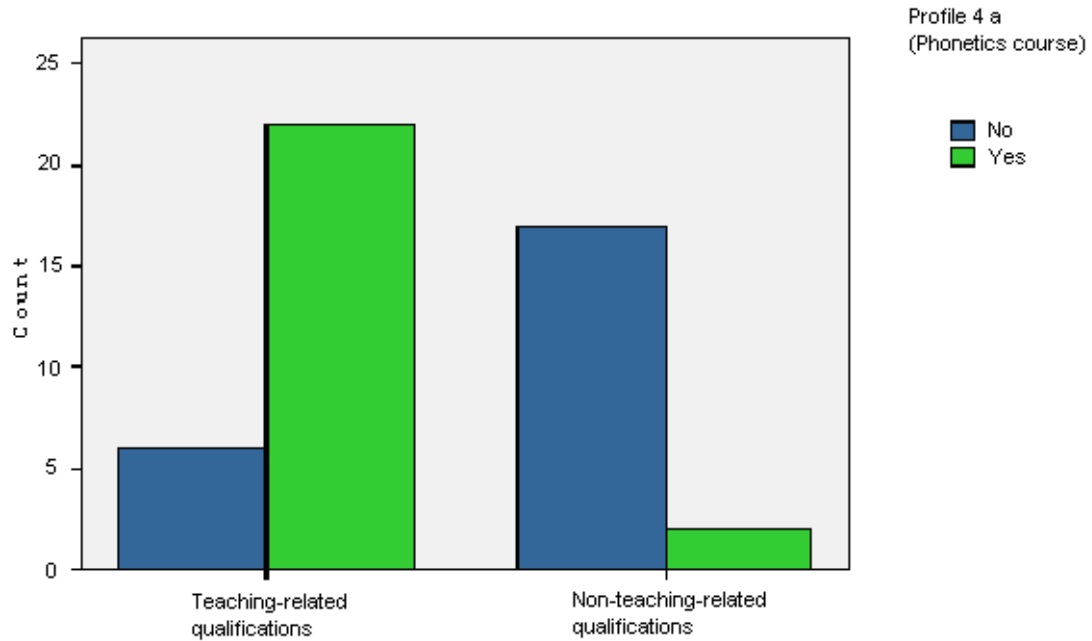
A marginally statistically insignificant relationship was found between teachers' L1 and attendance of phonetics courses (Figure 4.4). More teachers who had Greek as an L1 had attended phonetics courses compared to those teachers who had English as an L1, χ^2 (1, 47) = 4.615, $p = 0.032$ *(*adjusted alpha = 0.01).

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[144] Alpha = 0.05/5 = 0.01 because the original alpha level used (0.05) had to be divided by the number of times a variable was used in a comparison; here, the variable 'qualifications' was compared five times (to 'gender', 'L1', 'teaching level', 'course in phonetics' & 'course in pronunciation').

Figure 4.4
Teachers' L1 & attendance of phonetics courses
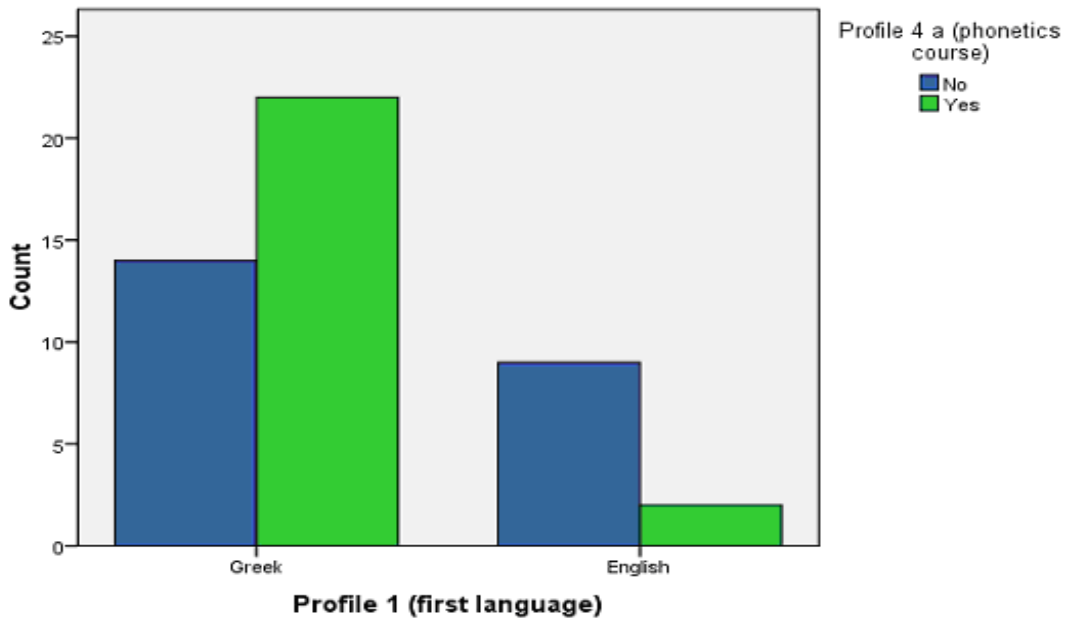
Learners

A marginally statistically non-significant relationship was found between learners' L1 and level of English. More learners who had Greek as their L1 were at the Lower+ level compared to learners who did not have Greek as their L1, χ^2 (1, 327) = 4.947, *p* = 0.026 (adjusted alpha is set at 0.025 here[145]). A possible explanation for this is that learners who do not have Greek as their L1 are migrant pupils and thus tend to come from lower income families; for some it may not be possible to continue with their education at a higher level (i.e. the Lower+ level) as there is pressure on them to start working and earn money. Furthermore, these learners already face the challenge of being fluent in two languages (Greek and their L1) and English is a third language for them. Thus, they may feel less motivated to sit the 'Proficiency' exam compared to Greek L1 learners.

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[145] Adjusted alpha is set at 0.025 (= 0.05/2) as each independent variable had to be compared twice (e.g. learners' level of English had to be compared to learners' gender and also to learners' L1).

Figure 4.5
Learners' L1 & level of English
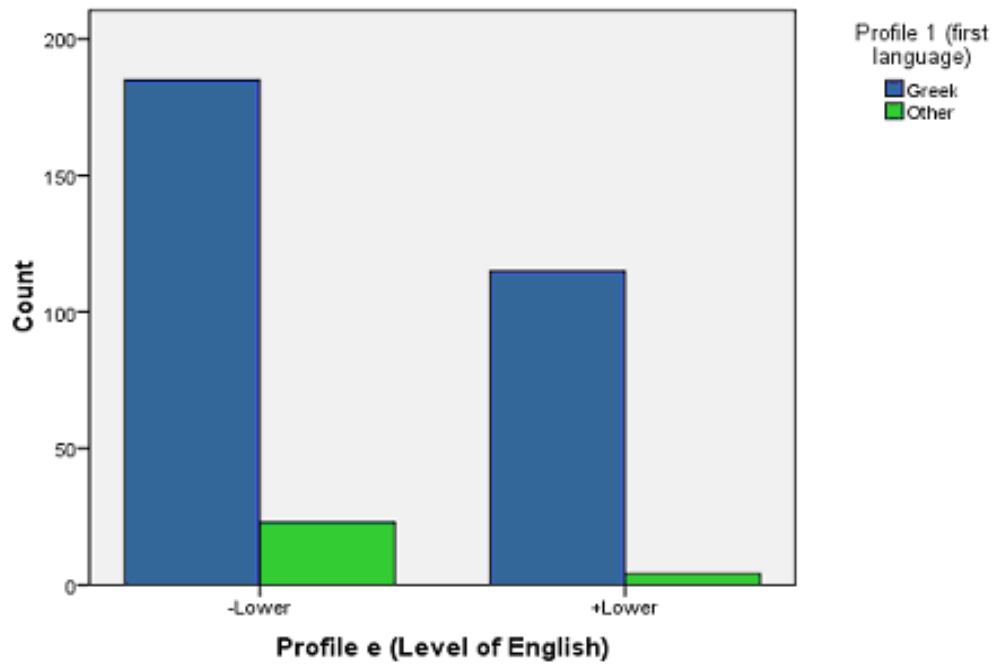
No other statistically significant relationships emerged between the independent variables for this study.

4.3 Results for Research Question 1 (RQ1)

RQ1

1a) What is the status and role of pronunciation, as perceived by the teachers and learners, in terms of the development of speaking and listening skills in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Thessaloniki, Greece?

1b) Are there statistically significant differences in the perception of the role and status of pronunciation amongst respondents according to different independent variables?

This section presents the results from the teachers' and learners' questionnaires that relate to RQ1a. RQ1a is broken down into several sub-components; for the convenience of the reader, the questionnaire items that relate directly to each sub-component are reproduced in boxes with the main text of this section. Then, any statistically significant differences that have emerged between teachers' and learners' responses on all relevant questionnaire items are presented. Finally, any statistically significant differences in response between different groups of teachers and between different groups of learners, according to the different independent variables of this study, are uncovered.

4.3.1 Teachers' & Learners' Questionnaires: RQ1a

Pronunciation status in teaching and learning speaking skills

Box 4.6
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

SPEAKING ABILITY

1. <u>How important</u> do you feel are the following elements in teaching your students to speak in English?

Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely important; 5= not at all important)

	1	2	3	4	5
grammar/ syntax					
vocabulary					
pronunciation					

Table 4.7 displays the results for the question in Box 4.6

Table 4.7
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	47	1	5	1.89	1.047
Vocabulary	47	1	4	1.49	.882
Pronunciation	47	1	4	2.28	.971

Table 4.8 displays the results from the learners' questionnaires to the corresponding question of Box 4.6 (see Appendix 3.11 for the learners' questionnaire).

Table 4.8
Learners

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	327	1	5	1.94	.944
Vocabulary	327	1	5	1.65	.933
Pronunciation	327	1	5	2.02	1.036

The teachers and learners regarded grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation as having importance in the development of speaking skills; all three elements received ratings on the top side of the scale.

Furthermore, it appears that teachers and learners have, in a sense, ranked grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of importance; starting from the 'most important' element, vocabulary seems to occupy the first place, grammar the second and pronunciation the third (Figures 4.9, 4.10).

Perceived importance of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation
Figure 4.9 (Teachers)
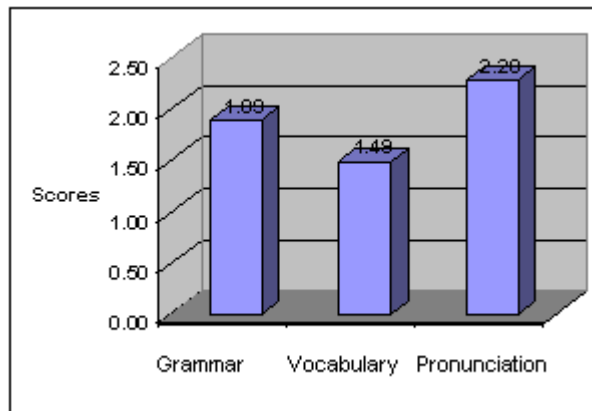
Figure 4.10 (Learners)
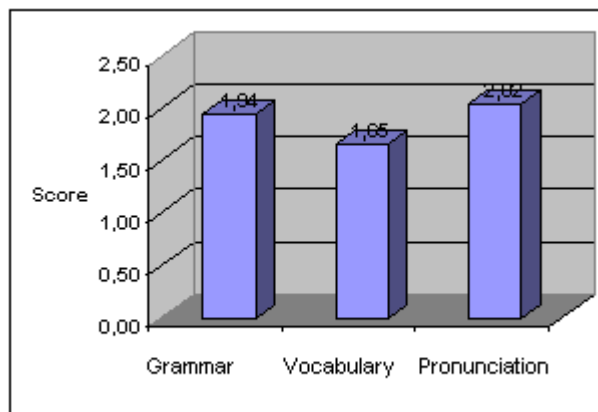
The *paired samples t-test*[146] was conducted in order to determine if the differences in the scores among grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation were statistically significant.

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[146]The data collected is interval and can tell us if there really is ranking among those three language areas. Interval data refers to data that has been produced by the use of an interval scale. An interval

The results in **the case of the teachers** were as follows:

- A statistically significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary in terms of 'importance', $t(46) = 3.256$, $p = 0.002$ ($p < 0.025$)[147]. *Vocabulary* (M = 1.49, S.D = 0.882) was viewed as more important than *grammar* (M = 1.89, S.D. = 1.047).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of *grammar* and *pronunciation* in terms of 'importance', $t(46) = 1.977$, $p = 0.054$ (adjusted alpha = 0.025).

- A highly statistically significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', $t(46) = 4.580$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Vocabulary* (M = 1.49, S.D = 0.882) was viewed as far more important than *pronunciation* (M = 2.28, S.D = 0.971).

The results in **the case of the learners** were as follows:

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary in terms of 'importance', $t(326) = 4.687$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha was set at 0.025 here). *Vocabulary* (M = 1.65, S.D = 0.933) was viewed as far more important compared to *grammar* (M = 1.94, S.D. = 0.944).

- No statistically significant difference was found between learners' evaluations of *grammar* and *pronunciation* in terms of 'importance', $t(326) = 1.234$, $p = 0.218$ ($p > 0.025$).

scale is a scale of measurement where the interval between consecutive numbers is always the same (Hinton, 2004: 350). This is also the case with the scale 1-5 that has been used for the purposes of our study.

[147] The original alpha level (0.05) was divided by two here (0.05/2= 0.025) as each language area was compared twice (e.g. grammar was compared once to vocabulary and once to pronunciation).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', t (326) = 5.707, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Vocabulary* (M = 1.65, S.D = 0.933) was viewed as far more important compared to *pronunciation* (M = 2.02, S.D = 1.036).

According to these findings, the teachers and learners viewed *pronunciation* as less important than *vocabulary* and equally important to *grammar* in the development of learners' speaking skills.

Pronunciation role in teaching and learning speaking skills

Box 4.11
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

SPEAKING ABILITY (cont'd)

2. In your opinion, how important are the following when your students speak in English so that other learners of English can understand them?

Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely important; 5= not at all important)

	1	2	3	4	5
appropriate use of grammar/ syntax					
appropriate use of vocabulary					
good level of pronunciation					

Table 4.12 shows the results for the question in Box 4.11

Table 4.12
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	47	1	5	2.38	.922
Vocabulary	47	1	4	1.79	.806
Pronunciation	47	1	4	2.49	.997

Table 4.13 shows the results for the corresponding question in the learners' questionnaire.

Table 4.13
Learners

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	326	1	5	2.03	.979
Vocabulary	327	1	5	1.84	.890
Pronunciation	326	1	5	2.35	1.107

The teachers and learners regarded the *appropriate use of grammar,* **the** *appropriate use of vocabulary* **and a** *good level of pronunciation* **as having importance in terms of the intelligibility (to other learners) of the learners' oral discourse; all three elements received ratings on the top side of the scale.**

Perceived importance of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation
Figure 4.14 (Teachers)
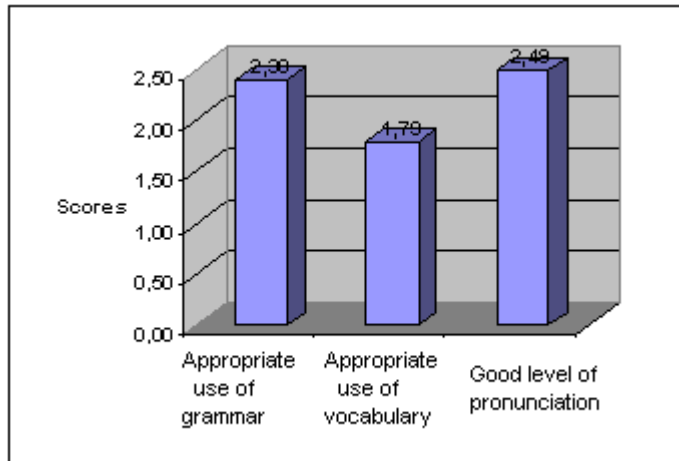
Figure 4.15 (Learners)
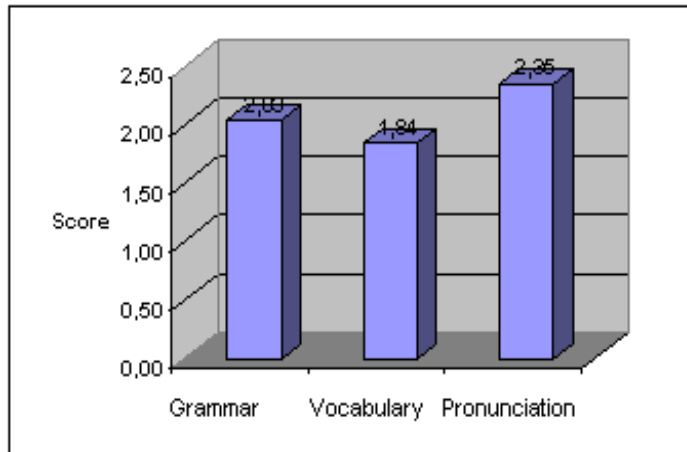
The *paired samples t-test* was undertaken to reveal if the differences in the scores among grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation were statistically significant.

The results in **the case of the teachers** are presented below:

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary in terms of 'importance', t (46) =

4.209, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha was set at 0.025 here). *Vocabulary* (M = 1.79, S.D = 0.806) was viewed as far more important than *grammar* (M = 2.38, S.D = 0.922).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of *grammar* and *pronunciation* in terms of 'importance', *t* (46) = 532, *p* = 0.597 (adjusted alpha = 0.025).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', *t* (46) = 4.221, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Vocabulary* (M = 1.79, S.D = 0.806) was viewed as far more important than *pronunciation* (M = 2.49, S.D = 0.997).

The results in **the case of the learners** are presented below:

- There was a statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary, *t* (325) = 3.071, *p* = 0.002 (*p* < 0.025). *Appropriate use of vocabulary* (M = 1.84, S.D = 0.890) was viewed as more important than *appropriate use of grammar* (M = 2.03, S.D = 0.979).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of grammar and pronunciation, *t* (325) = 4.222, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Appropriate use of grammar* (M = 2.03, S.D = 0.979) was viewed as far more important than a *good level of pronunciation* (M = 2.35, S.D = 1.107).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', *t* (325) = 6.736, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Appropriate use of vocabulary* (M

= 1.84, S.D = 0.890) was viewed as far more important compared to a *good level of pronunciation* (M = 2.35, S.D = 1.107).

According to these findings, the teachers viewed *pronunciation* as less important than *vocabulary* and equally important to *grammar* in terms of the intelligibility (to other learners) of the learners' oral discourse; nevertheless, the learners viewed *pronunciation* as less important than *vocabulary* and also as less important than *grammar*.

Box 4.16
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

SPEAKING ABILITY (cont'd)
3. When conversing in English, learners of English may not understand each other.
In your opinion, <u>how often</u> are the following responsible?
Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= always; 5= never)

	1	2	3	4	5
grammar/ syntax					
vocabulary					
pronunciation					

Table 4.17 shows the results for the question in Box 4.16.

Table 4.17
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	47	1	5	2.49	.975
Vocabulary	47	1	4	2.11	.814
Pronunciation	47	1	5	2.94	.987

Table 4.18 shows the results for the corresponding question in the learners' questionnaire.

Table 4.18
Learners

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	326	1	5	2.68	1.074
Vocabulary	326	1	5	2.22	1.021
Pronunciation	325	1	5	2.55	1.250

Teachers and learners regarded *vocabulary* as being 'often' responsible for misunderstandings/breakdowns in communication among learners of English (this element received a rating on the top side of the scale) and regarded

grammar **and** *pronunciation* **as having moderate responsibility (these elements received ratings close to the mid-point of the scale).**

Perceived responsibility of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation
Figure 4.19 (Teachers)
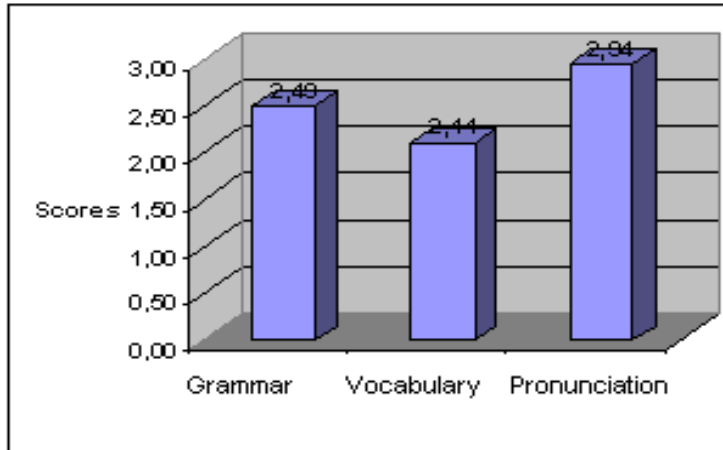
Figure 4.20 (Learners)
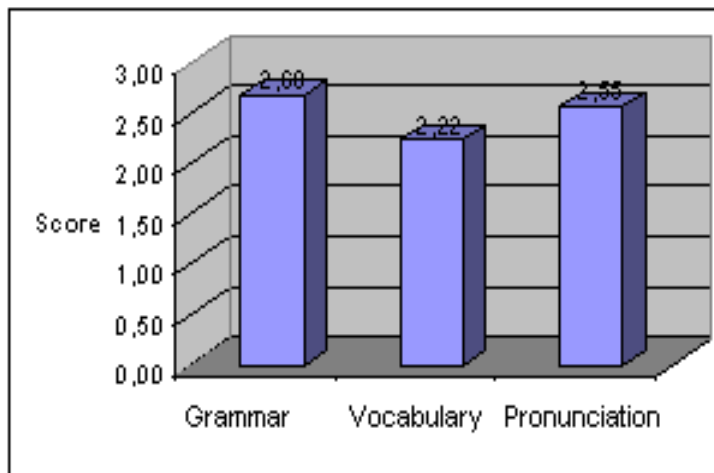
The *paired samples t-test* was undertaken in order to reveal if the differences in the scores among grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation were statistically significant. The results in **the case of the teachers** are presented below:

- A marginally statistically non-significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of *grammar* and *vocabulary* in terms of 'responsibility', t (46) = 2.174, p = 0.035 (adjusted alpha was set at 0.025 here). *Vocabulary*

(M = 2.11, S.D = 0.814) was viewed as more often responsible than *grammar*

(M = 2.49, S.D = 0.975) in communication misunderstandings/breakdowns.

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of *grammar* and *pronunciation* in terms of 'responsibility', $t(46) = 1.949$, $p = 0.057$ ($p > 0.025$).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'responsibility', $t(46) = 4.351$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Vocabulary* (M = 2.11, S.D = 0.814) was viewed as more often responsible than *pronunciation* (M = 2.94, S.D = 0.987) in communication misunderstandings/breakdowns.

The results in **the case of the learners** are presented below**:**

- A highly statistically significant difference was found between learners' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary in terms of 'responsibility', $t(324) = 6.061$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Vocabulary* (M = 2.22, S.D = 1.021) was viewed as more often responsible than *grammar* (M = 2.68, S.D = 1.074) in communication misunderstandings/breakdowns.

- No statistically significant difference was found between learners' evaluations of *grammar* and *pronunciation* in terms of 'responsibility', $t(324) = 1.366$, $p = 0.173$ ($p > 0.025$).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'responsibility', $t(324) = 3.729$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha was set at 0.025 here). *Vocabulary* (M = 2.22, S.D = 1.021) was viewed as more often responsible than

pronunciation (M = 2.55, S.D = 1.250) in communication misunderstandings/breakdowns.

According to these findings, t**he teachers and learners viewed** *pronunciation* **as less often responsible than** *vocabulary* **and as often responsible as** *grammar* **for communication misunderstandings/breakdowns among learners of English.**

Pronunciation status in teaching and learning listening skills

Box 4.21
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

1. <u>How important</u> do you feel are the following for your students to be able to understand in a listening activity?

Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely important; 5= not at all important)

	1	2	3	4	5
knowledge of grammar/ syntax					
knowledge of vocabulary					
knowledge of pronunciation					

Table 4.22 displays the results for the question in Box 4.21.

Table 4.22
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	46	1	5	2.63	.771
Vocabulary	47	1	4	1.60	.825
Pronunciation	47	1	5	2.00	1.063

Table 4.23 shows the results for the corresponding question in the learners' questionnaire.

Table 4.23
Learners

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grammar	326	1	5	2.67	1.062
Vocabulary	327	1	5	1.41	.729
Pronunciation	327	1	5	1.83	1.004

The teachers and learners regarded *knowledge of vocabulary* and *knowledge of pronunciation* as being 'very important' in terms of learners' listening comprehension skills (these two elements received ratings on the top side of the scale) and they regarded *grammar* as having moderate importance (this element received a rating close to the mid-point of the scale).

Perceived importance of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation
Figure 4.24 (Teachers)

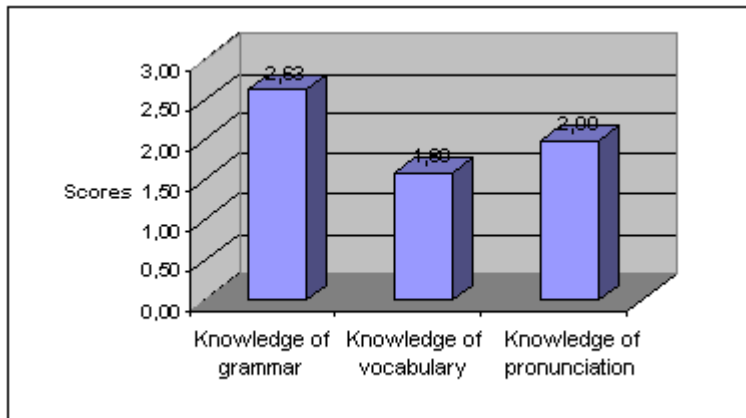**Figure 4.25 (Learners)**
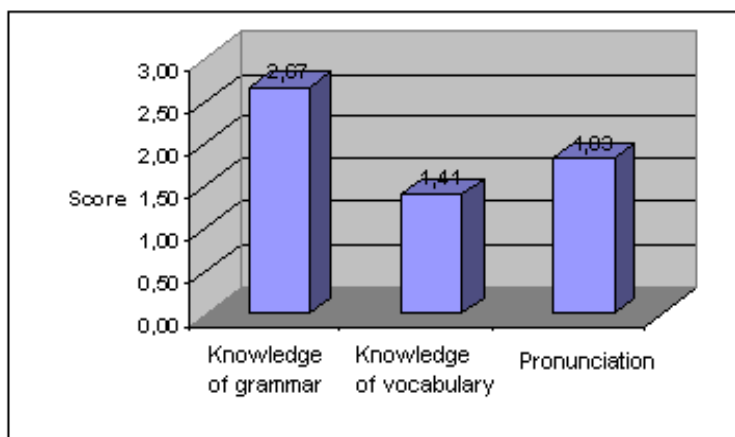
The *paired samples t-test* was used to determine if the differences in the scores among grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation were statistically significant.

The results in **the case of the teachers** are presented below:

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary in terms of 'importance', t (45) =

7.091, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Knowledge of vocabulary* (M = 1.60, S.D = 0.825) was viewed as more important than *knowledge of grammar* (M = 2.63, S.D = 0.771) in terms of learners' listening comprehension skills.

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' evaluations of grammar and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', *t* (45) = 3.268, *p* = 0.002 (*p* < 0.025). *Knowledge of pronunciation* (M = 2.00, S.D = 1.063) was viewed as more important than *knowledge of grammar* (M = 2.63, S.D = 0.771) in terms of learners' listening comprehension skills.

- A marginally statistically significant difference was found between teachers' evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', *t* (46) = 2.362, *p* = 0.022 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Knowledge of vocabulary* (M = 1.60, S.D = 0.825) was viewed as slightly more important than *knowledge of pronunciation* (M = 2.00, S.D = 1.063).

The results in **the case of the learners** are presented below:

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of grammar and vocabulary in terms of 'importance', *t* (325) = 18.449, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Knowledge of vocabulary* (M = 1.41, S.D = 0.729) was viewed as more important than *knowledge of grammar* (M = 2.67, S.D = 1.062) in terms of listening comprehension skills.

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' evaluations of grammar and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', *t* (325) = 10.623, *p* < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.025). *Knowledge of pronunciation* (M = 1.83, S.D = 1.004) was viewed as more important than *knowledge of grammar* (M = 2.67, S.D = 1.062) in terms of listening comprehension skills.

- A highly statistically significant difference was found between learners'
  evaluations of vocabulary and pronunciation in terms of 'importance', t (326)
  $= 6.220$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha $= 0.025$). *Knowledge of vocabulary* (M =
  1.41, S.D $= 0.729$) was viewed as more important than *knowledge of
  pronunciation* (M $= 1.83$, S.D $= 1.004$).

**According to these findings, the teachers and learners viewed *knowledge of
pronunciation* as playing a less important part than *knowledge of vocabulary* and
a more important part than *knowledge of grammar* in terms of learners' listening
comprehension skills.**

Perceived importance of exposure to various accents of English

Box 4.26
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

2. How important do you think it is for the students to hear a variety of accents of English through the listening material of the course?

Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely important; 5= not at all important)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. native speakers of a standard British variety e.g. Received Pronunciation (= Standard South-of-England/ BBC English)					
b. native speakers of a standard American variety e.g. General American					
c. native speakers of standard regional varieties of English e.g. Scottish, Northern					
d. native speakers of non-standard regional varieties of English e.g. Cockney (= 'working class' London)					
e. non-native (e.g. Italian, Bulgarian) but fluent speakers of English					

Table 4.27 shows the results for the question in Box 4.26.

Table 4.27
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Standard British Variety (Listening comprehension 2a)	47	1	4	1.62	.945
Standard American Variety (Listening comprehension 2b)	46	1	5	1.67	1.055
Standard Regional Varieties (Listening comprehension 2c)	46	1	5	2.61	.977
Non-standard Regional Varieties (Listening comprehension 2d)	46	1	5	3.17	1.141
Non-native Varieties (Listening comprehension 2e)	46	1	5	3.11	1.197

Table 4.28 shows the results for the corresponding question in the learners' questionnaires.

Table 4.28
Learners

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Standard British Variety (Listening comprehension 2a)	327	1	5	1.97	.951
Standard American Variety (Listening Comprehension 2b)	326	1	5	2.05	.972
Standard Regional Varieties (Listening Comprehension 2c)	324	1	5	3.18	1.200
Non-standard Regional Varieties (Listening Comprehension 2d)	327	1	5	3.12	1.282
Non-native Varieties (Listening Comprehension 2e)	327	1	5	3.40	1.369

The teachers and learners viewed the learners' exposure to the accents included in the questionnaire as ranging from 'very important' to 'quite important': the first two items *(NSs of a standard British variety* and *NSs of a standard American variety)* received ratings on the top side of the scale and the last three items *(NSs of standard regional varieties of English*, *NSs of non-standard regional varieties of English* and *NN but fluent speakers of English)* received ratings at the mid-point of the scale.

Perceived importance of learners' exposure to various English accents
Figure 4.29 (Teachers)
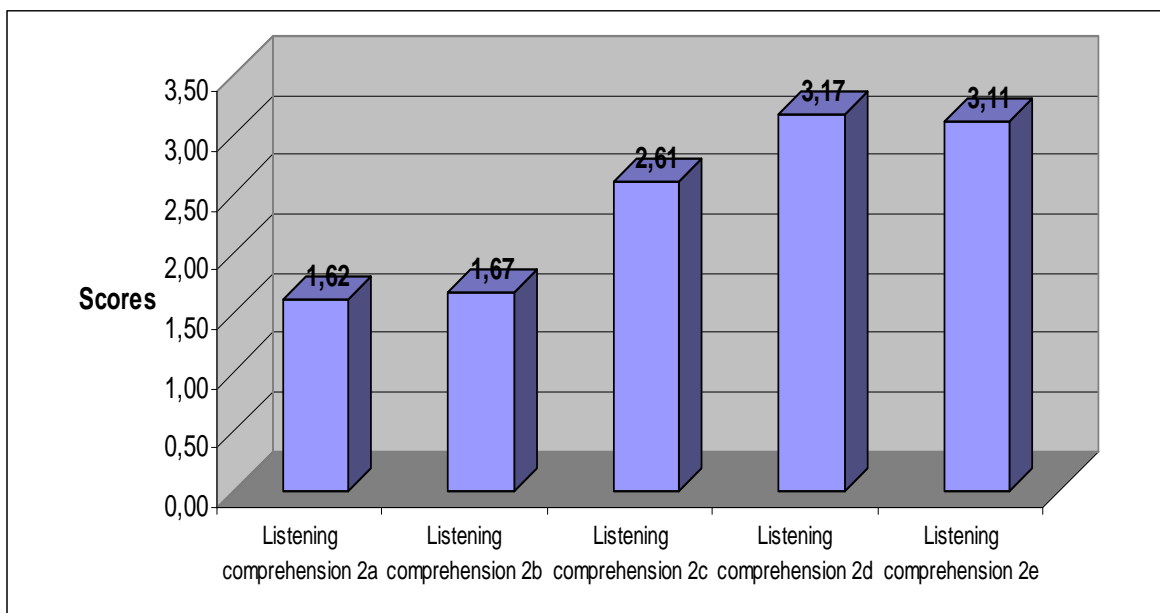
Figure 4.30 (Learners)
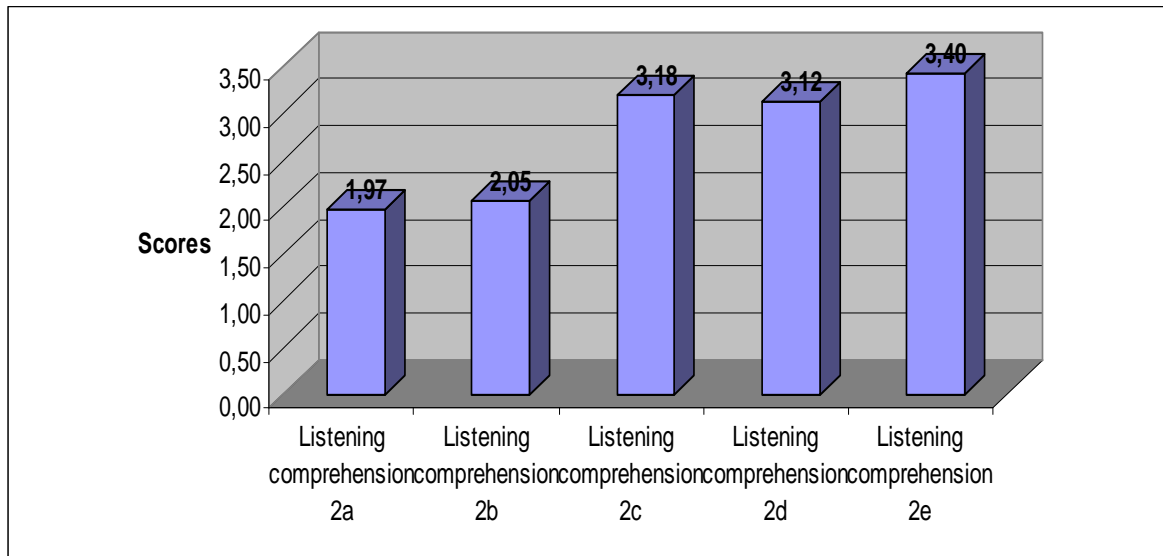
The *paired-samples t-test* was undertaken in order to determine if the differences in the scores among the various accents were statistically significant.

The results in **the case of the teachers** are presented below:

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for learners' listening to *NSs of a standard British variety (SBV)* and teachers' scores for learners' listening to *NSs of a standard American variety (SAV)* in terms of 'importance', $t(45) = 0.389$, $p = 0.699$ ($p > 0.0125$[148]).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of a SBV and teachers' scores for NSs of standard regional varieties (SRVs) in terms of 'importance', $t(45) = 5.359$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners' listening to *NSs of a SBV* (M = 1.62, S.D = 0.945) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 2.61, S.D = 0.977).

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[148] Adjusted alpha was set at 0.0125 here (= 0.05/4) as each questionnaire item was compared four times (e.g. questionnaire item 2a was compared to questionnaire items 2b, 2c, 2d and 2e).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of a SBV and teachers' scores for NSs of non-standard regional varieties (NSRVs) in terms of 'importance', t (45) = 7.266, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners' listening to *NSs of a SBV* (M = 1.62, S.D = 0.945) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.17, S.D = 1.141).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of a SBV and teachers' scores for non-native but fluent speakers (NNFSs) of English in terms of 'importance', t (45) = 6.487, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners' listening to *NSs of a SBV* (M = 1.62, S.D = 0.945) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NNFSs* (M = 3.11, S.D = 1.197).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of a SAV and teachers' scores for NSs of SRVs in terms of 'importance', t (44) = 5.007, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners' listening to *NSs of a SAV* (M = 1.67, S.D = 1.055) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 2.61, S.D = 0.977).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of a SAV and teachers' scores for NSs of NSRVs in terms of 'importance', t (44) = 6.522, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners' listening to *NSs of a SAV* (M = 1.67, S.D = 1.055) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.17, S.D = 1.141).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of a SAV and teachers' scores for NNFSs of English in terms of 'importance', t (44) = 6.589, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners'

listening to *NSs of a SAV* (M = 1.67, S.D = 1.055) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NNFSs* (M = 3.11, S.D = 1.197).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for NSs of SRVs and teachers' scores for NSs of NSRVs in terms of 'importance', t (45) = 3.339, p = 0.002 (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Learners' listening to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 2.61, S.D = 0.977) was viewed as more important than learners' listening to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.17, S.D = 1.141).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for learners' listening to *NSs of SRVs* and teachers' scores for learners' listening to *NNFSs of English* in terms of 'importance', t (45) = 2.135, p = 0.038 ($p >$ 0.0125).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for learners' listening to *NSs of NSRVs* and teachers' scores for learners' listening to *NNFSs* in terms of 'importance', t (45) = 0.311, p = .757 ($p > 0.0125$).

The results in **the case of the learners** are presented below:

- No statistically significant difference was found between learners' scores for listening to *NSs of a SBV* and learners' scores for listening to *NSs of a SAV* in terms of 'importance', t (325) = 1.153, p = 0.250 ($p > 0.0125$).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' scores for NSs of a SBV and learners' scores for NSs of SRVs in terms of 'importance', t (323) = 15.314, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Listening to *NSs of a SBV* (M = 1.97, S.D = 0.951) was viewed as more important than listening to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 3.18, S.D = 1.200).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' scores for NSs of a SBV and learners' scores for NSs of NSRVs in terms of 'importance', $t(322) = 13.868$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125 here). Listening to *NSs of a SBV* (M = 1.97, S.D = 0.951) was viewed as more important than listening to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.12, S.D = 1.282).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' scores for NSs of a SBV and learners' scores for NNFSs of English in terms of 'importance', $t(326) = 13.508$, , $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Listening to *NSs of a SBV* (M = 1.97, S.D = 0.951) was viewed as more important than listening to *NNFSs* (M = 3.40, S.D = 1.369).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' scores for NSs of a SAV and learners' scores for NSs of SRVs in terms of 'importance', $t(326) = 15.321$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Listening to *NSs of a SAV* (M = 2.05, S.D = 0.972) was viewed as more important than listening to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 3.18, S.D = 1.200).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' scores for NSs of a SAV and learners' scores for NSs of NSRVs in terms of 'importance', $t(325) = 12.879$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). Listening to *NSs of a SAV* (M = 2.05, S.D = 0.972) was viewed as more important than listening to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.12, S.D = 1.282).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between learners' scores for NSs of a SAV and learners' scores for NNFS of English in terms of 'importance', $t(325) = 14.725$, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.0125 here). Listening to *NS of a SAV* (M = 2.05, S.D = 0.972) was viewed as more important than listening to *NNFSs* (M = 3.40, S.D = 1.369).

- No statistically significant difference was found between learners' scores for *NSs of SRVs* and learners' scores for *NSs of NSRVs* in terms of 'importance', t (323) = 0.759, p = 0.449 ($p > 0.0125$).

- A statistically significant difference was found between learners' scores for NSs of SRVs and learners' scores for NNFSs of English, t (323) = 2.872, p = 0.0004 ($p < 0.0125$). Listening to *NSs of SRVs of English* (M = 3.18, S.D = 1.200) was viewed as more important than listening to *NNFSs* (M = 3.40, S.D = 1.369).

- A statistically significant difference was found between learners' scores for NSs of NSRVs and learners' scores for NNFSs of English, t (326) = 3.398, p = 0.001 ($p < 0.0125$). Listening to *NSs of NSRVs of English* (M = 3.12, S.D = 1.282) was viewed as more important than listening to *NNFSs* (M = 3.40, S.D = 1.369).

According to these findings, greater importance is attached by the teachers and learners to the exposure of learners to the accent of *NSs of a standard British or American variety of English* compared to the accent of *NSs of standard regional varieties of English*, the accent of *NSs of non-standard regional varieties of English* and the accent of *NN but fluent speakers of English*.

Frequency of exposure to various accents of English

Box 4.31
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

LISTENING COMPREHENSION					
3. How often do you use any of the following as part of the listening element of the course?					
Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= always; 5= never)					
	1	2	3	4	5
a. conversations among native speakers of standard British varieties of English					
b. conversations among native speakers of standard American varieties of English					
c. conversations among native speakers of standard regional varieties of English					
d. conversations among native speakers of non-standard regional varieties of English					
e. conversations among native speakers and non-native (but fluent) speakers of English					
f. conversations among non-native (but fluent) speakers of English					

Table 4.32 shows the results for the question in Box 4.31[149].

Table 4.32
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Standard British Varieties (Listening comprehension 3a)	47	1	5	1.74	.871
Standard American Varieties (Listening comprehension 3b)	47	1	5	2.02	.989
Standard Regional Varieties (Listening comprehension 3c)	44	1	5	2.91	1.178
Non-standard Regional Varieties (Listening comprehension 3d)	44	1	5	3.70	1.091
Native & Non-native Varieties (Listening comprehension 3e)	46	1	5	3.48	1.049
Non-native Varieties (Listening comprehension 3f)	46	1	5	3.78	1.172

The teachers claimed that the learners' exposure to the accents included in the questionnaire ranges from 'often' to 'rarely'; the first two items (*conversations among NSs of standard British varieties of English* and *conversations among NSs*

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[149] There was no corresponding question in the learners' questionnaire.

of standard American varieties of English) **received ratings on the top side of the**

scale, the third item (*conversations among NSs of standard regional varieties of***

English) **received a rating at the mid-point of the scale and the last three items**

(*conversations among NSs of non-standard regional varieties of English*,

conversations among NSs and non-native (but fluent) speakers of English **and**

conversations among non-native (but fluent) speakers of English) **received ratings**

on the bottom side of the scale.

Figure 4.33
Frequency of learners' exposure various English accents
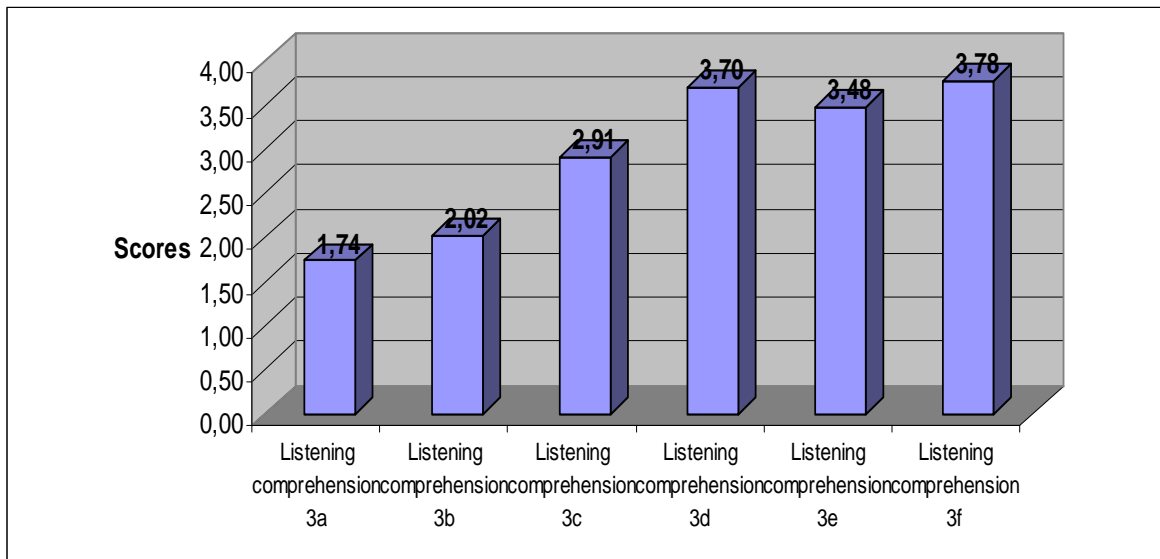
The *paired-samples t-test* was used to determine if there were any statistically

significant differences among the scores for the various English accents.

The results are presented below.

- A marginally statistically significant difference was found between teachers'

  scores for learners' exposure to 'conversations among NSs of SBVs' and

  'conversations among NSs of SAVs' in terms of learners' frequency of

  exposure, $t(46) = 2.658$, $p = 0.011$ (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure

to *NSs of SBVs* (M = 1.74, S.D = 0.871) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs of SAVs* (M = 2.02, S.D = 0.989).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SBVs and conversations among NSs of SRVs in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 4.730, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SBVs* (M = 1.74, S.D = 0.871) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 2.91, S.D = 1.178).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SBVs and conversations among NSs of NSRvs in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 8.454, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SBVs* (M = 1.74, S.D = 0.871) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.70, S.D = 1.091).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SBVs and conversations among NSs and NNFSs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (45) = 8.560 $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SBVs* (M = 1.74, S.D = 0.871) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs and NNFSs* (M = 3.48, S.D = 1.049).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SBVs and conversations among NNFSs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (45) = 9.154, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SBVs* (M = 1.74, S.D =

0.871) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NNFSs of English* (M = 3.78, S.D = 1.172).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SAVs and conversations among NSs of SRVs in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 3.719 p = .001 (p < 0.01). Learners' exposure *to NSs of SAVs* (M = 2.02, S.D = 0.989) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 2.91, S.D = 1.178).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SAVs and conversations among NSs of NSRVs in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 6.865 p < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SAVs* (M = 2.02, S.D = 0.989) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.70, S.D = 1.091).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SAVs and conversations among NSs and NNFSs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (44) = 6.856 p < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SAVs* (M = 2.02, S.D = 0.989) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs and NNFSs* (M = 3.48, S.D = 1.049).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SAVs and conversations among NNFss of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (45) = 7.768, p < 0.001 (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SAVs* (M = 2.02, S.D =

0.989) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NNFSs* (M = 3.78, S.D = 1.172).

- There was a highly statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SRVs and conversations among NSs of NSRVs in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (42) = 5.574, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.01). Learners' exposure to NSs of SRVs (M = 2.91, S.D = 1.178) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs of NSRVs* (M = 3.70, S.D = 1.091).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations NSs of SRVs and conversations among NSs and NNFss of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 2.976, $p = 0.005$ ($p < 0.01$). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 3.70, S.D = 1.091) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NSs and NNFSs* (M = 3.48, S.D = 1.049).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for conversations among NSs of SRVs and conversations among NNFSs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 3.513, $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.01$). Learners' exposure to *NSs of SRVs* (M = 3.70, S.D = 1.091) was found to be more frequent than learners' exposure to *NNFSs* (M = 3.78, S.D = 1.172).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for learners' exposure to conversations among NSs of NSRVs and conversations among NSs and NNFSs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = 1.301, $p = 0.200$ ($p > 0.01$).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for learners' exposure to conversations among NSs of NSRVs and conversations among NNFs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (43) = .322, $p = 0.200$ ($p > 0.01$).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for learners' exposure to conversations among NSs and NNFSs and conversations among NNFSs of English in terms of learners' frequency of exposure, t (45) = 2.047, $p = 0.046$ ($p > 0.01$).

According to these findings, the learners' exposure to *conversations among NSs of standard British* **and** *American varieties of English* **is more frequent than the learners' exposure to** *conversations among NSs of standard regional varieties of English*, *conversations among NSs of non-standard regional varieties of English*, *conversations among NSs and non-native (but fluent) speakers of English* **and** *conversations among non-native (but fluent) speakers of English*.

Segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation

Box 4.34
Relevant questionnaire question

PRONUNCIATION AREAS

How important do you think are the following areas for comprehension (=understanding spoken English) and production (= speaking English)?

Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely important; 5= not at all important)

	1	2	3	4	5
a. vowels					
b. consonants					
c. sounds in connected speech					
d. stress					
e. intonation					

Table 4.35 shows the results for the question in Box 4.34[150].

Table 4.35
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vowels	46	1	5	2.26	1.201
Consonants	45	1	5	2.53	1.100
Sounds in connected speech	45	1	3	1.87	.757
Stress	45	1	4	1.84	.903
Intonation	46	1	4	1.76	.899

The teachers regarded *vowels, sounds in connected speech, stress* and *intonation* as 'very important' for comprehending and producing spoken English (all items received ratings on the top side of the scale) and *consonants* as 'quite important' (this element received a rating rather close to the mid-point of the scale).

[150] There was no corresponding question in the learner version of the questionnaire.

Figure 4.36
Perceived importance of pronunciation areas for comprehension and production
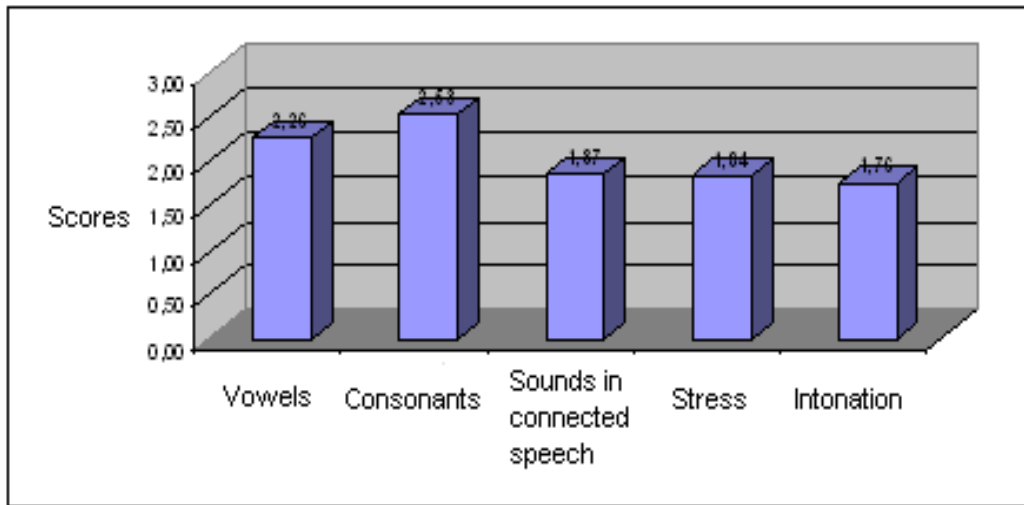
The *paired samples t-test* was undertaken to test for any statistically significant differences among the scores for any of the pronunciation features. The results are presented below:

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' ratings of vowels and consonants in terms of 'importance', $t(44) = 2.875$, $p = 0.006$ ($p < 0.0125$). *Vowels* (M = 2.26, S.D = 1.201) were viewed as more important for comprehension and production compared to *consonants* (M = 2.53, S.D = 1.100).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' ratings of *vowels* and *sounds in connected speech* in terms of 'importance', $t(44) = 1.765$, $p = 0.084$ ($p > 0.0125$).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' ratings of *vowels* and *stress* in terms of 'importance', $t(44) = 1.570$, $p = 0.123$ ($p > 0.0125$).

- A marginally statistically non-significant difference was found between teachers' ratings of *vowels* and *intonation* in terms of 'importance', $t(45) =$

1.215, p = 0.032 (adjusted alpha = 0.0125). *Intonation* (M = 1.76, S.D = 0.899) was viewed as more important for comprehension and production than *vowels* (M = 2.26, S.D = 1.201).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' ratings of consonants and sounds in connected speech in terms of 'importance', t (43) = 3.479, p = 0.001 (p < 0.0125). *Sounds in connected speech* (M = 1.87, S.D = 0.757) were viewed as more important for comprehension and production than *consonants* (M = 2.53, S.D = 1.100).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' ratings of consonants and stress in terms of 'importance', t (43) = 3.283, p = 0.002 (p < 0.0125). *Stress* (M = 1.84, S.D = 0.903) was viewed as more important for comprehension and production than *consonants* (M = 2.53, S.D = 1.100).

- There was a statistically significant difference between teachers' ratings of consonants and intonation in terms of 'importance', t (44) = 3.578, p = 0.001 (p < 0.0125). *Intonation* (M = 1.76, S.D = 0.899) was viewed as more important for comprehension and production than *consonants* (M = 2.53, S.D = 1.100).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' ratings of *sounds in connected speech* and *stress* in terms of 'importance', t (44) = 0.138, p = 0.890 (p > 0.0125).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' ratings of *sounds in connected speech* and *intonation* in terms of 'importance', t (44) = .626, p = 0.535 (p > 0.0125).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' ratings of *stress* and *intonation* in terms of 'importance', t (44) = 0.662, p = 0.511 ($p >$ 0.0125).

According to these findings, the teachers viewed *vowels*, *sounds in connected speech*, *stress* and *intonation* as playing a more important role than *consonants* in the comprehension and production of spoken English.

4.3.2 Learners versus Teachers: Results for RQ1a

The independent t-test was undertaken to test for significant differences in response on all relevant questionnaire items between learners and teachers. Here, I will only present the information that is directly relevant to RQ1; for example, statistically significant differences in teachers' and learners' responses in terms of the perceived importance of pronunciation in teaching/learning speaking but not in terms of the perceived importance of grammar (for such information, interested readers can see Appendix 4.1.)

Pronunciation status and role in teaching and learning speaking skills

No statistically significant differences were found between learners' and teachers' evaluations of pronunciation in terms of 'importance'. However, a statistically significant difference was found between learners' and teachers' scores in terms of perceived responsibility of pronunciation for communication misunderstandings/ breakdowns among learners of English. The learners were found to assign 'greater responsibility' to *pronunciation* (M = 2.55, S.D = 1.250) than the teachers (M= 2.94, S.D = 0.987), t (371) = 2.412, p = 0.019 ($p < 0.05$) (Box plot 4.37)[151]. Nevertheless, teachers as well as learners regarded *pronunciation* as less often responsible than *vocabulary* and as often responsible as *grammar* for any misunderstandings/breakdowns in communication among learners of English.

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[151] For an explanation in terms of what a box plot represents, please see Appendix 4.1.

Box Plot 4.37
Perceived responsibility of pronunciation ('Speaking Ability 3c') for communication misunderstandings among learners of English
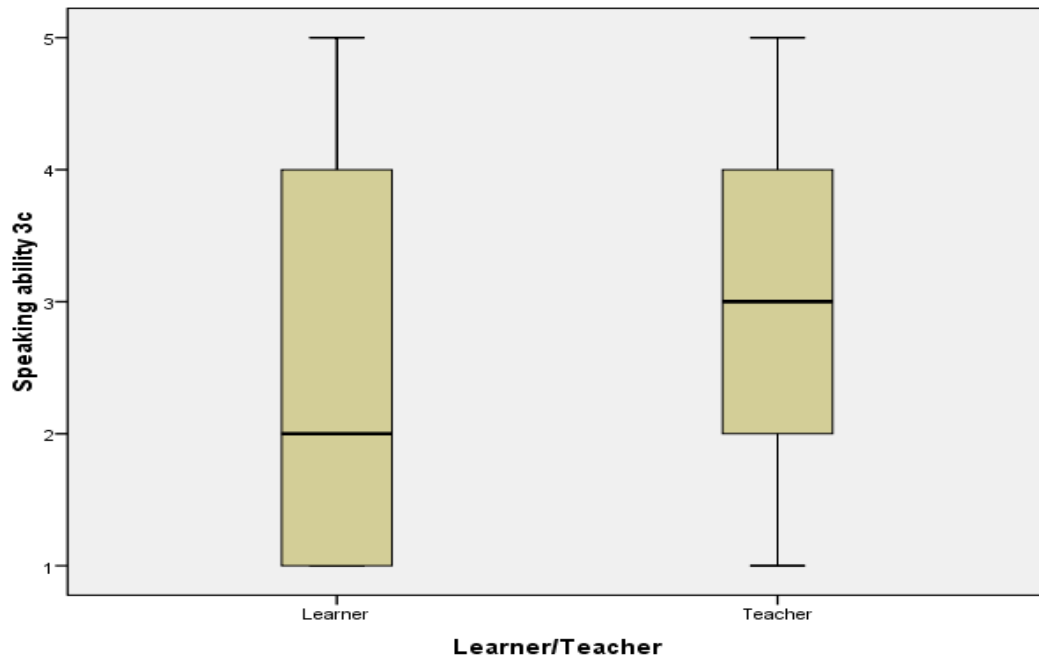
Pronunciation status in teaching and learning listening skills

No statistically significant differences were found between learners' and teachers' evaluations of *pronunciation* in terms of 'importance'.

4.3.3 Teachers' Questionnaires: Results for RQ1b

The independent t-test was undertaken to test for significant differences in teachers' responses on all relevant questionnaire items (displayed in the Boxes of Section 4.3.1), according to all the different independent variables.

As far as the perceived status (and role) of pronunciation is concerned, no statistically differences were found between teachers' responses according to gender, English language qualifications, teaching level, L1, course in English phonetics and pronunciation training. (For any statistically significant differences that emerged in teachers' responses but are not directly relevant to RQ1b, interested readers can see Appendix 4.2.)

4.3.4 Learners' Questionnaires: Results for RQ1b

The independent t-test was undertaken to test for significant differences in learners' responses on all relevant questionnaire items (displayed in the Boxes of Section 4.3.1), according to all the different independent variables.

As far as the perceived status (and role) of pronunciation is concerned, no statistically differences were found between learners' responses according to gender, level of English and L1. (For any statistically significant differences that emerged in learners' responses but are not directly relevant to RQ1b, interested readers can see Appendix 4.3).

4.3.5 Re-cap of Main Findings for RQ1

Overall, pronunciation was recognised as an important skill in terms of speaking and listening competence but, nevertheless, of secondary importance to vocabulary.

<u>Pronunciation and speaking</u>

- ➤ **Teachers and learners viewed pronunciation as a very important element in the development of learners' speaking skills. However, they viewed it as less important than vocabulary.**

- ➤ **Teachers and learners regarded a good level of pronunciation as having importance in terms of the intelligibility (to other learners) of the learners' oral discourse. Nevertheless, they viewed it as less important than appropriate use of vocabulary.**

- ➤ **Teachers and learners viewed pronunciation as being 'sometimes' responsible for misunderstandings/ breakdowns in communication among learners of English whereas they viewed vocabulary as being 'often responsible'. Nevertheless, learners were found to assign 'greater responsibility' than teachers.**

<u>Pronunciation and listening</u>

- ➤ **Teachers and learners regarded knowledge of pronunciation as being 'very important' in terms of learners' listening comprehension skills. Nevertheless, they viewed it as less important than knowledge of vocabulary.**

<u>Perceived importance of exposure to various accents of English (and reported frequency of exposure)</u>

> **Teachers and learners viewed the learners' exposure to the accent of NSs of a standard British variety (SBV) and NSs of a standard American variety (SAV) as 'very important' and to the accent of NSs of standard regional varieties (SRVs) of English, NSs of non-standard regional varieties of English (NSRVs) and non-native but fluent speakers (NNFSs) of English as 'quite important'. Overall, greater importance was attached to the accent of NSs of a SBV or a SAV compared to the accent of NSs of SRVs, the accent of NSs of NSRVs and the accent of NNFSs of English.**

> **The teachers claimed to 'often' expose learners to conversations among NSs of a SBVs and NSs of SAVs , 'sometimes' to conversations among NSs of SRVs and 'rarely' to conversations among NSs of NSRVs, conversations among NSs and NNFSs of English and conversations among NNFSs of English. Overall, the learners' exposure to the accent of NSs of SBVs and SAVs was found to be more frequent than to the accent of NSs of SRVS, NSs of NSRVs, NSs and NNFSs and NNFSs of English.**

<u>Segmental & suprasegmental features of pronunciation</u>

The teachers regarded *vowels, sounds in connected speech, stress* and *intonation* as 'very important' for comprehending and producing spoken English and *consonants* as 'quite important'.

4.4 Results for Research Question 2 (RQ2)

Research Question 2

2a) What are the pronunciation models and pronunciation performance targets that the teachers set for the learners? Do they differ from those that the learners wish to achieve?

2b) Are there statistically significant differences in the choice of pronunciation models and performance targets amongst respondents according to different independent variables?

This section presents the results from the teachers' and learners' questionnaires that relate to RQ2a. For the convenience of the reader, the questionnaire items that relate directly to RQ2a are reproduced in boxes within the main text of this section. The qualitative data results that are relevant to this question are also presented. Then, any statistically significant differences that have emerged between teachers' and the learners' responses on all relevant questionnaire items are presented. Finally, any statistically significant differences in response between different groups of teachers and between different groups of learners, according to the different independent variables of this study, are uncovered.

4.4.1 Teachers' & Learners' Questionnaires: Results for RQ2a

Pronunciation models

Box 4.38
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

PRONUNCIATION MODELS & PERFORMANCE TARGETS

1. Which pronunciation model do you follow in your teaching?

Please tick all those that apply

British English standard accent

American English standard accent

Other *(please specify)*: ………………..

Table 4.39 shows the results for the question in Box 4.38.

Table 4.39
Teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	British English standard accent	18	38.3	38.3	38.3
	American English standard accent	15	31.9	31.9	70.2
	Both	10	21.3	21.3	91.5
	Other[152]	4	8.5	8.5	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.39 shows that 38.3% of teachers claimed to adopt a *standard British accent* (38.3%), 31.9% adopt a *standard American accent* and 21.3% adopt *both* (21.3%) as model(s) for the teaching of English pronunciation. Only 8.5% claimed to adopt another pronunciation model.

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[152] 'Other' included Australian and South African accents. Also, one teacher claimed to adopt a variety of accents (e.g. Irish accent and heavy Italian-Greek accent).

Table 4.40 displays the results to the corresponding question from the learners' questionnaire.

Table 4.40
Learners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	British English standard accent	128	39.1	39.1	39.1
	American English standard accent	141	43.1	43.1	82.3
	Both	45	13.8	13.8	96
	Other (e.g. Australian)	9	2.8	2.8	99.8
	American English standard accent+other	2	.6	.6	99.4
	Both+other	2	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	327	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.40 shows that 39.1% of learners chose a *standard British accent*, 43.1% chose a *standard American accent* and 13.8% chose both as their desired model(s) of English pronunciation. Only 2.8% of the learners ticked *other* as their desired model of pronunciation, 0.6% chose *an American standard accent in combination with 'other'* and the remaining 0.6% chose a *British standard accent* along with an *American standard accent* and *'other'*.

As far as English pronunciation models are concerned, the vast majority of the teachers (92%) and the vast majority of the learners (96%) opted for either a *standard British accent* **or a** *standard American accent* **or** *both*

Choice of pronunciation models
Figure 4.41 (Teachers)
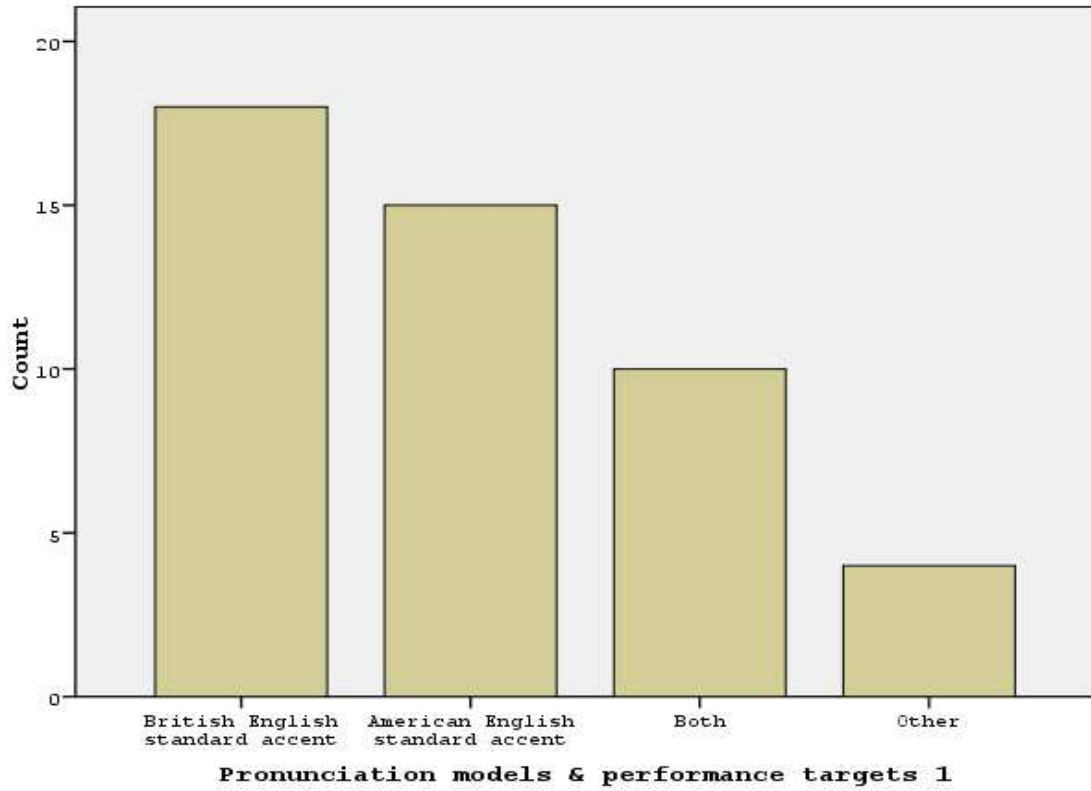
Figure 4.42 (Learners)
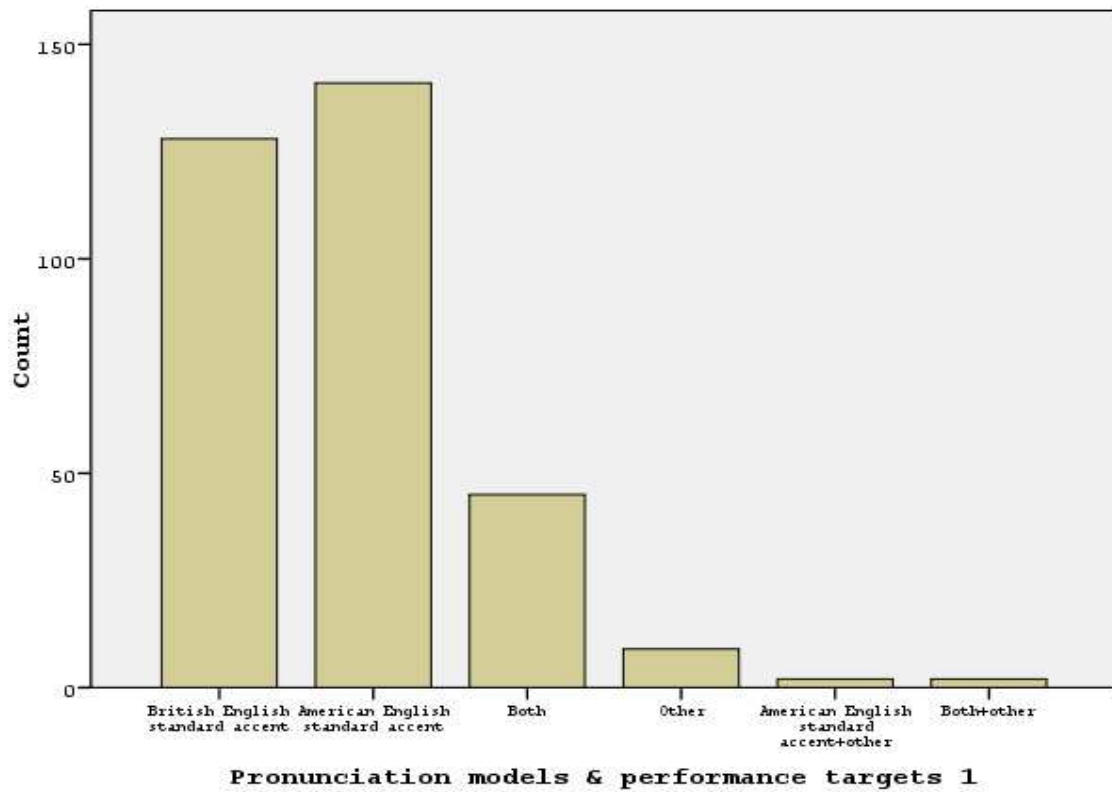
Pronunciation performance targets

Box 4.43
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

PRONUNCIATION MODELS & PERFORMANCE TARGETS (cont'd)

2 a) Ideally, <u>how close would you like</u> your students' accent to come to a native-like model?

Please tick one box only using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely close; 5= not at all close)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

  b) In practice, <u>how close do you expect</u> your students' accent to come to a native-like model?

Please tick one box only using the scale 1-5 (1= extremely close; 5= not at all close)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Table 4.44 shows the results for the question in Box 4.43.

Table 4.44
Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ideal Pronunciation Goal (2a)	46	1	4	2.04	.842
Practical Pronunciation Goal (2b)	46	1	4	2.91	.590

The results (Table 4.44) indicate that, ideally, the teachers would like their learners' pronunciation to come 'very close' to a *native-like model*. However, in practice, they expect that it will come 'quite close'. The difference between the mean response to '2a' and the mean response to '2b' is nearly one scalar point; this can be seen as an indication that the teachers have recognised the difference between 'ideal' and 'practical' performance targets.

Table 4.45 displays the results to the corresponding question from the learners' questionnaire.

Table 4.45
Learners

|	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
'Ideal' Pronunciation Goal (2a)	327	1	4	1.79	.823
'Realistic' Pronunciation Goal (2b)	326	1	5	2.67	.796

These results (Table 4.45) indicate that, ideally, the learners would like their pronunciation to come 'very close' to a *native-like model*. However, in practice they expect that it will come 'quite close'. The difference between the mean response to '2a' and the mean response to '2b' is nearly one scalar point; this indicates that the learners have recognised the difference between 'ideal' and 'practical' performance targets (just like the teachers did).

Overall, the teachers and learners would like the learners' accent to come 'very close' to a native-like model but expect that it will only come 'quite close'.

Box 4.46
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

PRONUNCIATION MODELS & PERFORMANCE TARGETS (cont'd)

3 a) Which is more important, in your opinion?

To raise students' pronunciation to… *(please tick one box only)*

 the level of native speakers so that people will think they are native speakers

 to a level at which native and non-native speakers can understand them perfectly well,

although they still have the accent of their country

 b) Please give a brief reason for your answer

…………………………………………………………………………………

Table 4.47 shows the results for the question in Box 4.46.

Table 4.47
Teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Native-like pronunciation	1	2.1	2.1	2.1
	Accented international intelligibility	46	97.9	97.9	100.0
	Total	47	100.0	100.0	

Virtually all teachers (97.9%) opted for accented international intelligibility (Table 4.47). All teachers, except for one[153], felt that for learners to develop an intelligible accent that embodies features of their L1 is more important than mastering native-like pronunciation.

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[153] It may be interesting to note that this particular teacher was 20 years old, her L1 was Greek and the only English language teaching qualification she had was the CPE. So, perhaps in a way she was closer to the 1/3 of the learners who chose 'native-speaker competence' in pronunciation.

Table 4.48 displays the results of the corresponding question from the learners'
questionnaires.

Table 4.48
Learners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Native-like pronunciation	109	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Accented international intelligibility	218	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	327	100.0	100.0	

The majority of the learners (66.7%) opted for accented international intelligibility
(Table 4.48). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that one third of the learners
(33.3%) opted for native-speaker competence in pronunciation.

**When required to choose between *native-like pronunciation* and *accented
international intelligibility,* virtually all teachers and two thirds of the learners
chose accented international intelligibility as the most important pronunciation
goal. Nevertheless, one third of the learners opted for *native-like pronunciation*
(Figures 4.49, 4.50).**

'Native-like pronunciation' versus 'accented international intelligibility'('non-native like')

Figure 4.49 (Teachers)
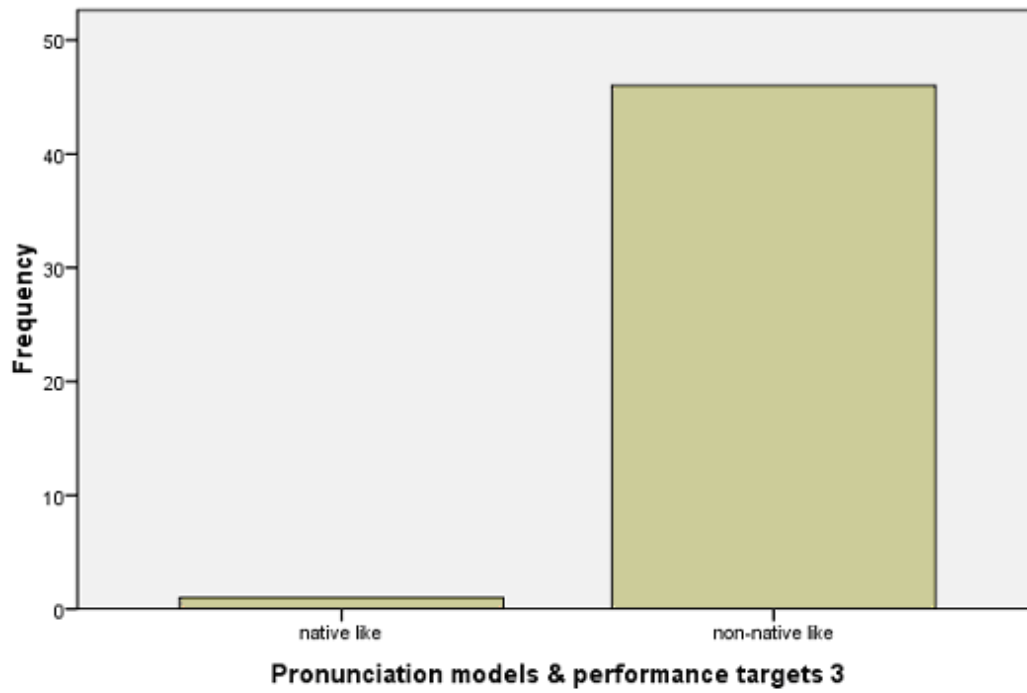
Figure 4.50 (Learners)
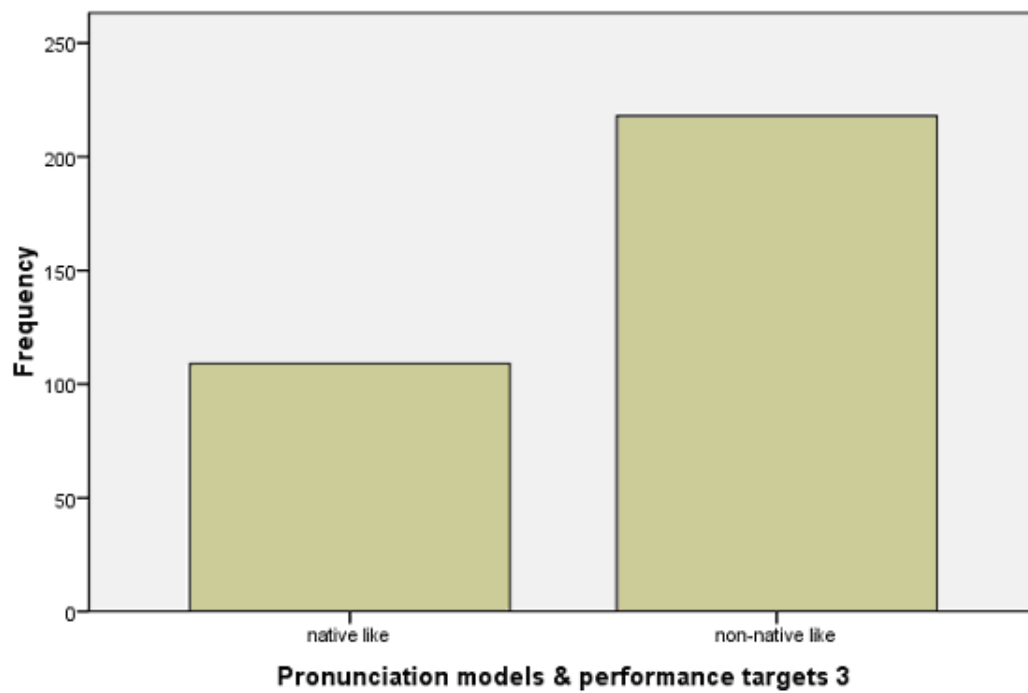
4.4.2 Learners versus Teachers: Results for RQ2a

Pronunciation models

The Chi-square test was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant relationships between learners and teachers and their responses in terms of pronunciation models. No statistically significant differences were found.

Pronunciation performance targets

The independent t-test was used to uncover any statistically significant differences in response between learners and teachers on all relevant questionnaire items.

The results are presented below:

- A marginally statistically significant difference was found between learners' scores (M = 1.79, S.D = 0.823) and teachers' scores (M = 2.04, S.D = 0.842) in terms of the ideal pronunciation goal, t (371) = 1.981, p = 0.048 ($p < 0.05$).The learners *would like* their accent to come 'closer' to a *native-like model* compared to the teachers (Box Plot 4.51).

- A statistically significant difference was also found between learners' scores (M = 2.67, S.D = 0.796) and teachers' scores (M = 2.91, S.D = 0.590) in terms of the practical pronunciation goal, t (370) = 2.475, p = 0.016 ($p < 0.05$). The learners *expect* their accent to come 'closer' to native-like model compared to the teachers (Box Plot 4.52).

Overall, the learners' wishes and expectations were found to be higher than the teachers' in terms of pronunciation performance targets.

Box Plot 4.51
Scores for 'ideal pronunciation goal' ('Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets 2a)
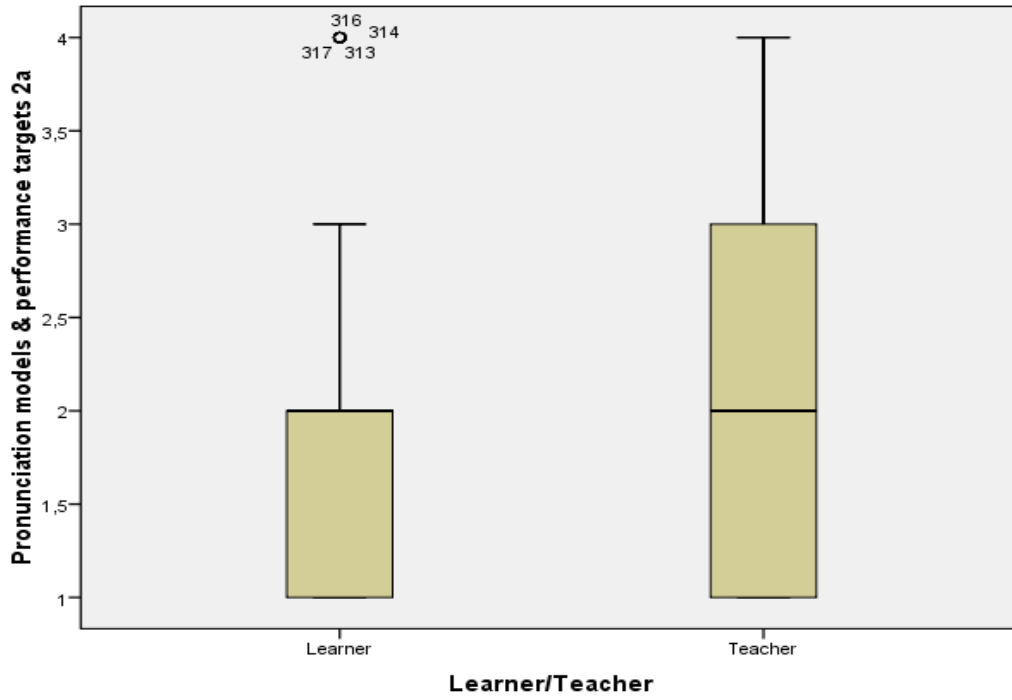
Box Plot 4.52
Scores for 'practical pronunciation goal' ('Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets 2b')
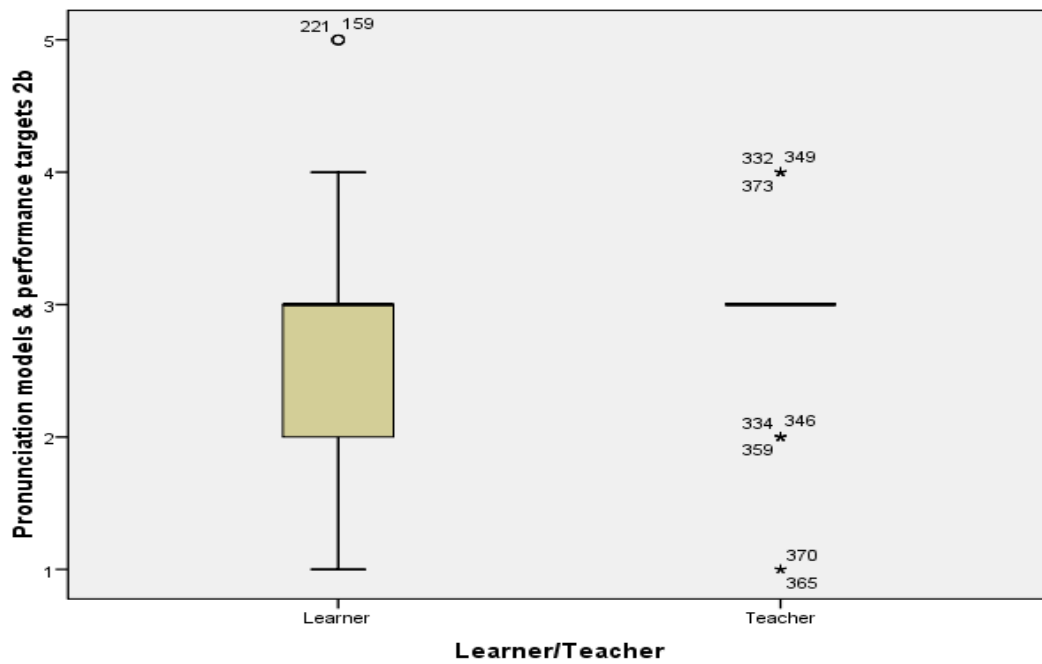
The Chi-square test was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant relationships between learners and teachers and their responses to 'native-like pronunciation' (NLP) versus 'accented international intelligibility' (AII). A highly statistically significant relationship emerged between learners' and teachers' answers, $\chi^2 (1, 374) = 17.801$, $p < 0.001$ (alpha is set at 0.05 here). There was a much greater tendency among learners than among teachers to regard *AII* as a more important goal than *NLP* (Figure 4.53). **Overall, the majority of the teachers as well as the majority of the learners considered *AII* as a more important goal than *NLP*. However, a substantial percentage of the learners (33.3%) regarded *AII* as a more important goal than *NLP* (whereas only 2.1% of the teachers share this view.)**

Figure 4.53
'Accented international intelligibility' and 'native-like pronunciation';
('Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets 3a')
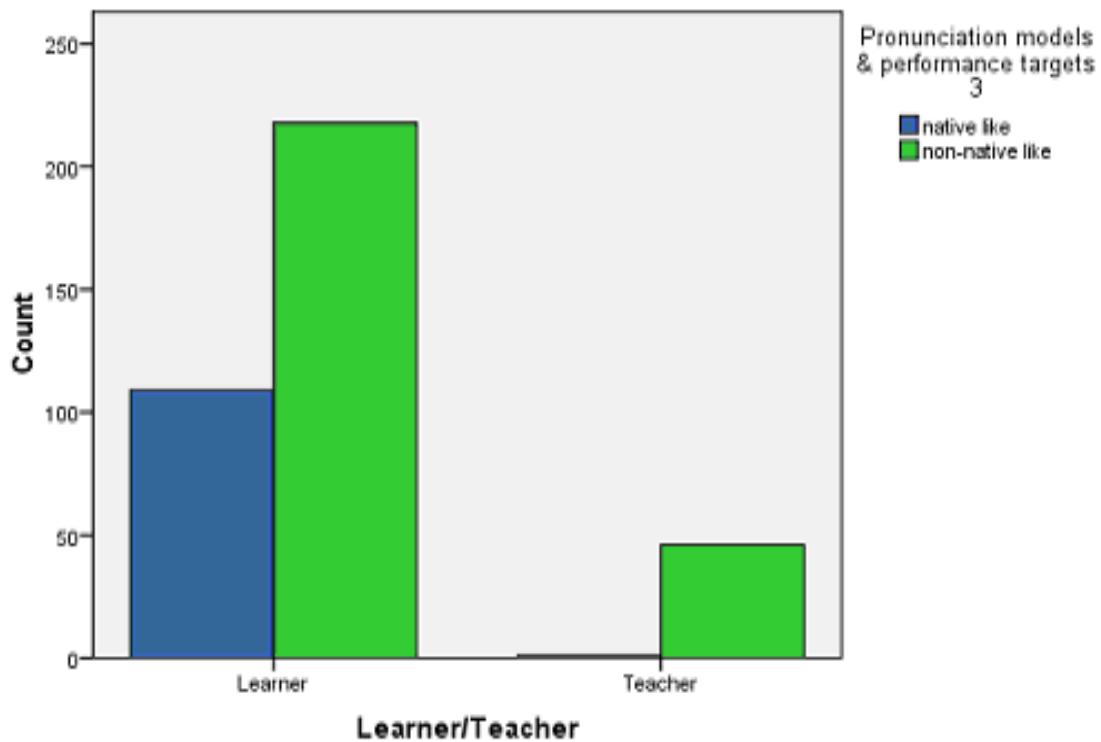
4.4.3 Teachers' and Learners' Questionnaires: Qualitative Data Results for RQ2a

The respondents were not only asked to choose between *native-like pronunciation (NLP)* and *accented international intelligibility (AII)* but also to provide a reason for their choice (see Box 4.46, Section 4.4.1, this Chapter). A content analytic procedure was followed in order to divide the teachers' and learners' responses into categories and identify the main themes in the data. In order to enhance the quality of the adopted coding scheme, the researcher provided a colleague[154] with a detailed description of the categories that had emerged and asked him to allocate all items into the appropriate categories. After comparing the results of the researcher's analysis to the results of the colleague's analysis, it was decided to create additional categories to cater for some of the 'miscellaneous' items initially identified by the researcher. Once this process was completed, the issue of 'inter-coder reliability' which refers to "the degree to which two or more individuals agree about the coding of an item" (Bryman, 2004: 540) had to be addressed more formally. Thus, the researcher provided a different colleague[155] with all of the teachers' and the learners' responses – making the criteria used to set up the categories explicit – and measured the extent to which they agreed over the coding of the data. The inter-coder reliability reached 97.2% for the teachers' data and 93% for the learners' data; both figures were above the standard accepted levels (see Robson, 2002)[156].

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[154] Benjamin Saunders was also a doctoral researcher working at the Centre for Language and Communication Research at Cardiff University, U.K.

[155] Ian Johnson had recently completed successfully a PhD at the Centre for Language and Communication Research at Cardiff University, U.K.

[156] We need to bear in mind a certain limitation of the inter-coder reliability checks that took place; the colleague employed for the inter-coder reliability check was working to a set categorised system as opposed to one he had devised himself which means, that under other circumstances, he may have provided different answers.

4.4.3.1 Main Categorisation for Teachers' & Learners' Answers

Teachers' answers

Virtually all teachers opted for *accented international intelligibility* (Table 4.55).

Table 4.55
Teachers

Total opting for *native-like pronunciation*	1 (2.1%)
Total opting for *accented int. intelligibility*	46 (97.8%)

Table 4.56 shows that the one and only teacher who opted for native-like pronunciation provided a reason for her choice. Table 4.57 shows that 74% of the teachers who opted for accented-international intelligibility provided a reason for their choice while the remaining 26% did not; the space where they were supposed to write in their answer was left blank. (Interested readers can see Appendix 4.4 for possible explanations as to why this was the case)

Table 4.56
Teachers who chose *native-like pronunciation*

Total giving a reason	1 (100%)
Total with no answer	0 (0%)

Table 4.57
Teachers who chose *accented international intelligibility*

Total giving a reason	34 (74%)
Total with no answer	12 (26%)

Let us now present the reasons provided by the teachers for their choice between the two pronunciation goals. The categories in which the teachers' answers were divided are set out in the next pages. For each category there is a box that includes example(s) of teachers' answers allocated to the particular category (for further examples of teachers' responses for each category, please see Appendix 4.4).

**Teacher(s) who chose native- like pronunciation (NLP)**

Category 1: Notions of correctness/accuracy; 'this is the appropriate/ right thing to do'. The following reason had to form a category on its own: *'A teacher's goal should be to improve as much as possible students' pronunciation in order to make it perfect'*.

**Teachers who chose accented international intelligibility (AII)**

Table 4.58 displays the categories that emerged in terms of the teachers' responses for their choice of AII. While 34 teachers provided a reason, there are 35 items in total as one item fitted two categories (see Appendix 4.4 for more information on this).

Table 4.58
Percentages of teachers' answers (number of items) in each category as a proportion of total teachers' answers (items) for their choice of *AII*

Categories	% of teachers' answers (items)
1. Emphasis on successful communication	54.2% (19 items)
2. Mastery of NLP is not a feasible target	31.4% (11 items)
3. Issues of origin/ identity/ character	11.4% (4 items)
4. Miscellaneous	2.8% (1 item)

Category 1: Emphasis on successful/ effective/ comprehensible communication

All the teachers' answers that placed great emphasis on issues of intelligibility, comprehension and communication were included in this category.

Box 4.59
Example

> '*My priority is proficient communication. I want my students to be able to understand and be understood when speaking in English.*'

This category, which addressed teachers' considerations in terms of an appropriate communicative goal, attracted the largest number of items (54.2%). It seems that

teachers are very much concerned with their learners' ability to convey the message they intend to and decipher the incoming message while conversing with others. The main objective in teaching pronunciation seems to be successful communication.

Category 2: The mastery of NLP is not a feasible target. All the items allocated to this category refer to the perceived difficulty in mastering NLP.

Box 4.60
Example

> Item 1: *'There are excellent students who just can't leave the accent of their country behind'.*

This category is the second largest category; it attracted 31.4% of the teachers' answers (Table 4.58). It seems that for at least one third of the teachers, their decision to opt for AII was based on realistic expectations in terms of learners' performance; thus, the NLP option was rejected. Furthermore, approximately half of the teachers whose responses were placed into this category even offered reasons as to why it is not feasible for learners to achieve NLP; for example, there is not enough time to focus on pronunciation in class and learners' exposure to English is limited.

Category 3: Issues of origin/identity/character. All items concerned with the relationship between language and learners' sociolinguistic identity were placed into this category which accounted for 11.4% of the teachers' responses (Table 4.58). Interestingly, the lack of an 'appropriate' model accent when learners' origin is taken into account was pointed out by a couple of teachers.

Box 4.61
Examples

> Item 1: *'Because a non-English accent gives their speech character'.*
>
> Item 2: *'Pronunciation reflects origin (both geographically and in terms of class) – so who should my students imitate?'*

Category 4: Miscellaneous. Any items that did not fit any of the aforementioned categories were coded under 'miscellaneous'. Only one such item was identified; one teacher wrote '*for social reasons'*. It was decided that the particular item was too vague to be included in 'Category 3'.

Learners' answers

The majority of learners (66.7%) opted for AII. Nevertheless, one third of learners (33.3%) opted for NLP (Table 4.62).

Table 4.62
Learners

Total opting for *native-like pronunciation*	109 (33.3%)
Total opting for *accented int. intelligibility*	218 (66.7%)

Table 4.63 shows that the vast majority (87.1%) of learners who chose NLP also provided a reason for their choice. Only 12.9% did not justify their choice by leaving the space where they were supposed to write in their answer blank. Table 4.64 shows that this was also the case with the learners who chose AII; the vast majority (84.4%) wrote in an answer explaining their choice and the remainder (15.6%) did not.

Table 4.63
Learners who chose *native-like pronunciation*

Total giving a reason	95(87.1%)
Total with no answer	14 (12.9%)

Table 4.64
Learners who chose *accented international intelligibility*

Total giving a reason	184 (84.4%)
Total with no answer	34 (15.6%)

As in the case of the teachers, the learners' answers were divided into categories (set out in the following pages). For each category there is a box that includes examples of learners' answers allocated to the particular category (for further examples of learners' responses for each category, please see Appendix 4.4).

Learners who chose NLP

Table 4.65 displays the categories that emerged in terms of learners' responses for NLP.

Table 4.65
Percentages of learners' answers (number of items) in each category as a proportion of total learners' answers (items) for their choice of NLP

Categories	% of learners' answers (items)[157]
1. Notions of correctness/accuracy	25% (25 items)
2. Effective communication is more likely to be achieved	22% (22 items)
3. Sense of achievement/indication of high level of competence in English	17% (17 items)
4. Love for the English language & its pronunciation	16% (16 items)
5. Greater acceptance by NSs; 'fitting in'/ feeling more comfortable	9% (9 items)
6. Miscellaneous	11% (11 items)

Category 1: Notions of correctness/accuracy; 'this is the appropriate/ right thing to do': learners' responses that considered this pronunciation goal to be the most 'appropriate' goal for pedagogical purposes were placed into this category, which attracted the largest number of items compared to the other categories featured in Table 4.65. The general consensus among those learners whose responses were coded under this category seems to be that the mastery of NLP is one of the prerequisites for

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[157] The reason we have a total of 100 items and not a total of 95 items (95 learners provided a reason for their choice) is because 5 items had to be allocated to two categories and were thus counted twice.

learners to consider themselves as competent users of English. For the purpose of learning English to be achieved, learners must reach the level of NSs; the appropriate/ right thing to do is learn 'correct' English and this entails the mastery of NLP.

Box 4.66
Examples

Item 1: *'Since they give you a certificate of competence in English you must also know the pronunciation of English very well.'*

Item 2: *'If somebody wants to speak a foreign language, they must speak it correctly.'*

Item 3: *'I like learning a new language and being able to speak it like the natives. I think that's the main point (of learning a new language).'*

Category 2: Effective communication is more likely to be achieved. The learners whose responses were allocated to this category seem to believe that speaking with a native-like accent will increase their chances of being understood by others and will thus help them communicate more successfully. Approximately one in five (22%) of the learners who provided a reason for their choice of NLP holds this view.

Box 4.67
Examples

Item 1: *'So that others can understand me better.'*

Item 2: *'In order to minimise any misunderstandings in any conversations with native speakers of English...'*

Item 3: *'It will be easier to communicate with people from other countries.'*

Category 3: Sense of achievement/indication of high level of competence in English. The items placed into this category reflect the learners' desire to achieve NLP as this will show/prove to them (as well as to others) that they have a high level of competence in English. Many of the items allocated to this category are similar to

the items of Category 1 in the sense that NLP is regarded as an important element of a very good command of English. However, in Category 1 the relationship between NLP and a high level of competence in English is expressed in highly prescriptive terms and, often as a generalisation, along the lines of 'this is the right thing' or 'this is what *must* be done' whereas in Category 3 the learners comment on the mastery of NLP in rather personal terms along the lines of 'this is what I *would like* to do in order to…'. The mastery of NLP is seen as an affectively rewarding goal for all learners whose responses were placed in Category 3; they *want* to master NLP in order to feel satisfied with the progress they have made in learning English, to impress others with their accent, to prove to others that they speak very good English and so on.

Box 4.68
Examples

Item 1: *'If so, I will be satisfied of my learning of English for so many years.'*

Item 2: *'So I can show people that I have a good command of the English language and I speak English very well.'*

Category 4: Love for the English language & its pronunciation. Some learners justified their choice of NLP through their 'love' for English and/or the sound of English. A further two items that were included in this category formed the following sub-category 'Dislike of Greek accent of English.' These two items were as follows: *'I don't think it sounds nice to have a Greek accent when speaking in English'* and *'because I don't like the accent of my country (Greece) in English.'* These two items can be interpreted as a rejection of the Greek accent of English and an endorsement of a native-like accent. Even if the two learners who provided these two answers do not 'love' the sound of English, we can assume that they prefer a native-like accent of English over a Greek accent of English.

Box 4.69
Examples

Item 1: *'Because I like the English language very much so I want to speak English very well.'*

Item 2: *'Because I like the sound of the language and I would like to speak like that too.'*

Category 5: Greater acceptance by NSs; 'fitting in/feeling more comfortable'. A few learners expressed the desire to acquire NLP in order to feel more 'comfortable' and more accepted by NSs. This was especially the case for those learners who expressed the wish to move to an English-speaking country for work or studies. It is reasonable to assume that the desire to acquire NLP in combination with the intention to live in an English-speaking country is related to the issue of 'fitting in' as addressed by this category.

Box 4.70
Examples

Item 1: *'I would feel more comfortable if others wouldn't be able to tell that I am not a native speaker.'*

Item 2: *'Because in that way you are not exposed.'*

Item 3: *'Because I will feel better too, knowing that I don't differ from them.'*

Item 4: *'I want to study and live in England.'*

Category 6: Miscellaneous. This category included those responses that did not fit in any of the previous categories. For example, the first item in Box 4.71 is related to career goals, the second item refers to a better understanding of the way of thinking of a British person and the last item does not offer any explanation as to why the particular learner opted for NLP.

Box 4.71
Examples

> Item 1: *'It is essential for me to sound like a native speaker of English as I intend to become an English language teacher.'*
> Item 2: *'Only if you do that can you understand the culture and philosophy/ way of thinking of a British person.'*
> Item 3: *'I think it is very important to do so.'*

As in the case of the teachers, all items could be placed in only one of those six categories and in this sense the categories are discrete. However, there were five items that each had to be included in two categories (for more information, see Appendix 4.4).

Learners who chose *AII*

Table 4.72 displays the categories that emerged in terms of the learners' responses for their choice of AII.

Table 4.72
Percentages of learners' answers (number of items) in each category as a proportion of total learners' answers (items) for their choice of *AII*

Categories	% of learners' answers (items)[158]
1. Emphasis on successful communication	57.6 % (109 items)
2. Issues of origin/identity/character; Greek identity – national pride.	16.4 % (31 items)
3. Mastery of NLP is not a feasible target	12.1 % (23 items)
4. Limited goals (e.g. passing exams)	3.7 % (7 items)
5.Miscellaneous	10% (19 items)

Category 1: Emphasis on successful/effective/comprehensible communication.

All learners' responses that placed great emphasis on issues of intelligibility, comprehension and communication were included in this category. This category

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[158] The reason we have a total of 189 items instead of 184 items (184 learners provide a reason for their answer) is because five items had to be placed in two categories and were thus counted twice.

attracted the largest proportion of learners' responses (57.6%) compared to all the other categories (Table 4.72). The main message conveyed through those learners' responses is as follows: what matters the most is for learners to be understood when conversing with others so that successful communication can be achieved. Also, an interesting point made by a few learners was that, unless you are an EFL teacher, there is no need to master NLP (e.g. item 3, Box 4.73).

Box 4.73
Examples

Item 1: *'Communication is what is important and not who you sound like.'*

Item 2: *'As long as I am intelligible to everyone'.*

Item 3: *'Because I use English just to communicate and not to teach it.'*

Category 2: Issues of origin/identity/character; Greek identity – national pride.

This category attracted 16.4% of the learners' responses and thus, became the second largest category (Table 4.72).The learners whose responses were allocated to this category seem to identify highly with their national identity; they express a high degree of national pride. All the items of this category referred to either a Greek accent of English or a Greek identity with the exception of three items which, albeit addressing the relationship between accent and sociolinguistic identity, formed a sub-category entitled 'dislike of sounding like an English speaker', for example: *'I don't want to sound like somebody who has English as a first language'.*

Box 4.74
Examples

Item 1: *'Because I am Greek and I want to sound Greek.*

Item 2: *'Because I want to show that I am Greek.'*

Item 3: *'I want to keep my Greek accent.'*

Category 3: The mastery of NLP is not a feasible target. Approximately one out of ten learners (12.1%, Table 4.72) who opted for AII seems to have done so on the grounds that he/she did not consider NLP to be a feasible target. The mastery of NLP is perceived as extremely difficult and, thus, they expressed contentment with AII.

Box 4.75
Examples

> Item 1: *'I don't think I can achieve such a high level in pronunciation so I'll settle for mutual understanding when conversing with others'.*
> Item 2: *'I think it is impossible to reach the level of native speakers.'*

Category 4: Limited goals (e.g. passing exams). This category contains a range of items that suggested unwillingness on the part of a few learners to master NLP due to limited goals. This category attracted 3.7% of the learners' responses (Table 4.72).

Box 4.76
Examples

> Item 1: *'Because I learn English to sit the FCE exam & I just want to be able to communicate with others.''*
> Item 2: *'Because I will only use English at work.'*

Category 5: Miscellaneous. This category included those responses that did not fit any of the previous categories. 10% of the learners' responses were found to belong to this category (Table 4.72)

Box 4.77
Examples

> Item 1: *'I believe this is very good because after this level, if you try hard you may reach the other level.'*
> Example 2: *'It is fake to pretend to be an English man/ English woman.'*

See Appendix 4.4 for those items that fitted two categories.

4.4.3.2 Supplementary Categorisation for Teachers' & Learners' Answers

Despite the utility and functionality of the discrete categorisation of the teachers' and learners' items (Section 4.4.3.1), the need arose to go beyond the discrete categorisation of items. During the process of matching each item to the appropriate category it emerged that there were quite a few items that referred to 'perfect English'. These items were spread out across more than one of the existing categories and, thus, it was difficult to record the extent to which they appeared across the data. Since the categories as currently set out would obscure such findings, it was decided to supplement the main categorisation (where everything was categorised discretely) with additional thematic groupings that would not be discrete and would allow the data to tell its full story. The idea to create a thematic grouping of items that could not form a further category (as all the items placed into it would have already been allocated to one of the categories described in Section 4.4.3.1) was based on a mode of data processing employed by Garrett et al (2005) and Garrett (2009). (See Appendix 4.5 for more information on this.)

Thus, a thematic grouping labelled 'perfect/correct English' was created. This group gathered together all those items that referred to a native-like accent as 'perfect' or 'correct'. For example, according to Table 4.78, there were 11 mentions of 'perfect/correct' English among those learners who opted for NLP.

Table 4.78
Mentions of 'perfect/ correct English' as a proportion of total responses

Participants (numbers of those who did provide a reason for their choice)	Mentions of 'perfect/ correct English'
Teachers – native-like pronunciation (1)	1/ 1 (100%)
Teachers – acc. int. intelligibility (34)	4 / 34 (11.7%)
Learners – native-like pronunciation (95)	11/ 95 (11.5%)
Learners – acc. int. intelligibility (184)	7/ 184 (3.8%)

It is striking that among those respondents who rejected *NLP* and opted for *AII* there were respondents who referred to NLP as 'perfect accent' or 'perfect speech' or 'perfect English' (Table 4.78). See Box 4.79 for examples from the teachers' and learners' data on 'perfect/ correct English' (for further examples, see Appendix 4.5).

Box 4.79
Examples for 'perfect/correct English' (Teachers & Learners)

Teachers

Item 1: *'It is difficult to speak **perfect English** in non-speaking English country.'*

Learners

Item 1: *'I would like to speak **perfect English** with a **perfect accent**.'*

Item 2: *'I don't want to have a **perfect accent**; I just want to be understood by everyone.*

The issue of how learners want to feel or see themselves ('self-regard') and how they want others to see them ('regard by others') was noted in the learners' answers of Category 3 'sense of achievement/ indication of high level of competence in English' (Section 4.4.3.1). 'Affective items' were also found in other categories of learners' responses regarding NLP and, also, in categories of learners' responses regarding AII. Thus, it was decided to supplement the main categorisation with one more thematic grouping labelled 'self-regard/regard by others'. Overall, there were 28 affective items among those learners who chose NLP and 43 among those learners who chose AII (Table 4.80).

Table 4.80
Affective items as a proportion of total learners' responses

Participants (numbers of those who did provide a reason for their choice)	Affective items
Learners – native-like pronunciation (95)	28/ 95 (29.4%)
Learners – acc. int. intelligibility (184)	44/ 184 (23.9%)

It is striking that nearly one out of three learners who opted for NLP as well as nearly one out of four learners who opted for AII were concerned with how they want to feel themselves and/or how they want others to see them. Box 4.81 includes examples of such instances (and Appendix 4.5 includes further examples).

Box 4.81
Examples for affective items (Learners)

> *NLP*
> Item 1: *'So I can show off to others!'*
> Item 2: *'This will make me feel more intelligent.'*
>
>
> *AII*
> Item 3: *'I don't want others to think I am an English man but just understand what I say.'*
> Item 4: *'I want people to know I am Greek.'*

Overall, there is a great sense of 'self' in the items that belong to this grouping. For example, the learners want to feel more intelligent or they want people to be impressed. They are very much concerned with how they will be regarded by others and clarify how they want others to see them or, even, how they do not want others to see them. Thus, it seems that for some learners their choice of pronunciation goal depended on how they want to feel themselves or how they want others to see them. The reader may wonder the extent to which the teachers seemed to be in touch with those matters in their responses. Only those teachers whose responses were included in category 3 'issues of origin/identity/character' (Section 4.4.3.1) seem to have considered the issue of 'self-regard/regard by others'. This implies that nine out of ten teachers have not based their decision to opt for AII on how they think the learners want to feel about themselves or how they want to be regarded by others. One teacher even wrote that *'language is a means of communicating not a reason to show off'*.

Finally, teachers' and learners' responses were categorised once again in terms of 'talking in personal terms' and 'making generalisations'. It was found that more than half of the teachers (55.5%) made generalisations in their responses whereas less than one third of the learners (30.4%) did so. The majority of the learners spoke in personal terms. Table 4.82 includes examples of both categories taken from the teachers' data and Table 4.83 includes examples of both categories taken from the learners' data. (See Appendix 4.5 for further examples).

Box 4.82
Examples for 'personal terms' & 'making generalisations' (Teachers)

'personal terms' (referring to the learners directly)

'Because it's difficult for the majority of them to speak exactly like a native speaker.'

'making generalisations'

'Understanding/ communicating effectively is the main goal.'

Box 4.83
Examples for 'personal terms' & 'making generalisations' (Learners)

'personal terms'

'I want to pronounce English with a Greek accent.'

'making generalisations'

'If one wants to speak a foreign language they must speak it correctly.'

4.4.4 Teachers' Questionnaires: Results for RQ2b

The independent t-test was used to investigate any significant differences in teachers' responses on the questionnaire items as reproduced in Box 4.43 (Section 4.4.1), according to all the different independent variables. The chi-square test was undertaken to uncover any significant relationships in teachers' responses to the questionnaire items reproduced in Boxes 4.38 & 4.46 (Section 4.4.1), according to all the different independent variables. No statistically significant differences existed in the responses on any of the relevant questionnaire items according to gender, English language qualifications, teaching level, L1, course in English phonetics and pronunciation training.

4.4.5 Learners' Questionnaires: Results for RQ2b

The independent t-test was used to investigate any significant differences in response on the learners' questionnaire items that corresponded to the teachers' questionnaire items (as reproduced in Box 4.43, Section 4.4.1), according to all the different independent variables. The chi-square test was undertaken to uncover any significant relationships in learners' responses to those items that corresponded to the teachers' questionnaire items (as reproduced in Boxes 4.38 & 4.46, Section 4.4.1), according to all the different independent variables. The following emerged:

Gender

A marginally statistically non-significant relationship was revealed between the gender of the learners and their choice between *native-like pronunciation (NLP)* and *accented international intelligibility (AII)*, χ^2 (1, 327) = 4,944, p = 0.026 (adjusted alpha = 0.016). There was a greater preference among females for *NLP* than males (Bar Chart 4.84).

A statistically significant difference was found between male and female learners' in terms of 'ideal pronunciation goal' ('Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets 2a'). Females (M = 1.65, S.D = 0.800) would like their accent to come 'closer' to a *native-like model* compared to males (M = 2.01, S.D = 0.818), t (326) = 3.856, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.016 here) (Means Plot 4.85).

Bar chart 4.84
Males' versus females' choice between NLP & AII
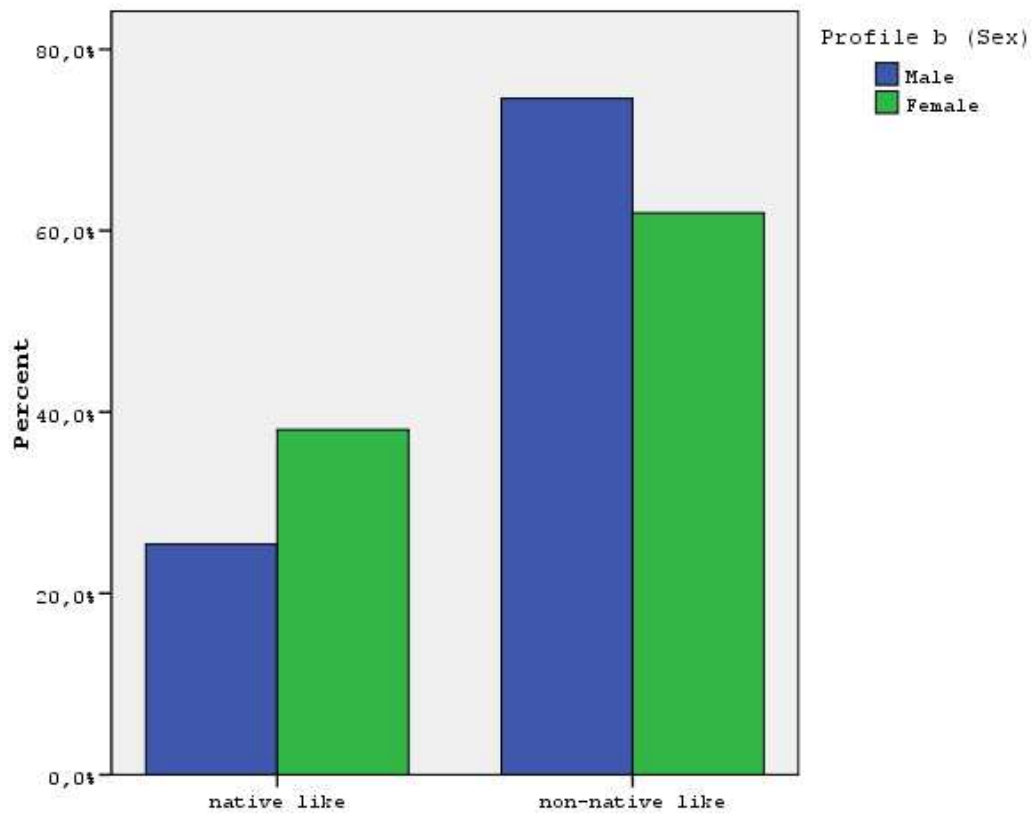
Means plot 4.85
Males' versus females' scores for ideal pronunciation goal
('Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets 2a')
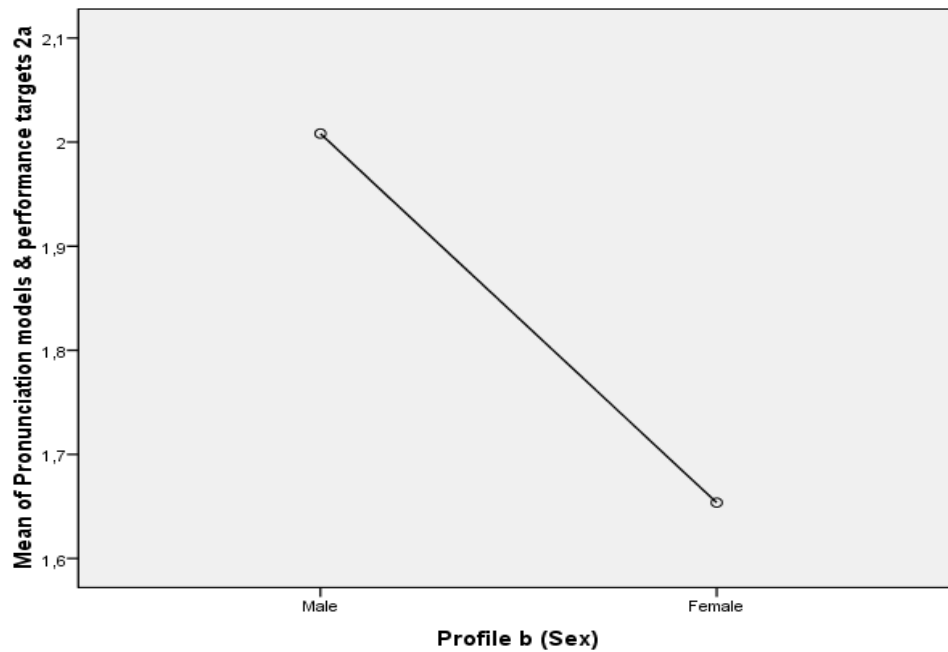
No statistically significant differences emerged between male and female learners' answers for any of the remaining questionnaire items.

Level of English

A marginally statistically non-significant relationship was found between the learners' level of English and choice between *NLP* and *AII*, χ^2 (1, 327) = 4,639, *p* = 0.031 (adjusted alpha = 0.016). There was a greater preference among Lower+ learners for *NLP* than –Lower learners (Bar Chart 4.86). No other statistically significant differences or relationships emerged in learners' answers according to this independent variable.

Bar chart 4.86
-Lower versus Lower+ learners' choice between NLP & AII 'Pronunciation Models & Performance Targets 3a'
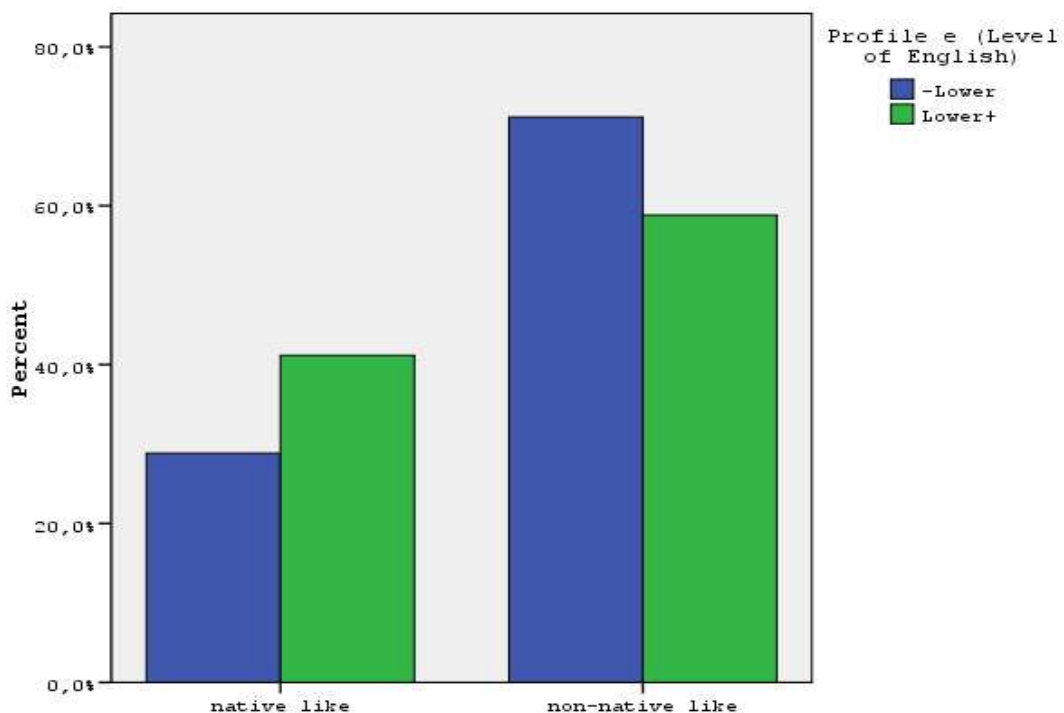
L1: No statistically significant differences existed in the responses on any of the relevant questionnaire items according to the learners' L1.

4.4.6 Re-cap of Main Findings for RQ2

Pronunciation models

The vast majority of the teachers (92%) and the vast majority of the learners (96%) agreed on the selection of a *Standard British accent* or a *Standard American accent* or *both* as pronunciation models.

Pronunciation targets (quantitative data)

➤ **Ideally, teachers and learners would like the learners' pronunciation to come 'very close' to a *native-like model*. In practice, they expect that it will only come 'quite close'. Nevertheless, learners' wishes and expectations were found to be higher than the teachers'. Also, female learners would like their accent to come 'closer' to a native-like model than male learners.**

➤ **When required to choose between *native-like pronunciation (NLP)* and *accented international intelligibility (AII),* virtually all teachers and 67% of learners opted for AII as the most important pronunciation goal. Nevertheless, 33% of learners opted for *NLP*. Overall, there was a greater tendency among learners to opt for NLP than teachers.**

Pronunciation targets (qualitative data)

➤ **The teachers' main reasons for their choice of *AII* comprised the following: a) their considerations in terms of an appropriate communicative goal; emphasis on successful communication (54%), b) realistic expectations in terms of target performance; mastery of a native-like accent is not a feasible target (31%) and, c) issues of origin, identity**

and character; the desire for their learners to retain a token of speaker's identity (11%).

➢ The learners' main reasons for their choice of *AII* comprised the following: a) their considerations in terms of an appropriate communicative goal; emphasis is on successful communication (58%), b) realistic expectations in terms of target performance; mastery of a native-like accent is not a feasible target (12%), c) issues of origin, identity and character; the desire to retain a token of speaker's identity in particular their Greek identity (16 %), d) limited goals (e.g. passing exams) (4%).

➢ The learners' reasons for their choice of *NLP* comprised the following: a) notions of correctness/ accuracy; 'this is the appropriate/ right thing to do' (25%), b) effective communication is more likely to be achieved (22%), c) sense of achievement/ indication of high level of competence in English (17%), d) love for the English language & its pronunciation (16%) and, e) greater acceptance by native speakers; fitting in/feeling more comfortable (9%).

4.5 Results for Research Question 3 (RQ3)

Research Question 3

3a) What techniques do the teachers employ for the teaching of pronunciation? And, how often is each pronunciation teaching technique employed?

3b) Are there statistically significant differences in the use of pronunciation teaching techniques amongst respondents according to different independent variables?

First, the results from the teachers' questionnaires that relate to RQ3a are presented. For the convenience of the reader, the questionnaire items that relate to RQ3a are reproduced in a box within the main text of this section. Finally, any statistically significant differences in teachers' responses, according to the different independent variables of this study, are revealed.

4.5.1 Teachers' Questionnaires: Results for RQ3a

Pronunciation Teaching Techniques

Box 4.87
Relevant questionnaire question

PRONUNCIATION TEACHING	1	2	3	4	5
Please tell us <u>how often</u> you use/ do any of the following as part of the English language lesson. *Please tick one box for each item using the scale 1-5 (1= always; 5= never)*					
a. pronunciation practice just before/ as part of/ after 'speaking' activities					
b. listening to authentic spoken English = real (tape or video recorded) conversations among speakers instead of scripted ones (e.g. British/ American radio or TV)					
c. modern computer technology (pronunciation software programs)					
d. pronunciation practice in the language laboratory					
e. ear-training (discrimination) exercises between similar-sounding phonemes etc.					
f. production/ articulation exercises (i.e. 'reading aloud' activities, drilling & imitation exercises)					
g. individual responses from each learner in class					
h. choral responses from all learners in class together					
i. teaching the symbols of the international phonetic alphabet to the students					
j. teaching the phonological rules of English (i.e. stress placement rules, spelling to sound rules) to the students					

Table 4.88 shows the results for the question(s) in Box 4.87. The teachers claimed to 'sometimes' engage in *pronunciation practice just before/as part of/after 'speaking' activities* and to 'often' expose their learners to *authentic spoken English. Pronunciation software programs* are 'rarely/never' used and *practise in the language laboratory* takes place 'rarely'. *Ear-training exercises* are 'sometimes/ rarely' used and *production/ articulation exercises* are 'often' used. *Individual responses from each learner in class* are 'often' sought whereas *choral responses from all learners in*

class are 'sometimes' sought. *IPA symbols* are 'rarely' taught and *phonological rules*

are 'sometimes' taught.

Table 4.89
Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Practice just before/ as part of/ after 'Speaking Activities' (Pronunciation teaching a)	47	1	5	2.89	1.238
Listening to authentic spoken English (Pronunciation teaching b)	47	1	5	2.04	1.250
Modern computer technology (Pronunciation teaching c)	46	1	5	4.30	1.072
Practice in the language laboratory (Pronunciation teaching d)	43	1	5	4.14	1.037
Ear-training exercises (Pronunciation teaching e)	47	1	5	3.51	1.140
Production exercises (Pronunciation teaching f)	46	1	5	1.87	.957
Individual responses (Pronunciation teaching g)	47	1	5	1.60	.901
Choral responses (Pronunciation teaching h)	46	1	5	2.78	1.444
Teaching the IPA (Pronunciation teaching i)	47	1	5	3.72	1.425
Teaching phonological rules (Pronunciation teaching j)	47	1	5	3.26	1.170

Overall, the teachers claimed to employ virtually all the pronunciation teaching techniques included in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, there was a considerable range in terms of 'frequency of use'. 'Individual responses', 'production exercises' and 'listening to authentic spoken English' received ratings on the top side of the scale, 'choral responses', 'practice just before/as part of/after speaking activities' and 'teaching phonological rules' received ratings at the mid-point of the scale, and 'ear-training exercises', 'teaching the IPA', 'practice in the language laboratory' and 'modern computer technology' received ratings on the bottom side of the scale.

Figure 4.90 illustrates how often the teachers claimed to use the aforementioned pronunciation techniques. The most popular (in terms of frequency of use) seems to be 'g'= *seeking individual responses from each learner in class* and the least popular seems to be 'c' = *using pronunciation software programs*.

Figure 4.90
Pronunciation teaching techniques (Teachers' scores)
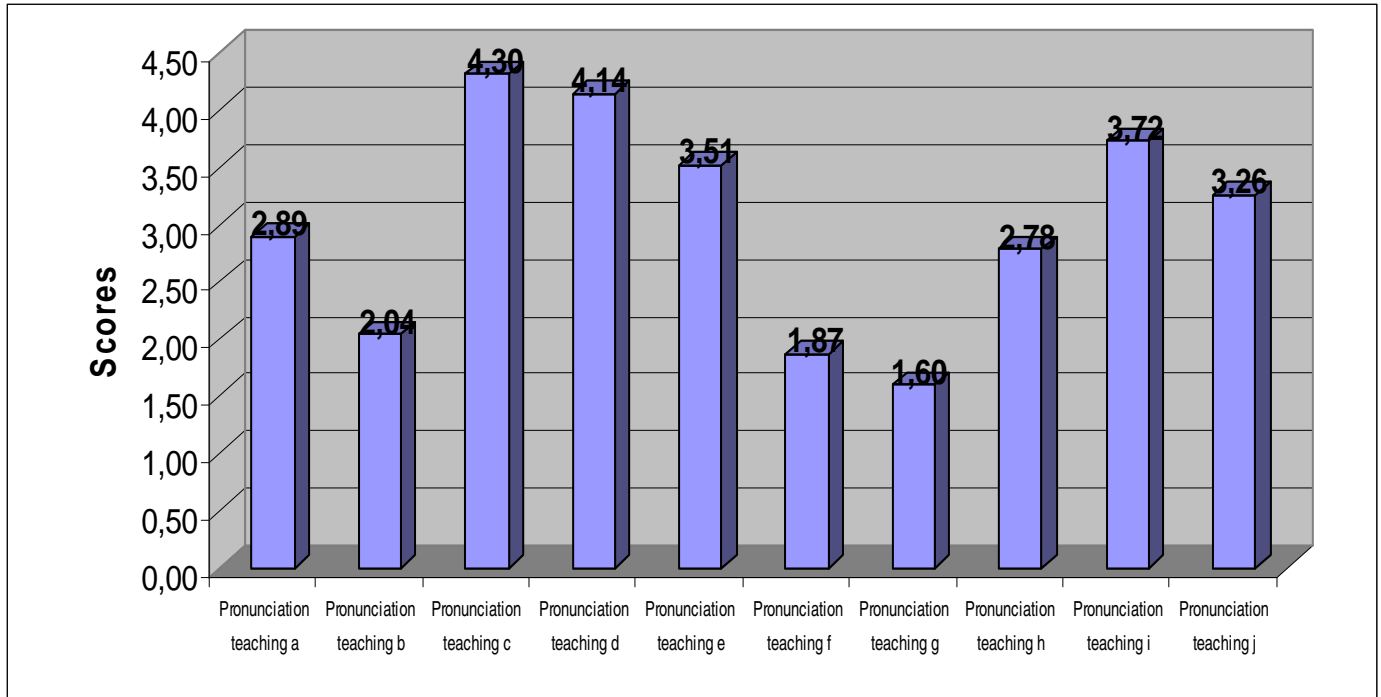
If we were to place in order of 'most frequently employed' and, also, allocate into groups all those pronunciation teaching techniques (starting from the 'most frequently employed' and ending with the 'least frequently employed'), the results would be as follows: see Box 4.92.

Box 4.92
Pronunciation teaching techniques (rankings & grouping in terms of 'frequency of use')

1st place:
g, f, b

2nd place:
h, a, j

3rd place:
e, i, d, c

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RQ3a was aimed at revealing which pronunciation teaching techniques are employed by the teachers and how often each technique is used; it was not so much aimed at making direct comparisons among all techniques. Nevertheless, the *paired samples t-test* was conducted in order to determine if the differences in the scores among all those techniques were statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 4.93 and we can see that nearly all the t-test results (91% = 41 out of the 45 results) confirm the ranking and grouping of pronunciation teaching techniques as presented in Box 4.92. For example, there was a statistically significant difference between teachers' scores for 'a' and 'b' in terms of teachers' frequency of use, t (46) = 3.275, p = 0.002 ($p < 0.005$)[159]. The teachers claimed to use 'b' (M = 2.04, S.D = 1.250) more often than 'a' (M = 2.89, S.D = 1.238) and, thus, it makes sense for these two techniques to be allocated to different groups and, also, for 'b' to belong to the group that holds the 1st place and for 'a' to belong to the group that holds the 2nd place (see Box 4.92). Nevertheless, the following t-test results did not confirm the grouping and ranking of the pronunciation teaching techniques as displayed in Box 4.92:

- A marginally statistically non-significant difference was found between teachers' scores for 'b' and 'h' in terms of teachers' frequency of use, t (45) = 2.852, p = 0.007 (adjusted alpha = 0.005). The teachers claimed to use 'b' (M = 2.04, S.D = 1.250) more often than 'h' (M = 2.78, S.D = 1.444). Since the distance in the scores between 'b' and 'h' is marginally statistically non-significant, these two techniques do not necessarily belong to different groups (as displayed in Box 4.92).

- A statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for 'c' and 'e' in terms of teachers' frequency of use, t (45) = 3.642, p = 0.001 (p

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[159] The adjusted alpha is set at 0.005 (=0.05/9) since each pronunciation teaching technique is used in nine comparisons.

< 0.005). The teachers claimed to use 'e' (M = 3.51, S.D = 1.140) more often than 'c' (M = 4.30, S.D = 1.072). Since the distance in the scores between 'c' and 'e' is statistically significant, these two techniques do not necessarily belong to the same group (as displayed in Box 4.92).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for 'e' and 'pronunciation teaching technique j' in terms of teachers' frequency of use, $t(46) = 1.288$, $p = 0.204$ ($p > 0.005$). Since the distance in the scores between 'e' and 'j' is not statistically significant, these two pronunciation teaching techniques do not need to belong to different groups (as displayed in Box 4.92).

- No statistically significant difference was found between teachers' scores for 'i' and 'j' in terms of teachers' frequency of use, $t(46) = 2.298$, $p = 0.026$ ($p > 0.005$). Since the distance in the scores between 'i' and 'j' is not statistically significant, these two pronunciation teaching techniques do not need to belong to different groups (as displayed in Box 4.92).

Table 4.93
T-test results for Q3a

Paired Samples Test: Significant differences are highlighted

| | | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching b	.851	1.781	.260	.328	1.374	3.275	46	.002
Pair 2	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching c	-1.391	1.612	.238	-1.870	-.913	-5.853	45	.000
Pair 3	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching d	-1.140	1.390	.212	-1.567	-.712	-5.375	42	.000
Pair 4	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching e	-.617	1.438	.210	-1.039	-.195	-2.942	46	.005
Pair 5	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching f	1.022	1.308	.193	.633	1.410	5.298	45	.000
Pair 6	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching g	1.298	1.428	.208	.879	1.717	6.230	46	.000
Pair 7	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching h	.109	1.622	.239	-.373	.591	.454	45	.652
Pair 8	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching i	-.830	1.785	.260	-1.354	-.306	-3.186	46	.003
Pair 9	Pronunciation teaching a - Pronunciation teaching j	-.362	1.699	.248	-.861	.137	-1.459	46	.151
Pair 10	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching c	-2.239	1.493	.220	-2.683	-1.796	-10.169	45	.000
Pair 11	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching d	-2.070	1.564	.239	-2.551	-1.588	-8.676	42	.000
Pair 12	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching e	-1.468	1.544	.225	-1.922	-1.015	-6.517	46	.000
Pair 13	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching f	.174	1.554	.229	-.287	.635	.759	45	.452
Pair 14	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching g	.447	1.396	.204	.037	.857	2.195	46	.033
Pair 15	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching h	-.783	1.861	.274	-1.335	-.230	-2.852	45	.007

Pair									
Pair 16	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching i	-1.681	1.866	.272	-2.229	-1.133	-6.175	46	.000
Pair 17	Pronunciation teaching b - Pronunciation teaching j	-1.213	1.628	.237	-1.691	-.735	-5.108	46	.000
Pair 18	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching d	.186	1.277	.195	-.207	.579	.955	42	.345
Pair 19	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching e	.761	1.417	.209	.340	1.182	3.642	45	.001
Pair 20	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching f	2.422	1.485	.221	1.976	2.868	10.945	44	.000
Pair 21	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching g	2.696	1.489	.220	2.254	3.138	12.281	45	.000
Pair 22	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching h	1.489	1.714	.255	.974	2.004	5.828	44	.000
Pair 23	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching i	.543	1.810	.267	.006	1.081	2.037	45	.048
Pair 24	Pronunciation teaching c - Pronunciation teaching j	1.043	1.577	.233	.575	1.512	4.488	45	.000
Pair 25	Pronunciation teaching d - Pronunciation teaching e	.581	1.401	.214	.150	1.013	2.721	42	.009
Pair 26	Pronunciation teaching d - Pronunciation teaching f	2.238	1.445	.223	1.788	2.688	10.037	41	.000
Pair 27	Pronunciation teaching d - Pronunciation teaching g	2.488	1.369	.209	2.067	2.910	11.917	42	.000
Pair 28	Pronunciation teaching d - Pronunciation teaching h	1.357	1.751	.270	.812	1.903	5.024	41	.000
Pair 29	Pronunciation teaching d - Pronunciation teaching i	.419	1.665	.254	-.094	.931	1.648	42	.107
Pair 30	Pronunciation teaching d - Pronunciation teaching j	.860	1.441	.220	.417	1.304	3.917	42	.000
Pair 31	Pronunciation teaching e - Pronunciation teaching f	1.630	1.162	.171	1.285	1.975	9.520	45	.000
Pair 32	Pronunciation teaching e - Pronunciation teaching g	1.915	1.427	.208	1.496	2.334	9.200	46	.000
Pair 33	Pronunciation teaching e - Pronunciation teaching h	.717	1.515	.223	.267	1.167	3.211	45	.002
Pair 34	Pronunciation teaching e - Pronunciation teaching i	-.213	1.731	.253	-.721	.296	-.843	46	.404

Pair 35	Pronunciation teaching e - Pronunciation teaching j	.255	1.359	.198	-.144	.654	1.288	46	.204
Pair 36	Pronunciation teaching f - Pronunciation teaching g	.283	1.148	.169	-.058	.624	1.669	45	.102
Pair 37	Pronunciation teaching f - Pronunciation teaching h	-.933	1.452	.216	-1.370	-.497	-4.311	44	.000
Pair 38	Pronunciation teaching f - Pronunciation teaching i	-1.848	1.699	.251	-2.352	-1.343	-7.375	45	.000
Pair 39	Pronunciation teaching f - Pronunciation teaching j	-1.370	1.388	.205	-1.782	-.957	-6.691	45	.000
Pair 40	Pronunciation teaching g - Pronunciation teaching h	-1.196	1.439	.212	-1.623	-.768	-5.634	45	.000
Pair 41	Pronunciation teaching g - Pronunciation teaching i	-2.128	1.610	.235	-2.600	-1.655	-9.060	46	.000
Pair 42	Pronunciation teaching g - Pronunciation teaching j	-1.660	1.536	.224	-2.111	-1.209	-7.406	46	.000
Pair 43	Pronunciation teaching h - Pronunciation teaching i	-.978	1.795	.265	-1.511	-.445	-3.696	45	.001
Pair 44	Pronunciation teaching h - Pronunciation teaching j	-.457	1.486	.219	-.898	-.015	-2.083	45	.043
Pair 45	Pronunciation teaching i - Pronunciation teaching j	.468	1.396	.204	.058	.878	2.298	46	.026

According to the t-test findings, the most popular pronunciation teaching technique is 'g'= *individual responses from each learner in class* **and the least popular one is 'c' =** *pronunciation software programs*.

4.5.2 Teachers' Questionnaires: RQ3b

The independent t-test was carried out to test for any significant differences in the responses of teachers on any of the relevant questionnaire items (as reproduced in Box 4.88, Section 4.5.1), according to the different independent variables of this study. No statistically significant differences were found among teachers' responses on any of the relevant questionnaire items according to gender, English language qualifications, teaching level, L1, course in English phonetics and pronunciation training.

4.5.3 Re-cap of Main Findings for RQ3

Pronunciation teaching techniques

There was a considerable range in terms of 'frequency of use' of the pronunciation teaching techniques included in the questionnaire. The teachers claimed to 'often' employ the following methods: *individual responses from each learner in class*, *production/articulation exercises* **and** *listening to authentic spoken English*. **They claimed to 'sometimes' use the following methods:** *choral responses from all learners in class together*, *pronunciation practice before/as part of/after 'speaking activities'* **and** *teaching the phonological rules of English*. **Finally, they claimed to 'rarely' use** *ear-training (discrimination) exercises between similar sounding phonemes*, *the IPA symbols*, *the language laboratory* **and** *pronunciation software programs*.

4.6 Additional Findings

This section present the results from the 'Contexts of Use of English' section of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires where respondents were asked to identify the likely situations for the learners' use of English in the future. As part of the next chapter of this thesis, we will consider if the pronunciation models and performance targets, as chosen by the teachers and learners of this study, are appropriate in terms of the learners' future contexts of use of English.

The questions included in 'Language Areas' section[160] of the questionnaires are not directly related to the RQs of this study; nevertheless, interested readers can find the results of those questions in Appendix 4.6. Here I will only mention one of the results that emerged from the analysis of the 'Language Areas' questionnaire items as it may help explain the learners' higher ambitions than the teachers' policies in the area of pronunciation performance targets (see next chapter). The independent t-test was used to uncover if there was a statistically significant difference in the responses between learners and teachers for the 'Language Areas 2' question (the question is reproduced in Appendix 4.6). A statistically significant difference was found between learners' scores (M = 3.63, S.D = 1.129) and teachers' scores (M = 2.96, S.D = 1.062) for *pronunciation* ('Language Areas 2c') in terms of 'perceived difficulty', t (371) = 3.821, $p < 0.001$ (alpha is set at 0.05 here). The teachers regarded *pronunciation* as a more difficult language area for the learners to master than the learners do (Box plot 4.94).

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[160] As the reader may recall those questions were easy-to-answer questions and would thus create a pleasant first impression for the participants and encourage them to go on with the task of completing the questionnaire. (Please refer back to Section 3.2, Chapter 3 for more information on this).

Box Plot 4.94
Learners' versus teachers' scores for pronunciation in terms of 'perceived difficulty' ('Language Areas 2c')
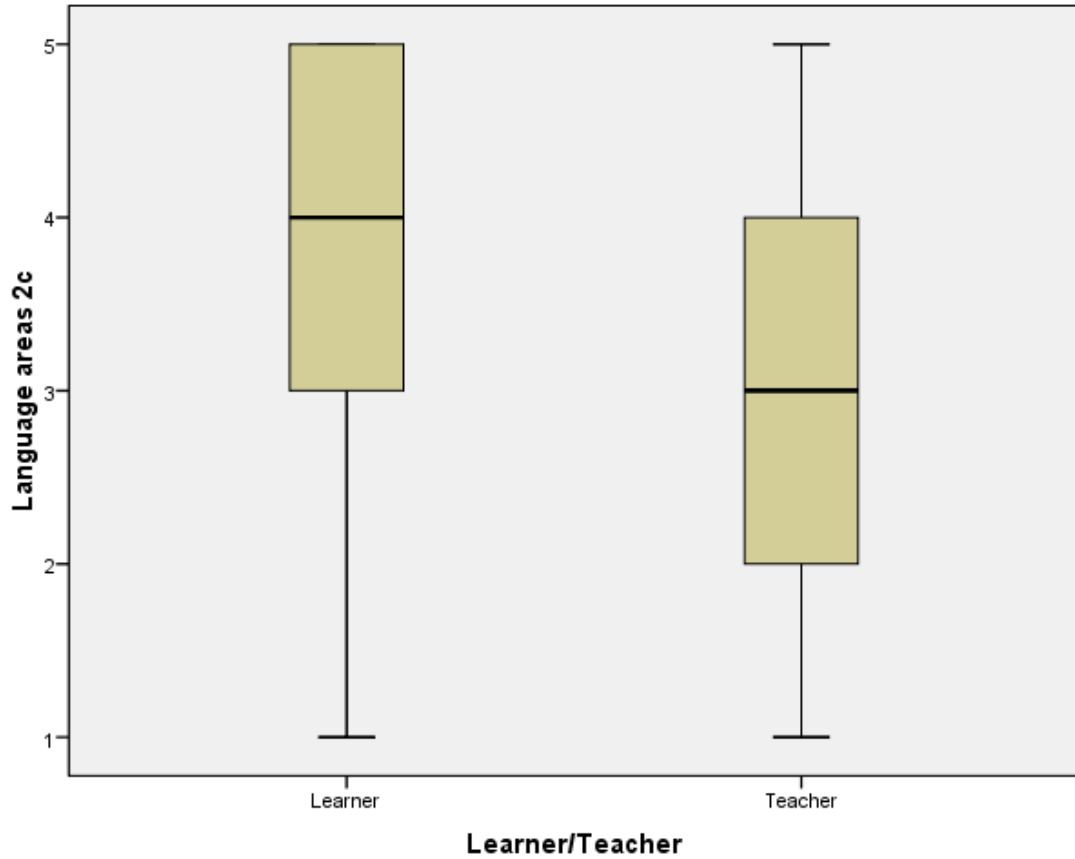
4.6.1 Contexts of Use of English

Box 4.95
Relevant questionnaire question (Teacher version)

CONTEXTS OF USE OF ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In which situations, in your opinion, are your students more likely to use their knowledge of English in the future (after they leave the frontistirio)?

Please tick all those that apply.

a.   when travelling for leisure or work in different countries around the world

b.   for a better chance of employment & financial reward in the job market in Greece and, generally, at work

c.   for studies at a university in an English-speaking country

d.   use of internet & computers

e.   other *(please specify)*: ………………..

Table 4.96 shows the results for the question in Box 4.95

Table 4.95
Teachers

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	b. Work	41	87.2%
	d. Computers	36	76.5%
	c. Studies	30	63.8%
	a. Travel	29	61.7%
	e. Other	1	2.1%

Table 4.95 shows that 'context b' (= work) was ticked by the largest percentage of teachers (87.2%). It was closely followed by 'context d' (= computers) which was ticked by 76.5% of the teachers, 'context c' (= studies) ticked by 63.8% of the teachers and, finally, 'context a' (= travel) ticked by 61.7% of the teachers. Since only 1 out of the 47 teachers (2%) ticked 'context e' (= other)[161], we can confirm that 'context a', 'context b', 'context c' and 'context d' (see Box 4.95) as specified in the

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[161] That teacher put down 'life'.

questionnaire, covered the learners' reasons and purposes for learning English so far as the teachers were able to specify. Here I have reported how many times each specified context was ticked by the teachers; for an alternative way of presenting the results of this question, interested readers can see Appendix 4.7.

Table 4.96 shows the results for the corresponding question in the learners' questionnaire.

Table 4.96
Learners

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	a. Travel	270	82.5%
	b. Work	230	70.3%
	d. Computers	194	63.8%
	c. Studies	154	47%
	Other	26	7.9%

Table 4.96 shows that 'context a' (= travel) was ticked by the largest percentage of learners (82.5%). It was followed by 'context b' (= work) which was ticked by 70.3% of the learners, 'context d' (= computers) which was ticked by 61.7% of the learners and, finally, 'context c' which was ticked by 47% of the learners. For an alternative way of presenting those results, interested readers can see Appendix 4.7.

Learners versus Teachers (interested readers can see Appendix 4.7 for more details)

We can see that while for the learners 'travel' features first, for the teachers it comes last. Also, 'work' is first on the teachers' list and second on the learners' list. Of course, such differences could be attributed to the great age difference between teachers and learners (the learners were teenagers and the teachers were adults) which may also lead them to have different priorities in life.

4.7 Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) Results

"Reliability is the ability of the questionnaire to consistently measure the topic under study at different times and across different populations" (Hinton et al, 2005: 356). In Chapter 3 'Research Methodology' of this thesis, we examined different ways of increasing the reliability of the questionnaire used in this study. The reliability of the questionnaire was also measured using Cronbach's Alpha and, here, I will present the results of this procedure. Cronbach's Alpha is "the most popular method of testing reliability" (Hinton et al, 2005: 356) and the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha is based on the number of items (e.g. the number of questions on a questionnaire) and the average inter-item correlation. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of how well each individual item in a scale correlates with the sum of the remaining items; it measures consistency among individual items in a scale[162]. The value of Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0 for a completely unreliable test to 1 for a completely reliable test (Hinton et al, 2005: 357).

The 'Reliability' procedure of SPSS provided the Cronbach Alpha for each scale of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires of this study. The Cronbach's Alpha for the teachers' questionnaire was 0.759 and the Cronbach's Alpha for the learners' questionnaire was 0.625. Both Alpha figures are regarded as acceptable. 0.70 to 0.90 shows high reliability and 0.50 to 0.70 shows moderate reliability whereas a figure below this generally indicates a scale of low reliability (Hinton et al, 2005: 363-364). There is much debate among researchers and statisticians as to what value of Cronbach's Alpha is needed for a questionnaire to be regarded as reliable; some suggest 0.7 whereas others recommend 0.8 (Hinton et al, 2005: 357). The

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[162] http://www.childrensmercy.org/stats/weblog2004/CronbachAlpha.asp accessed on 09.10.2008.

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widely-accepted social science cut-off is that alpha should be .70 or higher but some use .75 or .80 while others are as lenient as .60[163]. However, "because of the complexity of the second language acquisition process[164]… somewhat lower Cronbach Alpha coefficients are to be expected" (Dornyei, 2007: 207). Nevertheless, "if the Cronbach Alpha of a scale does not reach 0.60, this should sound warning bells" (Dornyei, 2007: 207). The general consensus seems to be that a value as low as 0.6 is acceptable for an exploratory study (see Narashimhan and Jayaram, 1998 and Rahman, 2001).

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[163] http://www.childrensmercy.org/stats/weblog2004/CronbachAlpha.asp accessed on 09.10.2008.

[164] "L2 researchers typically want to measure many different areas in one questionnaire, and therefore cannot use very long scales (or the completion of the questionnaire would take several hours)" (Dornyei, 2007: 207).

Chapter Five

Discussion & Conclusions

5.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the main questionnaire results of the study reported in this thesis and uses the data gathered from the interviews to help explain those results. The interview data were analysed by means of content analysis and teachers' responses were grouped into relevant categories; in the case of responses that fitted more than one category, these were allocated to all relevant categories. The teachers interviewed were Angela, Evanthia, Maria, Marios, Fotini, Katrina, Liam, Aspa, Claire, Sarah, Aphroditi and Chara[165]. The questionnaire and interview data results will be compared with those of the research studies described in Chapter 2 (this thesis) in order to discover whether or not they agree; possible explanations and speculations about any discrepancies that may emerge will be provided. Furthermore, we will explore the extent to which the views and beliefs of ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers (see Chapter 1, this thesis) are reflected in the teachers' attitudes and practices. If, for example, it emerges that the views expressed in ELT handbooks in the area of pronunciation pedagogy have had little impact on the teachers' practices, the reasons why this is the case will be revealed and, if necessary, appropriate recommendations will be made. Finally, attention will be drawn to the main implications of the study for the field as a whole and, where appropriate, directions for future research and action will be suggested.

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[165] Please note that these are not the teachers' real names (for more information on the teachers' interviews, please refer back to Section 3.4, Chapter 3).

5.1 Discussion for Research Question 1

5.1.1 Pronunciation Status in Teaching & Learning Speaking

The teachers and learners of this study viewed pronunciation as a very important element in the development of learners' speaking skills but, nevertheless, less important than vocabulary. The recognition of pronunciation as an important skill in terms of speaking competence but, nevertheless, of secondary importance to vocabulary alludes to those ELT handbooks that acknowledge pronunciation as an important skill but, nevertheless, highlight other areas of language knowledge to a greater extent than pronunciation (see Theme 3, Section 1.2.1).

In the interviews that were conducted as part of the study reported in this thesis, all interviewees were presented with the above questionnaire result and were asked if they agreed with it and if they could explain it. All twelve teachers, except for one, agreed that vocabulary is more important than pronunciation in teaching speaking and admitted that they devoted more time and effort in teaching vocabulary than pronunciation. The reasons they provided to justify their responses were grouped into two categories, as follows:

Category 1 *Vocabulary plays a more important role than pronunciation for success at exams* (9 teachers)

By 'exams' the teachers referred to the EFL examinations[166] distributed by Cambridge University (i.e. the FCE and CPE) and Michigan University (i.e. the ECCE and ECPE). The teachers whose responses were allocated to this category commented on the importance attached to vocabulary in order for the students to succeed at the Cambridge and/or Michigan EFL examinations. For example, Evanthia

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[166] Please refer back to Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, Chapter 3 for more information on the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams.

said that 'for the students to do well at high levels and succeed at exams we need lots of vocabulary' and, according to Angela, 'students are more judged on the basis of vocabulary they know' (for further examples of teachers' responses, see Box 1, Appendix 5.1).

We have already seen[167] that ELT in private language schools is exams oriented and the acquisition of an English language certificate is considered essential by students and their parents. The interview data confirmed that this is indeed the case of private ELT in Greece (see Box below).

'Teaching English in Greece means teaching for exams'

Fotini: The aim of the students is not just to learn English; it's to learn English in order to take exams.
Katrina: You know why because us teachers especially in Greece we have the certificates as of priority. And because it's exam preparation mostly. So we have a pre-junior class starting off we know that in six years' time this child has to sit for the lower exam.
Liam: It's the exam orientated teaching that we have in Greece.

As can be deduced from the teachers' responses above, the students' main aim is to acquire an English language certificate and the teachers need to ensure that the students are adequately prepared in order to sit for and succeed at the Cambridge and/ or Michigan EFL examinations. In the course of the interviews, it emerged that vocabulary is emphasised to a greater extent than pronunciation in EFL exams and since TEFL in Greece focuses on exam preparation, the teachers also emphasised vocabulary to a greater extent than pronunciation in class (for examples of teachers' responses, see Box 2, Appendix 5.1). Interestingly, vocabulary seems to be more valued than pronunciation even by the examiners of the oral component of English language tests; this emphasis on vocabulary is also reflected in the marking charts of

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[167] Please refer back to Sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, Chapter 3.

the 'speaking' parts of the tests created and distributed by the major EFL examination boards (see Marios's response below).

'Pronunciation and the speaking component of EFL tests'

> Marios:… oh all exams actually if you see the scoring that they use the scoring for the speaking test the pronunciation is one of the minor criteria
> Vicky (interviewer): Tell me a little bit more about that. Because I know you are an examiner as well [for the Michigan EFL exams but has worked for others too].
> Marios: It's just as far as we can understand… as far as we can understand the word then we don't really take it into account.

Indeed, for example, in the Speaking Scoring Rubric (2009) of the ECPE, there is a much greater focus on vocabulary and grammar than pronunciation (see Appendix 5.1). The message conveyed seems to be that as long as students' pronunciation is intelligible, teachers do not need to pay much attention to pronunciation and can focus on expanding students' vocabulary. Furthermore, the fact that pronunciation only needs to be intelligible for a student to perform well at the 'speaking' component of an English language test together with the fact that an intelligible pronunciation is relatively easy for most Greek learners to achieve means that less time needs to be spent practising pronunciation compared to practising vocabulary. In this respect, Evanthia's perspective is an interesting one:

> Evanthia: students sit for the exams and it's all fine with pronunciation. We had no problems. Our methods work, why change them? Pronunciation is dealt with as part of vocabulary activities so there's no need to focus on pronunciation separately or to a great extent.

It is worth noting that Greek learners of English have a phonetic advantage compared to, for example, Chinese learners of English as the phonetic system of Greek is more similar to the English one than the Chinese is. As Vassilakis (2004: 30) puts it, "the listener's first impression of most Greek learners' speech is that it is generally intelligible, though distinctly non-native". **Of course, there are problem areas in terms of pronunciation for Greek learners of English but, nevertheless, the**

mastery of intelligible pronunciation does not represent a great challenge for most Greek learners and, consequently, their teachers.

The suggestion that learners from a non-European linguistic background will have greater difficulty in mastering English pronunciation (e.g. Chinese learners) than those from a European background (e.g. Greek learners) on account of greater divergences in their phonological systems throws an interesting line of enquiry; researchers may wish to carry out studies in order to prove or disprove this hypothesis. To this date and to my knowledge there are no studies in this area[168]. Despite the lack of experimental research studies in this area, it is worth noting that when teachers and program coordinators of Canadian ESL programs were asked how important pronunciation instruction was for individuals of specific language backgrounds (Breitkreutz et al, 2001: 56), 83% identified learners from an East Asian language background (including Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Mandarin) as those most in need of pronunciation instruction[169]. **This finding can serve as an indication that English language teachers are aware that the greatness of the challenge to master English pronunciation depends, to some extent, on the learners' L1.** If the aforementioned hypothesis is supported by empirical evidence, then we can go as far as to declare that it is natural for non-European EFL learners (and their teachers) to attach greater importance to the area of pronunciation than European EFL learners (and their teachers). And, thus, this could be one of the reasons why pronunciation was found to constitute an area of greater concern for the Chinese learners' in Peacock's (1999) study than the Greek learners of

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[168] The question of 'phonetic distances' between the learners' L1 and the target language was posted on the SUPRAS list and with the exception of Bongaerts et al (2000) study it did not yield any responses that included research studies to prove or disprove the particular hypothesis. Bongaerts et al (2000) found that speakers from languages unrelated to Dutch were unable to achieve a native-like accent, whereas there were some individuals from related languages such as German who were able to achieve a native-like accent

[169] The second largest grouping included Punjabi, Arabic and Iranian.

our study. Furthermore, there is information in 'Learner English', edited by Swan and

Smith (2001), which aims at helping EFL teachers "anticipate the characteristic

difficulties of learners of English who speak particular mother tongues" (Swan and

Smith, 2001: ix), which makes my hypothesis stronger. For example, Chinese learners

are expected to face greater problems in mastering English pronunciation than

German learners, as follows:

> Chinese Learners
> Chinese and English belong to different language families (Sino-Tibetan and Indo-European)…. In general, Chinese speakers find English hard to pronounce, and have trouble learning to understand the spoken language.
>
> Chang, 2001: 310-311

> German Learners
> German is an Indo-European language, closely related to Dutch, English… The German and English phonological systems are broadly similar, and German speakers do not have serious difficulty in perceiving or pronouncing most English sounds.
>
> Swan, 2001: 37

As far as Greek learners of English are concerned, it must be noted that even though

the mastery of native-like pronunciation is not an easy task, the achievement of

intelligible pronunciation is. For example, "some features of Greek intonation carried

over into English (such as the use of a high fall where English would be a low rise)

may make speakers sound abrupt and impolite" (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2001: 132),

albeit intelligible.

Category 2 *Vocabulary is the most important area of language knowledge* (7 teachers)

Vocabulary was seen as the foundation, the basic building block of any language and

a couple of teachers went as far as to declare that 'language is vocabulary' (Aspasia)

and 'learning a language means learning vocabulary because if you haven't got your

words and your vocabulary you won't be able to produce anything' (Katrina).

Vocabulary was viewed as the 'beginning' and as the 'end of all' when it came to

TEFL. After all, the number of words learners know was seen as the greatest determining factor in terms of learners' allocation to a suitable level that reflects their competence in English: 'vocabulary has to be very important because don't they separate the pre-lower and the lower level and the proficiency level based on how many words you know' (Claire) and 'to raise students' level to proficiency level regardless of whether or not they will sit the proficiency exams you need lots of texts and lots of vocabulary' (Evanthia). (For further examples of teachers' responses, see Box 3, Appendix 5.1). This preoccupation with vocabulary was also reflected in teachers' practices; a couple of teachers remarked that it is common practice to give students to learn lots of words by heart in the form of lists and Liam expressed his disapproval of the particular method, as follows:

> Liam: I think they put too much stress on vocabulary here in Greece. For a start it's the easy option. At my school we give kids 5 words to learn every time. That's their homework. There are places where they get 50. 50 words for homework. Madness. And the kids can't even put two words together. I'd much rather give them 5 words and read a chapter from a book.

Gabrielatos (2002: 2) refers to this phenomenon as "vocabulary list syndrome" that, unfortunately, ELT in Greece suffers from; vocabulary teaching mainly consists of "the teaching of single word items, with 'meaning' being the only information given (quite often in the form of Greek 'equivalents')". To return to the interview data, there were teachers who seemed to operate under the misconception that vocabulary is the most important factor in successful communication. For example, Sarah stated that vocabulary is the most important area for conveying meaning and 'if your pronunciation is a little bit weak, the message is still conveyed'.[170]

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[170] This matter will be explored in greater detail in the next section of this chapter that deals with the relationship between pronunciation and intelligibility.

So far two reasons have been provided to account for the dominance of vocabulary over pronunciation in TEFL in Greece; the teachers' view that mastery of vocabulary is more important for the students to succeed at the Cambridge and/or Michigan EFL examinations and the teachers' belief in the superiority of vocabulary over all other areas of language knowledge for spoken production in English. Let us move on to examine if there are any other possible findings as part of this research that may help account for the fact that vocabulary is accorded a more important role than pronunciation.

As the reader may recall, Kanellou (2001) attributed the teachers' greater emphasis on vocabulary to the teaching approach employed; the majority of teachers claimed to use CLT in the classroom[171]. Unfortunately, in the case of our research, the *teaching methods* factor had too many conditions; thus, it was impossible to test the effect that the choice of certain teaching methods (over others) had on the perceived status of pronunciation[172]. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a preponderance of commitment to some kind of communicative methodology as, overall, 40 out of the 47 teachers ticked the CLT option (Table 4.2, Section 4.2). While 9 out of the 47 teachers claimed to only employ CLT in their teaching of English, a further 31 teachers claimed to employ CLT in addition to other method/s. **The endorsement of CLT, at least to some extent, by most of the teachers of our study may explain the greater importance attached to vocabulary compared to pronunciation.** Nevertheless, our study demonstrated that pronunciation is accorded a more important role nowadays in TEFL in Greece compared to the past, albeit still less important than vocabulary. The fact that CLT was not the only paradigm adhered to by most of the teachers in our study – as was the case in Kanellou's (2001) study – may have had a

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[171] For information on the adverse effect of CLT on the status of pronunciation, please refer back to Section 1.1.1, Chapter 1.

[172] Please refer back to Section 4.2, Chapter 4 for more information on this.

positive influence on the status of pronunciation. Overall, 80% of the teachers in Kanellou's (2001) study displayed some kind of commitment to CLT and 86% of the teachers in this study displayed some kind of commitment to CLT. However, in Kanellou's (2001) study, 54% of the teachers said that CLT was the only method they used (and a further 26% indicated that they used CLT along with other methods) whereas in this study, only 19% of the teachers said that CLT was the only method they used (and a further 66% indicated that they used CLT along with other methods.) **The fact that the teachers of our study seem to have moved away from employing CLT as *the one and only approach* to their teaching of English may help explain why pronunciation was viewed as 'very important' by the teachers of this study compared to the teachers in Kanellou's (2001) study who viewed as 'important'.**

As for the status of pronunciation in relation to vocabulary as perceived by the learners, a limitation of our study pertains to the fact that it was not possible to interview the learners once the questionnaires had been analysed due to the time constraints imposed upon the completion of this project as well as due to access issues. Nevertheless, since learners viewed pronunciation as less important than vocabulary (just like the teachers did), it is very likely that the at least some of the research findings used to explain the teachers' views can also be used to help explain the learners' views. Let us begin by bearing in mind that teachers and learners are united in their goal for the learners to succeed at the exams set by the major EFL examination boards. TEFL in Greece, especially in private language schools, entails training students to pass standardised exams (Tziava, 2003; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). The Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams are extremely popular in Greece (Gabrielatos, 2002: 1); it is worth noting that Greece submits the highest number of entrants for the Cambridge EFL exams worldwide (Nikolaou, 2003 cited in Tziava,

2003: 6). **Thus, if teachers and learners agree that the main goal of English language instruction is the acquisition of an English language certificate and learners expect the teachers to help them achieve this goal, it is possible that teachers and learners also share similar views as to the relative importance of the different areas of language knowledge. Especially so, given the fact that the emphasis placed by EFL exams on vocabulary – albeit, at the expense of pronunciation – is also reflected in teachers' practises, the type of language lesson and the course book material.** Gabrielatos (2002) identifies two commonly used approaches to exam preparation in Greece as implemented in many language schools at the level of –Lower and Lower+ learners; 'teaching *through* the exam' and 'teaching *for* the exam', as follows:

Teaching *through* the exam
Tests are used as the only teaching materials. Learners are asked to prepare (part of) a test at home: in class the teacher checks the answers and provides the correct ones. Correct answers are counted and an average score is calculated. The teacher or the students themselves keep a record of the scores in order to check 'development'…. The underlying principle seems to be that students should 'cover' as many materials as possible in order to increase the chance of 'knowing' the items in the exam.

<div align="right">Gabrielatos, 2002: 1</div>

Teaching *for* the exam
Teaching is geared entirely towards the exam. Every effort is made so that texts are as close as possible to the ones used in the exam in terms of length, type, style and level of difficulty. Learners are asked to perform only the task-types present in the exam. On the whole, the materials used simulate exam materials. Special exam-prep coursebooks are used, and usually a lot of exam-type supplementary coursebooks. The underlying principle, again, seems to be quantitative; the more they become familiar with exam-type texts and exercises the better their chances of success.

<div align="right">Gabrielatos, 2002: 1-2</div>

It is possible that the overall focus on exam preparation, the teachers' practises, the structure of the language lesson, the course book and any other materials used in class and the homework set for the learners to have had a considerable influence on the learners' perceptions as to the relative importance of pronunciation and vocabulary.

5.1.2 Pronunciation Role in Teaching & Learning Speaking

According to the questionnaire results, teachers and learners regarded a *good level of pronunciation* as having importance in terms of the intelligibility (to other learners) of the learners' oral discourse. Nevertheless, they viewed it as less important than the *appropriate use of vocabulary*. Furthermore, teachers and learners viewed *pronunciation* as being 'sometimes responsible' for misunderstandings/breakdowns in communication among learners of English and they viewed vocabulary as being 'often responsible'.

Those questionnaire results were discussed in the interviews and, interestingly, only one teacher claimed that an equal degree of quality in all three levels (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) is required for effective communication to take place. As for the rest of the teachers' responses, they were grouped into the following two categories.

Category 1 *Vocabulary is the most important factor in successful communication*

(9 teachers)

This category attracted the majority of the teachers' responses and can thus be viewed as providing further evidence as to the validity of the questionnaire results. These teachers gave a relative high priority to vocabulary in terms of comprehensibility. For examples of teachers' responses, see the box below (further examples appear in Box 1, Appendix 5.2)

Aphroditi: Learners somehow manage to… learners focus on vocabulary learners of the same language or of a different language have a very good strategy of understanding each other probably because they follow the same logic. So if the wrong word is used or if there is a lack of vocabulary then communication is difficult.

Katrina: Yes, I would agree because if you have a lack of vocabulary it means that you won't be able to speak properly. I think that having adequate words means that you are able to speak and pronunciation must have severe problems for you not to be able to express yourself correctly.

Interestingly, when one of the teachers, whose response fitted this category, was asked to comment about the intelligibility of her oral discourse as part of her experience of having lived in the UK for four years, she admitted that 'there were many cases when I was misunderstood by wrong pronunciation rather than vocabulary' (Angela). It is worth noting that three out of those nine teachers made specific references to Greek EFL learners and, as we have seen, Greek EFL learners have an advantage in terms of the intelligibility of their spoken discourse (with respect to pronunciation). For example, Marios said that 'we [the teachers] find it harder when there is inappropriate use of vocabulary to understand students whereas we can fill the gaps of mispronouncing and actually acquire meaning' (additional examples appear in Box 2, Appendix 5.2). Also, those three teachers shared the same L1 with their learners. Nevertheless, this view is not restricted to Greek EFL learners as most teachers stated their belief that vocabulary is more important for effective communication to take place among *all* learners of English. However, it may help account for the relatively low priority given to pronunciation by the learners in this study. Since these learners are teenagers who live in Greece, it is possible that most of their experiences of interaction in English have taken place with learners of the same L1[173] in the context of the language classroom. Perhaps, if they were given the opportunity to communicate with others learners of English from different L1s and in a variety of contexts, they would place greater importance to pronunciation than vocabulary.

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[173] The vast majority of the learners in our study shared the same L1, Greek (please refer back to Section 3.1.4, Chapter 3).

Category 2 *Pronunciation is more important than vocabulary for successful communication* (2 teachers)

Chara made the important distinction between learners of the same L1 conversing in English – 'if a Greek learner is talking to another Greek learner and they lack pronunciation I think they will be able to understand each other'– and learners of a different L1 conversing in English – 'if a Greek learner is talking to a French or an Italian or a German learner pronunciation would be 100% the cause'. And, Liam argued that if you are fluent and confident, "then you can get round vocabulary" but if you have not got a good level of pronunciation, 'you won't get round' and gave an interesting example in relation to the lexical competence of NSs of English to support his argument, as follows:

> Liam: so if it's a question of vocabulary you don't understand you can always I mean how many people for example in English think that 'livid' means 'red in the face'? 'He was livid with anger' 99% of people in Britain would say 'yeah, he was absolutely furious, he was red in the face', when it's supposed to mean 'white' he was so angry he was actually white look it's just an example if you are fluent and confident you can get round vocabulary.

It seems, that a few of the teachers who had English language experiences outside the Greek context (Liam is British and Angela has lived in the UK) and/or had interacted with other speakers of English with whom they did not have the same L1 (Chara is married to a Nigerian man) could see that pronunciation is more responsible than vocabulary for producing communication breakdowns.

Overall, the low priority given to pronunciation in comparison to vocabulary in terms of the comprehensibility of EFL learners' spoken discourse and as the cause of misunderstandings among EFL learners by the teachers and learners of this study is striking. And, not only is this a striking finding but a rather disappointing one because the teachers' and learners' views as far as the relationship between pronunciation and intelligibility is concerned are wrong.

The close link between pronunciation and intelligibility is delineated in the vast majority of recently published ELT handbooks; unless L2 speakers pay attention to their pronunciation, they may convey unintended meanings, misunderstandings may occur and communication breakdowns may take place (Theme 4, Section 1.2.1, Chapter 1).

The view that pronunciation is responsible to a great extent for the intelligibility of L2 speakers' oral discourse is also prevalent in the relevant literature and has been demonstrated by various researchers. Rajadurai (2007) states that pronunciation is a vital element for effective communication and refers to evidence which points to a threshold level where pronunciation is concerned; "speakers who fall below this level will have communication problems no matter how well they control other aspects of the language like grammar and vocabulary" (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996; Lam and Halliday, 2002 cited in Rajadurai, 2007: 88). Pronunciation is not just one of several factors contributing towards intelligible speech; it is the most important factor in this respect: "intelligibility and 'error gravity' studies attempting to isolate the role of particular linguistic features relative to others in the determination of intelligibility have consistently pointed to the importance of the pronunciation component" (Fayer and Krasinski, 1987; Suenobu et al, 1992; Derwing and Rossiter, 2003 cited in Rajadurai, 2007: 88). Fraser (2000: 7) identifies a number of language areas that an ESL learner needs to draw on in order to speak in English but, nevertheless, considers pronunciation to be the most important of those: "with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors; with poor pronunciation, a speaker can be very difficult to understand, despite accuracy in other areas". For Dalton-Puffer et al (1997: 116), "good pronunciation is indeed indispensable for adequate communication in a foreign language".

Perhaps the greatest advocacy of the importance of pronunciation in terms of the intelligibility of English language learners' oral discourse is found in Jenkins's (1995, 2000, 2002) works. Jenkins (1995) carried out a study among a multilingual group of postgraduate students at London University and found that "pronunciation emerged by far as the greatest factor in unintelligibility, and the difficulty tended to increase with the gap between interlocutors' first languages" (cited in Jenkins, 2000: 20). For Jenkins (2000: 19), this is not surprising because in terms of production, ILT (interlanguage talk)[174] is likely to be characterised by a substantial amount of differential L1 phonological transfer which leads to mutual intelligibility problems. And, since "ILT is characterised by so much L1 phonological transfer, pronunciation is often a first-base obstacle to communication beyond which the interaction is unable to proceed in a satisfactory manner" (Jenkins, 2000: 83). Jenkins (2000: 83) delves further into this matter by writing that in ILT, "given the speakers' frequent inability to 'say what (they) mean' pronunciation-wise, which is compounded by listeners' seemingly ubiquitous use of bottom-up processing strategies, pronunciation is possibly the greatest single barrier to successful communication". Jenkins (2000) points out that this seems to be the case well beyond beginner and elementary English language learner levels and provides evidence, in terms of concrete examples, that it also applies to learners who are at upper-intermediate level and beyond. Thus, this finding is of relevance to our study as the learners were at upper-intermediate level and beyond. According to Gimson (1994[175]), "in ILT the 'necessary conditions are, probably above all, mutually intelligible pronunciation, for even 'high adequacy in lexis and grammar can be negated by incompetence in the signalling phase'" (cited in

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[174] Jenkins uses the term 'interlanguage talk' to describe the speech of speakers of English from different L1s as they engage in interaction.

[175] Gimson A.C. 1994. *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. 5th edition. Revised by Cruttenden, A. London: Edward Arnold.

Jenkins, 2000: 79). Jenkins (2002) describes how she collected data over a period of three years in classroom and social settings and noted down every example of mis- and non-communication among L2 speakers of English in order to establish the extent to which those instances of miscommunication were caused primarily by problems at the phonological level. Approximately 70% of those instances of miscommunication were due to pronunciation; this percentage is staggeringly high. She concluded that phonological errors caused the most serious problems in her data and wrote: "although pronunciation was by no means the sole cause of ILT communication breakdown, it was by far the most frequent and the most difficult to resolve" (Jenkins, 2002: 87).

Since the aforementioned evidence is sufficient in suggesting that intelligibility is mainly lost through pronunciation errors and since pronunciation is a major cause of problematic communication in interaction even among fluent speakers of English (see Jenkins, 2000), all EFL teachers must be informed about this. Against this backdrop, it is rather disturbing that the teachers and learners of our study viewed vocabulary as more important than pronunciation as far as the intelligibility of EFL learners' discourse is concerned and pronunciation as having moderate responsibility for any instances of miscommunication that may take place among EFL learners. Interestingly, the teachers and learners of our study are not alone in this; Majer (2002) reported that pronunciation errors were ranked the lowest in error gravity scale by teacher training college students (cited in Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005: 232). The learners in Majer's (2002) study were prospective teachers of English; they should have known better but it seems that they did not.

In the course of the interviews, the teachers were informed about the view that pronunciation is responsible for most failures in communication among NNSs of English worldwide. Interestingly, the vast majority of the teachers were not familiar with this idea; a few of them admitted that they were surprised to be told this and none of the teachers had ever heard of Jenkins's works. What was even more interesting was the teachers' reaction once they were informed about the relevant research findings of Jenkins's (2000) research and were asked to give their own opinion in the light of her research; five[176] out of the twelve teachers were not convinced and kept their original stance as to pronunciation not being the most important factor in effective communication and the other seven agreed. Out of those seven teachers, two of them had already expressed a similar view in the course of the interview (see Category 2, this section) and the remaining five changed their original opinion and endorsed Jenkins's (2000) view once they carefully considered her position; see the box below for examples of teachers' answers.

Teachers' views in the light of Jenkins's (2000) work (examples)

Evanthia: Well it could be. Thinking about it when I went to that conference in Brighton and there was this professor of English from Pakistan in the audience of the session I was attending, he asked a question and I couldn't understand what he was saying because of his accent. He had such a strong accent the words he uttered were incomprehensible to me. So I suppose pronunciation could play the most important role when it comes to communication among non-native speakers of English.

Marios: Ah then I'd have to agree. Yes. Anyway the way I see it is that the range of vocabulary non-native speakers use is limited not limited but anyway it is moderate so more or less speakers know what to expect in terms of vocabulary from one another but when it comes to pronunciation it is really hard for ehm people from different countries to ehm understand yes mispronounce words. Whereas vocabulary you know it is a moderate range so you can actually have expectations on what the speaker wants to say even if he doesn't use the appropriate word.

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[176] Out of these 5 teachers, 4 of them believed that vocabulary was responsible to a greater extent than pronunciation for any communication breakdowns and the remaining one believed vocabulary and pronunciation to be equally responsible.

As can be deduced from the teachers' responses in the box above, Evanthia endorsed Jenkins's (2000) position by recalling an incident of the incomprehensibility of a colleague's oral discourse (with whom she did not have the same L1) and Marios by recognising that greater variations are expected at the level of phonology than at the level of lexis. **The fact that at least some of the teachers changed their original opinion (as recorded in the questionnaires and as voiced in the course of the interviews) and recognised that pronunciation is responsible to a great extent for the intelligibility of NNSs' oral discourse is promising; it serves as an indication that if teachers are somehow informed about the close link between pronunciation and intelligibility, at least some of them (if not most of them) will embrace it and, hopefully, pass it on to their learners as well.** Catering for the learners in this respect is extremely important; since the learners of this study anticipate to use English in variety of contexts worldwide (e.g. for studies at an English-speaking country and travel around the world[177]), they will need engage in successful communication with NSs and NNSs of English in various contexts worldwide. And, one of the first steps to ensure that they are adequately prepared for this is to help them realise that a good level of pronunciation is the prerequisite for successful communication to take place.

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[177] Please refer back to Section 4.6.1, Chapter 4.

5.1.3 Pronunciation Status for Teaching & Learning Listening

According to the questionnaire results, the teachers and learners regarded *knowledge of pronunciation* as being 'very important' in terms of the learners' ability to understand in listening activities. Nevertheless, they viewed it as less important than *knowledge of vocabulary*. **It is interesting to note that just like in the case of the questionnaire questions addressing the relative importance of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar in terms of speaking skills, vocabulary wins out over pronunciation, albeit in the case of the teachers' data, only slightly so. And, for the first time grammar is downgraded; instead of sharing second place along with pronunciation, it comes as a poor third.**

When the teachers were presented with this questionnaire result in the interviews and were asked if they agreed it with it, two thirds of the teachers interviewed disagreed. This rather contradictory result can be viewed as one of the limitations made through the use of qualitative methods of data collection; it was not possible to interview all 47 teachers that participated in the study and, thus, the views of the 12 teachers interviewed cannot be regarded as entirely representative of the views of all 47 teachers; especially, in the case of the particular questionnaire result where there was a marginally statistically significant difference between the perceived importance of pronunciation and that of vocabulary. Nevertheless, looking at the interview data will help account for this decrease in the gap between the perceived importance of pronunciation and vocabulary in the context of listening comprehension.

<u>Category 1</u> *Teachers* that *agreed that vocabulary is more important than pronunciation for listening activities* (4 teachers)

One of the teachers, Marios, argued that he attached greater importance to vocabulary than pronunciation in the context of listening comprehension on the grounds that 'we are not talking about everyday real situations' and in most listening activities standard pronunciations are used; since learners know what 'they are going to encounter in terms of accents then vocabulary is the great challenge… in my classes more mistakes are due to vocabulary failure than pronunciation'. The issue regarding the prevalence of standard accents of English in the listening material of language courses is examined later on in this chapter.

<u>Category 2</u> *Teachers that disagreed that vocabulary is more important than pronunciation for listening activities* (8 teachers)

The teachers, whose responses were allocated to this category, consistently made the observation that often their students seemed unable to understand what was being said as part of listening activity but once the teacher presented them with the transcription of that text they could understand it; this was seen as proof that neither vocabulary nor grammar was the cause of the students' failure to understand; the cause was pronunciation. The teachers attributed the problems at the phonological knowledge level to factors such as the students not being used to listening to different accents or voices and also to features of fast speech and different intonation patterns. (See Evanthia's response in box below; for additional examples, see Box 1, Appendix 5.3).

> <u>Evanthia:</u> No, I think this is not the case with listening. I think pronunciation plays a more important part than vocabulary. Accent is important, intonation I think intonation confuses the students a lot, how fast the speaker speaks. A lot of the time when the students have problems understanding a particular text in a listening activity we then see the same text in written form and the students see that it is a simple text really.

Indeed, we have seen that phonology is recognised as one of the most important types of linguistic knowledge for the learners to draw on in order to comprehend a spoken message in many ELT handbooks (Theme 2, Section 1.2.1). **The scores given by the teachers and learners of this study to 'knowledge of pronunciation' in the context of listening comprehension can be viewed as an acknowledgement that whether or not the interpretation of spoken texts in listening activities will be successful depends, to a large extent, on the listener's phonological knowledge.**

5.1.4 Pronunciation Status & Role; Teachers' & Learners' Views

As part of the 'Literature Review' chapter, **evidence of conflict was found between teachers' and learners' views as to the importance of pronunciation; English language learners attached greater importance to pronunciation than their teachers in the following three studies: Willing (1988), Peacock (1999) and Kanellou (2001).** It was argued that any mismatch between learner and teacher desires and hierarchy needs to be addressed and dealt with because it may result in negative learning outcomes. Thus, the reader of this thesis was informed that if it emerges that learners' views differ markedly from teacher's views as to the perceived importance of pronunciation, first the reasons behind this mismatch would be explored, and then a decision would be made as to whose beliefs are wrong and should therefore be convinced to adopt a different perspective. **Nevertheless, no gap emerged between teachers' and learners' perceptions as to the importance of pronunciation and, thus, instead of considering ways to bridge a gap, I will need to speculate on the reasons why this was not the case.**

Let us first consider the results of Willing's (1988) study, which explored the learning style preferences of 517 adult ESL learners in Australia. The learners in Willing's (1988) study placed greater emphasis on pronunciation practice compared to vocabulary development whereas their teachers – as recorded in Nunan's (1988) study, which was a follow up to Willing's (1988) study – placed greater emphasis on vocabulary than pronunciation. The learners in Willing's (1988) study rated pronunciation more highly compared to vocabulary and grammar and pronunciation had the highest rating of all questionnaire items. The learners (and teachers) in our study rated vocabulary more highly than pronunciation and equally important to grammar in many cases; vocabulary had the highest rating of all items. This rather

contradictory result may be explained by considering the differences in terms of the characteristics of the learners in Willing's (1988) study and the learners in our study. Firstly, all the learners in Willing's (1988) study were adults whereas the learners in our study were teenagers and differences in learners' perceptions on various pedagogical issues may be attributed to differences in terms of age. Secondly, the learners in Willing's (1988) study were beginners whereas the learners in our study were upper-intermediate and advanced learners of English. Again, differences in learners in terms of level of competence in the target language can account for differences in learners' perceptions on pedagogical issues. For example, **pronunciation may be a very high priority for beginning learners but not for advanced learners. Indeed, it makes sense to assume that pronunciation is a high priority for beginners and then drops down as learners make progress in their learning of English; beginners may value a good pronunciation but more advanced learners may assume that they already have a good level of pronunciation and, thus, attach greater value to vocabulary development.** And, it is legitimate to wonder if the learners in Willing's (1988) study had been advanced learners whether or not teachers and learners would have agreed on the importance of vocabulary over pronunciation. Thirdly and fourthly, in Willing's (1988) study, the learners were migrants in an inner circle country who wished to use English for survival purposes, communication at work and to integrate socially. In our study, they were all EFL learners in an expanding circle country who wished to succeed at professionally designed language tests; that is not to say that this was their only goal but it was the one with the highest priority. The reasons as to the difference in the results between Willing's (1988) and this study can certainly become clearer if we take into consideration the fact that the immediate language context as well as the

language learning purpose were different for the learners of Willing's (1988) study and the learners of this study. For example, it is possible that Willing's (1988) learners were aware to a greater extent of the important role of pronunciation in terms of the intelligibility of spoken language as they may have experienced communication breakdowns due to faulty pronunciation as part of their daily lives in Australia. Also, it is possible that pronunciation was seen as a higher priority for them due to their need and/or desire to fit in within the English L1 community they found themselves in whereas such a need/desire would not apply to the learners of our study who found themselves in a Greek L1 community. Just like the immigrants pouring into the United States in the late nineteenth century needed to learn the new language in order to survive in the new environment and cope with the problems of everyday life benefited from the Direct Method, whose tenets held that oral work should be strongly emphasised and pronunciation should receive great attention from the beginning and throughout the course[178], the migrants in Australia shared the same need. There is certainly a need for greater attention to the spoken language and, consequently, pronunciation in order to meet learners' immediate practical needs for everyday purposes of social survival. The learners of our study appear more conscious of wanting to communicate messages rather than being concerned with accuracy in grammar and pronunciation; it could be argued that they see vocabulary development as having more things to say which suggests burgeoning confidence in the use of English; something to say rather than saying it right. It is worth noting that confidence in the use of English is greatly valued as part of students' performance in the oral component of the EFL examinations and "if he [the student] knows a lot of

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[178] Please refer back to Section 1.1.1, Chapter 1 for more information on this.

vocabulary, it appears to the examiner that the student feels more confident" (Maria, Box 1, Appendix 5.1).

Moving on to Peacock's (1999) study of 202 EFL Science & Maths university students and 45 EFL teachers in China, it was found that learners put much more value on accent than their teachers and Peacock (1999) proposed that many EFL teachers around the world assign less importance to good pronunciation than do their students. Again there are differences between those learners and the learners in our study. The learners in Peacock's (1999) study were adults whereas the learners in our study were teenagers. Just like Willing's (1988) learners who were in a place where they intended to use English for adjustment purposes and hence there was an immediate need as to the use of English, there was also an immediate need as to the use of English on the part of Peacock's (1999) students; they were university students who intended to use English for their careers. The learners in Peacock's (1999) study were doing a course called 'English communication skills', and thus, it is possible that there was a greater focus on speaking and listening and, consequently, pronunciation than there was for the learners in our study who were learning English for 'general purposes'. **Moreover, EFL exams were not the focus for immigrants in Australia and neither were they the motivation for Chinese students in an English-speaking academic environment. It seems that learners who are in the immediate English language context (Willing, 1988; Peacock, 1999) particularly value good pronunciation. On the other hand, in the case of the learners in our study who found themselves in a Greek L1 environment, the exam certificate is going to determine what their perception of their priorities is.** Furthermore, as it has already been addressed earlier in this chapter (Section 5.1.1), the phonetic system of L1 Chinese EFL learners diverges to a greater extent from English than the phonetic

system of L1 Greek EFL learners. Thus, **Chinese EFL learners face greater challenges in terms of the intelligibility of their oral discourse compared to Greek EFL learners and, thus, may attach greater importance to the mastery/practice of pronunciation than Greek learners**. For more information, see the 'Chinese Speakers' and the 'Greek Speakers' chapters in Swan and Smith (2001).

Moving on to Kanellou's (2001) study, the results showed that improving pronunciation skills was of equal importance to vocabulary development for the majority of Greek EFL learners but not for the majority of the teachers; the teachers were more concerned with the students' vocabulary development. Let us examine the differences in learner characteristics with respect to the learners in Kanellou's (2001) study and the learners in our study. Firstly, the learners in Kanellou's (2001) study were young adults as opposed to the learners of our study who were teenagers. **Older students' views may differ to younger students' views regarding the relative importance of language areas as older students may have had a greater variety of experiences compared to younger ones; for example, they may have travelled more and may be thus more aware of the importance of pronunciation for communication.** Secondly, the learners in Kanellou's (2001) study were all in possession of the FCE and were not necessarily going to sit any further EFL examinations whereas the majority of the learners in our study were preparing to sit for the FCE and/or ECCE exams. The rest of the learners in our study were in possession of the FCE and were preparing to sit for the CPE and/or ECPE exams. It is possible that the learners of our study were more focused on vocabulary in order to increase their chances of succeeding at those EFL exams. Thirdly, the learners in Kanellou's (2001) study were all advanced learners of English whereas the majority of learners in our study were upper-intermediate (-Lower) level learners.

Earlier in the thesis (Section 2.1), it was stated that it would be interesting to see whether or not nowadays there are still discrepancies between teachers' and learners' beliefs as to the importance of pronunciation in the ELT context in Thessaloniki, Greece. Of course to be in the position to directly compare the results of our study to the study conducted by the same researcher 10 years ago, the current study should have been a replication of the former study; however, this was not the case. Nevertheless, **it is possible that the overall agreement between the teachers and learners of our study as to the perceived importance of pronunciation – as opposed to the disagreement between the teachers and learners of Kanellou's (2001) study – stems from the fact that the teachers and learners of our study were united in their goal for the learners to succeed at EFL exams. Since knowledge of vocabulary is viewed as playing the most important role for succeeding at those exams (Section 5.1.1), teachers and learners placed greater emphasis on vocabulary rather than pronunciation.**

Furthermore, even though the results of our study may seem contradictory to the results of Willing's (1988), Peacock's (1999) and Kanellou's (2001) studies, this is not necessarily the case; they may just be a 'refinement' since the age of learners ('are they teenagers or adults')**, the stage/level of competence in English** ('are they beginners or advanced level learners')**, the language context** ('whether or not the learners live or are required to operate in an English L1 environment') **and the language learning goal** ('is their main aim to acquire an English language certificate or to use English for survival purposes') **all seem to have a different effect on the perceived importance of pronunciation. To the aforementioned factors we may also add the phonetic distance between the learners' L1 and English;** the greater the divergence in the phonological system of

their L1 and English, the more time and effort the learners may need to devote into the mastery of pronunciation and, consequently, the greater the perceived importance of pronunciation compared to other language areas.

Let us now use the aforementioned factors in the comparisons to be drawn between our study and other studies (of the 'Literature Review' chapter) with respect to the perceived importance of pronunciation for communication by EFL learners. For the learners of Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak's (2005) study, the perceived importance of pronunciation was found to be lower than that of vocabulary; the 'English Studies' and the 'Economics & Sociology' university students that participated in this research conducted in Poland pointed to vocabulary as the most important aspect of spoken language for communication. In Sobkowiak's (2002) study of 645 university students at an English language teacher training college in Poland, the perceived importance of pronunciation was not found to be greater than that of other language areas; 67% did not believe good pronunciation to be more important than vocabulary or grammar. It seems that my original assumption that the views of students who have chosen English as their major field of studies at university level or are studying towards becoming EFL teachers are not necessarily representative of the views of secondary school students is not right as I have found evidence to prove otherwise; even though the learners in Sobkowiak's (2002) and Waniek-Klimczak's and Klimczak's (2005) study were working towards becoming specialists in ELT, they seem to share the views of the learners (and, also, the teachers) in our study; pronunciation is not the most important element for successful communication. **It is possible that the learners' level of competence in English has affected the hierarchy of importance in terms of language areas; none of the aforementioned studies deal with beginners and, as it has been argued already,**

pronunciation may be more important for beginners. Furthermore, advanced learners of English may be more conscious of the image they project; they may feel that vocabulary is more important because an expansive vocabulary will allow for more things to say and/or they may feel more vulnerable to criticism if their vocabulary is not up to scratch. Also, it is worth mentioning that the Polish and Greek phonetic systems are closer to the English one than, for example, the Chinese phonetic system and, since Polish and Greek learners tend to face fewer difficulties in developing an intelligible pronunciation than, for example, Chinese learners[179], it is possible that they also attach less importance to pronunciation for the intelligibility of spoken discourse. Nevertheless, **the fact that pronunciation is not viewed by EFL teachers (this study) and prospective EFL teachers (Sobkowiak, 2002; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005) as the most important element for effective communication points to the need to educate teachers as to fact that pronunciation is the most important element for the intelligibility of speaker's oral discourse and also the major cause of communication misunderstandings/breakdowns among NNSs of English.**

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[179] Please consult the 'Polish Speakers', 'Greek Speakers' and 'Chinese Speakers' chapters in Smith and Swan's (2001) 'Learner English' for more information.

5.1.5 Perceived Importance & Frequency of Exposure to Various Accents of English

According to the questionnaire results, teachers and learners viewed the learners' exposure to the accent of *NSs of a SBV* and *NSs of a SAV* as 'very important' and to the accent of *NSs of SRVs of English*, *NSs of NSRVs of English* and *NNFSs of English* as 'quite important'. Overall, greater importance was attached to the accent of *NSs of a SBV or SAV* compared to the accent of *NSs of SRVs*, the accent of *NSs of NSRVs* and the accent of *NNFSs*. Moreover, it emerged that the learners' exposure to *conversations among NSs of a SBV* and *conversations among NSs of a SAV* was more frequent compared to *conversations among NS of SRVs* , *conversations among NSs of NSRVs, conversations among NSs and NNFSs and conversations among NNFSs.*

In the interviews, the teachers were asked why the general consensus among teachers seems to be that it is more important to expose learners to standard British and American accents of English rather than standard regional, non-standard regional and non-native accents of English and why the same pattern is also reflected in the 'listening' element of courses. It is important to note that all twelve teachers interviewed agreed that this is indeed the case of ELT in Greece in terms of the perceived importance and frequency of exposure to various accents of English; this can be viewed as further evidence as to the validity of the questionnaire results. Overall, the teachers' responses were grouped into three categories, as follows:

Category 1 *Focus on EFL exams* (8 teachers)

The general consensus among the teachers whose responses were allocated to this category seems to be that the priority attached to certain accents, namely standard British (SB) and standard American (SA), reflects the priorities of the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams (see Marios's response below and also Box 1, Appendix 5.4).

> Marios: the exams yeah… we've got like the American exams anyway I know like the Michigan exam the TOEFL exam and the TOEIC exams they all use standard American pronunciations ah the anyways that's my impression in the Cambridge exams and some other British exams the majority I'd say about 70% or 80% of the listening activities are standard English again. They do have some parts but they are the minority which are you know based on regional varieties.

It is interesting to note, for example, that in the teachers' guide of the ECPE, it is written that "the language of the examination is Standard American English" (Irvine-Niakaris, 2009: 4). The students preparing for the Cambridge EFL examinations are mainly taught how to understand the SB accent and the students preparing for the Michigan EFL examinations are mainly taught how to understand the SA accent; of course most students are preparing for both exams simultaneously and, thus, they are taught how to understand both. And, if there is time, then they are also exposed to some regional varieties. As Aspa put it: 'there's no Scottish certificate'; it would be reasonable to assume that if there was one, then teachers would consider the exposure of students to SRVs to be more important than they consider it to be nowadays.

Category 2 *The course books and listening material available* (7 teachers)

The teachers whose responses were allocated to this category said that they follow the textbook and, as part of the listening material available, students are mostly exposed to a SB or SA accent. The reason behind the high dominance of SB and/or SA accents as part of the listening material available is because 'the books we are using lead you to either Cambridge or Michigan [exams]' (Chara) and teachers 'go by the book' (Maria). Interestingly, there are teachers who do not even see the need to expose learners to various accents of English (see Evanthia's response in the box below).

> Evanthia: We use the course books we don't produce our own listening material and the books mostly use standard accents for the listening activities. For example, the books that prepare the students for the Cambridge exams use British standard accents mainly and the books we use to prepare our students for the Michigan exams use American standard accents mainly… Yes mainly they're standard British or American accents and that's cause of the course books and the exams. And, why should you teach other accents? You don't really need to.

And, some other teachers who would like to expose their learners to various accents are unable to do so due to time constraints (see Aphroditi's response in Box 2, Appendix 5.4).

Category 3 *Favourable attitudes towards standard NS accents* (4 teachers)

Interestingly, 1/3 of the teachers expressed views along the lines that a SB or SA accent is the most appropriate, the most accurate, the correct way of pronouncing English and that British or American people are those that speak English as an L1 and therefore learners should listen to their accent rather than to the accent of NNSs of English (for examples of teachers' responses, see Box 3, Appendix 5.2). Even more interestingly, one of the teachers who expressed such views was a Greek L1 EFL teacher. The remaining three comprised one American, one British and one South African.

Finally, there was only one teacher, Liam, who said that it is important to expose learners to all five categories of the accents included in the questionnaire and claimed to do so in his school.

> Liam: In my school they are exposed particularly to Geordie 'cause I'm a Geordie so they learn lots of phrases in Geordie… and I'm very pleased about that… if I were Welsh I would expect to be able to interest the kids in the fact that there is a distinct Welsh accent in English perhaps why there should be so just to get the kids' interest going… The only accent I put on is RP because this is not my native accent my native accent is Geordie. Uhm we have an American teacher so they get American the coursebooks of course quite a lot of them have a variety of accents and we do a lot of films so they are exposed to different accents from there also we listen occasionally to the BBC world service in class so they are exposed to all.

Interestingly, Liam pointed out that it is important to expose learners to various accents because 'you go to England you get on a bus the first thing you do come out of the airport you get on the bus and you can't understand the bus conductor'. It is strange that the rest of the teachers interviewed did not express a similar opinion to

Liam's even though, as part of the questionnaire, the majority of the teachers indicated that the learners are likely to use English 'for studies at university in an English-speaking country' and 'when travelling for leisure or work in different countries around the world' (see Section 4.6.1). It is possible that even though the teachers were aware of the learners' future contexts of use of English, their preoccupation with exam preparation affected their responses in this respect.

The reader may recall that the learners' exposure to *the accent of NSs of a SBV* was found to be slightly more frequent than to *the accent of NSs of a SAV* (see Section 4.3.1). The teachers interviewed provided an explanation for this, as follows:

Category 1: *Exams and course book material* (7 teachers)

It emerged that the Cambridge EFL examinations, which represent British English, were far more popular than the Michigan EFL examinations, which represent American English up to the late 1990s. The situation seems to have changed in the first decade of the new millennium as the Michigan EFL examinations have become popular too. Nevertheless, British English varieties continue to dominate course book material up to pre-lower level; for example, Marios said that 'I don't know of any course book up to pre-first certificate anyway B1 level… which uses American varieties. They all use British varieties'. After that level, learners are also introduced to American varieties; learners who aim to sit the Cambridge EFL exams are mainly exposed to the Standard British English as part of the listening material of the course and learners who aim to sit the Michigan EFL exams are mainly exposed to Standard American English. And, those learners that will take both exams are exposed to both varieties. (For examples of teachers' responses, see Box 4, Appendix 5.4).

<u>Category 2:</u> *History, culture and tradition* (4 teachers)

Fotini said that 'British English was the first language and then American… I think it's for historical reasons, and, yeah probably it's tradition too' (Fotini). Aphroditi said that 'I would say this is still the European culture. For me at least. That's the European culture… for me it's a cultural thing'. Moreover, Chara and Aspa said that when they were training to become EFL teachers they were taught British English and were mostly exposed to the SB accent.

Moving on to other questionnaire findings, the accent of NNFSs of English received the lowest rating in terms of perceived importance of all the varieties included in the questionnaire in the case of the learners (M =3.40) and in the case of the teachers (M = 3.11)[180]. Also, the exposure to *conversations among NNFSs of English* received the lowest rating (M = 3.78) in terms of frequency of exposure of all the other relevant questionnaire items. Such findings are disappointing in the era of World Englishes and in a world of increasing globalisation where English is primarily used for communication among NNSs in a variety of contexts worldwide. So, are teachers and learners not ready to embrace non-native accents of English?

When the teachers were asked to provide a reason as to why the learners are exposed to conversations among NNFSs of English so rarely the vast majority of the teachers maintained that this is not the focus of exams and there are hardly any materials available; see for example, the interview excerpt in the box below:

> <u>Angela:</u> I think that this [the predominance of native standard accents] comes from the textbooks. You really don't have a choice really. You follow the textbook.
> <u>Vicky (interviewer):</u> I know you guys use different textbooks. Even if I have a selection of different textbooks
> <u>Angela:</u> they follow the same pattern
> <u>Vicky:</u> Oh, ok so it is mostly native standard varieties
> <u>Angela:</u> Yeah I think that uhm 2% might be non-native but fluent speakers of English
> <u>Vicky:</u> Only 2% of activities perhaps.
> <u>Angela:</u> Yeah, and I'm not even sure about that.

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[180] In the case of the teachers it received the lowest rating along with the accent of NSs of NSRVs (M = 3.17).

Thus, it seems that EFL learners in Greece are not exposed to non-native accents of English as part of the course they attend and will be exposed to non-native accents of English for the first time when they travel abroad. Moreover, a couple of teachers went as far as to declare that listening to NNSs of English speaking in English as part of the listening material of the course is superfluous or even inappropriate; for example, see Claire's response below:

> Claire: Well, I think that well that might sound stupid but listening to non-native speakers of English like listening to two Italians speaking English is irrelevant to the idea of learning English because aren't you supposed to learn English from a native speaker of English how are you supposed to learn it?
> Vicky (interviewer): ok
> Claire: Why would you even use people of another foreign language speaking English as a learning tool I am saying

Claire's perspective is interesting; **perhaps, teachers need to be educated that** *exposure to non-native but fluent speakers of English* **is not to be viewed as a learning tool; just as a way, as a medium of exposure to increase their students' chances of understanding their interlocutors in international contexts.**

When the teachers were asked in the interviews whether or not they felt that they used listening material in order to help their learners understand a wide variety of accents, virtually all replied that they did not. The same reasons were provided as before, namely the preoccupation with exam preparation and the lack of listening material in this respect. Nevertheless, quite a few of teachers expressed their regret in this respect (see for example, Sarah's response below):

> Sarah: I think this is an area [listening to various accents of English] to be focused on to be incorporated in course book material in the future because I think this is the element they [the students] struggle most as well when they hear a French accent or a slightly Italian accent on the tape I mean it's extremely rare that you hear the non-native speakers on any listening material and they struggle because perhaps because it's the least familiar element I think unfortunately, most teachers especially EFL teachers get caught up in preparing students for exams and we're so focused towards that that there is no dialogue between teachers and course book writers or teachers and publishers and I think that everyone is so focused on preparing students for the exams where they do hear standard British accents… that that's perhaps the least of their worries at the moment.

One of the teachers, Aphroditi, expressed the wish for the exposure to various accents to begin at a young age ('when you get junior courses') because 'it's easier for children to hear the same words being pronounced slightly differently' rather than to wait for learners to reach adolescence or adulthood. On the other hand, a couple of teachers expressed their unwillingness to expose learners to various accents of English; 'it would confuse them [the learners] more' (Maria) and Evanthia said ('if you have an adult who wants to do Business English and you know he has to interact with people from other countries yes ok you can do something different [expose him to different accents of English]' but does not see the need for learners of English for general purposes to be exposed to various accents. It is striking that she does not consider the fact that the latter will also come across a range of accents when they travel and so on.

It is certainly disappointing that while some of the teachers recognise that an unfamiliar accent can negatively affect the learners' understanding in a listening activity[181], the exposure of learners to different accents of English is not achieved in the language courses taught by the teachers and attended by the learners of this study. We have seen that the general consensus among ELT handbook writers is that accent is a very important variable in listening comprehension and teachers need to embrace the presence of various accents of English and use listening material that will help students become aware of different accents and dialects of English. (Theme 2, Section 1.2.1). Unfortunately, according to the questionnaire findings of this study, the perceived importance attached to listening to standard native accents of English is far greater than to native standard (and non-standard) regional accents or non-native accents by the teachers and learners. **It seems that the teachers' and learners'**

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[181] Please refer back to Category 2, Section 5.1.3, this Chapter and Box 6 Appendix 5.1

perceptions of standard British and American accents as the most valuable accents in the world reflect the importance attached to the standard British accent in the Cambridge EFL exams and to the standard American accent in the Michigan EFL exams. Nevertheless, while exam preparation and the acquisition of an EFL certificate is the short-term goal shared by the teachers and learners of this study, I ought to point out that the majority of the teachers and learners of this study have indicated 'travelling for leisure or work in different countries around the world' as likely for the learners to engage in (Section 4.6.1). Thus, the fact that the learners of this study are rarely exposed to any non-native accents of English is rather problematic; for example, these learners will encounter non-standard accents in travel and may face major problems in their communication with other NSs or NNSs of English. Moreover, nearly half of the learners that participated in this study (47%) indicated that they anticipate to use English for 'studies at a university in an English-speaking country' (Section 4.6.1), a view also shared by the majority of the teachers (62%). Again, in such a context, learners will be exposed to a wide range of accents rather than just RP and GA. Interestingly, Hannam (2005: 4) reported that a significant number of her university level students "complained that once they arrived in the UK to continue their studies at post-graduate level, they could not understand many of the accents they encountered as 'most people don't speak like those people on the listening cassettes'". Her students comprised Greek students (and, also, students from other Balkan countries) who had obtained an undergraduate degree at an International College in Northern Greece, where she taught. Those students pursued a postgraduate degree at a university in Britain and Hannam (2005) wrote that:

> Some students expressed a feeling of having been 'overdosed' on the RP varieties represented in listening materials throughout their language learning experience, and began critically

questioning the lack of previous exposure either to the International varieties they themselves speak, or the regional British accents they might need to be able to comprehend in the UK.

Hannam, 2005: 4

While Hannam's (2005) study is a small-scale qualitative study and, thus, it shares certain limitations associated with the qualitative approach such as the inability to generalise findings, it indicates that EFL learners in expanding circle countries will encounter a wide range of non-standard accents when they find themselves in an English L1 country and that the English language instruction they have received has not prepared them for this. **As a large-scale quantitative survey, the research reported in this thesis makes Hannam's (2005) case much stronger as it provides further valid and reliable evidence to this end; the lack of EFL learners' exposure to a wide range of non-standard and non-native accents as part of the language courses they follow in Greece, in combination with the learners' anticipated future uses of English, may lead to comprehensibility problems when the learners encounter such accents for the first time.** This finding certainly deserves to be thought out and acted upon and will be addressed again as part of the 'Conclusions' section of this chapter.

5.1.6 Segmental & Suprasegmental Features of Pronunciation

According to the questionnaire results, the teachers regarded both segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation as having importance for the comprehension and production of spoken English. However, they regarded *vowels, sound in connected speech, stress* and intonation as more important than *consonants*.

In the interviews, the teachers were asked if they agreed that vowels are more important than consonants for understanding and producing spoken English. The majority of the teachers agreed and justified their response on the grounds that English vowels are different to Greek vowels and that the more complex system of English vowels compared to the Greek one makes them more confusing for Greek learners of English. For example, see the response in the Box below (for further examples, see Box 1, Appendix 5.5).

Marios: Well comparing the two languages most problems have to do with vowels because they some of them are like very different to the Greek ones so we find it hard to explain to students how to pronounce them whereas consonants are very close to closer anyway.

Nevertheless, 1/3 of the teachers interviewed disagreed. For example, Liam said that he believed differences in vowels to have a similar effect on intelligibility with differences in consonants (see Box below).

Liam: No, you see you wouldn't say the difference between 'ship' and 'sheep' is very important and that's a vowel difference but what about the difference between 'ship' and 'sip' that's equally important isn't it. Seems to me. I'm not sure how you can distinguish… if you are really trying to get a good accent the differences in consonants are very very important.

Interestingly, Jenner (1989: 3) also viewed vowels as indispensable for successful communication; vowel quality or 'length' were viewed as of a high priority in the Common Core[182] since "all native varieties make oppositions based on vowel length;

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[182] See Appendix 2.2 'Jenkins's Lingua Franca Core and other phonological cores'.

i.e. they all have some long vowels contrasting with some short vowels, and the loss of these contrasts seriously impairs intelligibility". Also, in the third edition of Gilbert's *Clear Speech* (2005a), vowel quality was upgraded to high-priority status and there were many 'vowel work' activities in that book.

Now, as far as Greek EFL learners are concerned, the problems with phonemic contrasts between vowels for perception and production have been well documented (see Hooke and Rowell, 1982, Botinis, 1998 and Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2001). Vassilakis (2004) recognises the importance of vowels in this respect but also believes that a problem which adds to the distinct nonnativeness of Greek speakers' English, while also causing problems of comprehensibility, is the lack of aspiration of syllable-initial fortis plosives /p/, /t/ and /k/ in accented syllables, which might therefore be perceived as the equivalent voiced lenis plosives; "thus, a Greek speaker might be heard as saying 'bat', 'duck' and 'gore' when (s)he is actually trying to articulate 'pat', 'tuck' and 'core' respectively" (: 30). He goes as far as to argue that since the aspirated release of the plosives is found in all major accents of English, unlike the vowel length distinction which is not (Giegerich, 1992: 100-101, 219 cited in Vassilikakis, 2004: 30), the former poses a greater threat to intelligibility and is thus, a more urgent problem. Aspiration is the main distinguishing feature between fortis and lenis in different phonetic environments (see Cruttenden, 2001: 300-301; Roach, 2000: 34; Giegerich, 1992: 219 all cited in Vassilakis, 2004: 30) and as such it contributes significantly to intelligibility and since it is present in all accents of English it is relevant no matter which norm or model the learner has selected. Vassilakis (2004) points out that this has been confirmed by Jenkins's (2000) research and has led her to include this as a feature in her Lingua Franca Core "on the grounds

that both native and non-native listeners tend to mishear the syllable-initial /p/, /t/ and

/k/ for /b/, /d/ and /g/ respectively" (Jenkins, 2000: 140-141).

Having consulted Hooke and Rowell (1982), Kenworthy (1987), Pennington (1996), Papaethymiou-Lytra (2001) and Power (2011)[183] in terms of pronunciation problem areas for learners of English from a Greek language background and having written assignments on the performance target in respect of the consonant system (and in respect of the vowel system) of English for Greek learners of English (as part of the 'Phonology' course of my Masters in 'Applied Linguistics', 2000-2001, Cardiff University), I am now convinced that vowels as well as consonants are very important for the perception and production of spoken English for Greek learners of English.

Greek learners of English encounter various problems when required to perceive and produce certain consonants as well as consonant sequences and clusters. For example, as it has been already mentioned in this section, Greek speakers of English often produce voiceless stops[184], /p/, /t/, /k/, with not quite enough aspiration[185] and Kenworthy (1987) argues that it is vital for learners to use appropriate aspiration when they pronounce words such as 'pit, 'tip' and 'kit' because "if there is no obvious puff of air, then English listeners will probably hear these sounds as /b, d, g/ respectively" (Kenworthy, 1987: 59). Fortunately, the tendency to aspirate can be cultivated as it is partly present in Greek. For instance, learners could

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[183] 14 out of Power's (2011) 29 common English pronunciation problems as far as a Greek language background is concerned refer to consonant production problems and the remaining 15 to vowel production problems.

[184] 'Voiced' sounds are produced with vocal cord vibration, whereas 'voiceless' ones are not. Also, 'stops' are vocal sounds made with a complete obstruction, or stoppage, of the airflow coming up from the lungs (Pennington, 1996: 42-43)

[185] A voiceless stop followed by a vowel, such as in the word 'tack', has a period of voicing lag just after its production. In the production of a voiceless stop, the vocal folds do not vibrate at all throughout the period of oral closure. Additionally, the vocal fold remain slack and open for a period of time before the vocal fold vibration of a following vowel begins. During this period, air may be released through the open glottis as a concomitant of the opening of the oral closure. In other words, when the voiceless stops are produced there is a very slight pause before the following vowel during which a slight puff of air is released. This release of air is called aspiration (Pennington, 1996: 53)

be asked to say Greek names with English type aspirated stops. The resulting amusement could be quite useful to establish the difference between the two languages. Names such as 'Panos', 'Tania' and 'Kate' could be used. The Greek pronunciation of these names may sound like 'Banos', 'Dania' and 'Gate' to the English ear (see Kenworthy, 1987: 139).

Another example concerns the tendency of Greek learners to both hear and produce the approximants /j/ and /w/ as full vowels; /i/ and /u/ respectively. Even though the last two sounds are very similar to the consonants, the main problem lies in the fact that if /j/ and /w/ are pronounced in this way, the English listener will interpret them as separate syllables (Kenworthy, 1987: 139). For this reason, it is important for the students to devote a considerable amount of time and effort in order to learn how to 'shorten' these sounds in words such as 'yard', 'yes', 'will' and 'watch'.

A final example, I would like to mention, concerns the number and complexity of cluster types in English which presents an area of difficulty for many NNSs. Greek learners often mishear and misproduce the second consonant of the following phonemes: /mp/, /nt/ and /nk/. Thus, the word 'simple' may be misheard as 'symbol' and the word 'ankle' may be mispronounced as 'angle'. Also, some Greek learners have difficulties in pronouncing correctly the cluster /sm-/ (see Kenworthy, 1987: 140-141). For instance, the 's' of 'smart' would be pronounced as /z/ and 'smart' would sound like /zmart/.

Moving on to vowels, it is important to note that in slow, careful speech, people tend to articulate vowels fully, whereas in rapid, casual speech, the incidence

of reduced vowels[186] increases. In fact, experimental evidence has demonstrated that in rapid speech, all vowels tend toward the middle of the vowel space, towards the position of the schwa, which can be considered the neutral vowel position for English. As Pennington (1996: 94) puts it: "the tendency to weaken vowels towards schwa in conversational English seems to be a difficult aspect of English to learn for most non-native speakers, possibly in part because of an over-reliance on spelling as a guide to pronunciation". When considering Greek learners of English, we need to bear in mind that the schwa /ə/ does not exist in the Greek language and "Greek learners tend to substitute either /e/ as in 'bed' or the Greek vowel /a/ as in 'iota' for schwa" (Kenworthy, 1987: 141). Greek speakers of English need to be encouraged to pronounce it correctly and, if some of them, do not succeed in doing so, their teacher may be willing to accept the first form of substitution that involves /ɛ/.

Another problem area for Greek learners of English is the production of diphthongs[187]; even though in Greek two vowel sounds can occur in sequence in words, the Greek language has hardly any diphthongs (Hooke and Rowell, 1982) and, thus, for example "the /ou/ diphthong in 'coat' may need special attention" (Kenworthy, 1987: 141).

Moreover, Kenworthy (1987) notes that Greek speakers of English often confuse 'beat' with 'bit', as the Greek language has one vowel which is midway between the two vowels /iː/ and /ɪ/ and, thus, need to use extreme lip-spreading in order to produce /i/.

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[186] Full vowels are those that occur in positions of strength or focus in words and long utterances, for example in stressed syllables. Reduced vowels occur in non-focal, weak positions in words or longer utterances (see Pennington, 1996: 93).

[187] "Diphthongs differ from monophthongs in that they involve a movement, usually referred to as a 'glide', from one vowel position to another" (Finch, 2000: 75).

Overall, there are problem areas in terms of Greek learners' perception and production of English vowels as well as English consonants and some of those also seem to have a pervasive effect on the comprehensibility of spoken discourse and the learners' production of oral English discourse. Of course, the extent to which such areas will need to be addressed in terms of comprehensibility and will need to be minimized (or overcome) in terms of production will depend on the pronunciation model followed and the pronunciation performance target aimed at in the context of a specific teaching situation. Especially in the case of advanced learners of English, it would be good for learners to be provided with information regarding which styles of pronunciation are appropriate depending on the particular speech event or the level of formality of a specific situation.

In the interviews, the teachers were also asked if they taught segmental features first and then suprasegmental features (or vice versa) as well as to justify their preferred practice (interested readers can see Appendix 5.5 for information on this).

An important finding that emerged as part of the interview data was the importance attached to intonation by a couple of teachers. For example, Katrina said that intonation is the most important pronunciation feature because 'when we have a student taking the proficiency exam his intonation is important and I guess that it is more strictly evaluated. Because many times when I've spoken to examiners a comment mostly always is the intonation problems'. Intonation also received the highest rating of all pronunciation features in the questionnaire data and even though the difference in the scores between intonation and stress and intonation and connected speech were not found to be statistically significant, intonation was found

to more important than vowels in a marginally statistically significant way and more important than consonants in a statistically significant way. **This is a very promising finding and points to the rise in the status of intonation which as a feature of pronunciation has been rather neglected in the past;** "intonation has traditionally not had the same kind of attention in the past that has been accorded to the study of consonants, vowels and word stress" (Tench, 1996: 1). Unfortunately, this has been the case even though intonation serves very important functions; all of them delineated by Tench (1996). I will reproduce the beginning lines of Tench's (1996) widely acclaimed work, 'Intonation Systems of English' to briefly introduce the reader to 'what intonation is and what it does':

> Intonation refers to the rise and fall of the pitch of the voice in spoken language. When you say something, you cannot say it without some kind of intonation – even a monotone can be classed as kind of intonation. It is also important: we have all made an observation like 'It is not what they said, but the way the said it'. The 'way they said it' is a rough guide to what intonation is.
>
> Tench, 1996: 1

Let us now compare the results of our study in relation to the perceived importance of segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation with those of other studies. In Breitkreutz et al's (2001) study on pronunciation teaching practices in Canada, "when respondents were asked whether they emphasised mainly prosodic features or individual sounds (segments) in their instruction, 89% stated that they teach a combination of the two (: 56). This finding can be seen as an indication that the vast majority of the teachers in that study viewed segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation as equally important. Indeed, Breitkreutz et al (2001: 58) concluded that "an overwhelming majority of respondents believe that a combination of suprasegmental and segmental features is important". Such a finding seems to be in agreement with the relevant finding of our study, albeit consonants were perceived as less important than vowels, stress, intonation and connected speech features by the

respondents in our study. Unfortunately, a direct comparison between this finding of Breitkreutz et al's (2001) study and the relevant finding of our study is not possible as the teachers in the former study were not asked to comment on each pronunciation feature alone but were only presented with the two levels of pronunciation; the segmental and suprasegmental one. In Cenoz and Lecumberri's (1999) study on learners' views on the acquisition of English pronunciation, the participants were asked to rate the importance of vowels, consonants, stress and intonation in terms of comprehension and production of spoken English from a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 = not important and 10 = crucial). Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999: 11) found that their participants "tended to consider segmentals more important than suprasegmentals". Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) offered the following explanation:

> The learners who participated in this study had received very little phonetic training when the data were collected, but they had studied English for a number of years, so it is very likely that their secondary school learning experiences led them to identify pronunciation with segmentals.
>
> Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 11

Cenoz and Lecumberri's (1999) explanation is a plausible one since phonetics courses and teaching materials tend to concentrate more on segmentals (see Seidlhofer, 1995 for more information) and thus, a greater emphasis on segmentals may indeed be the case in many language classrooms around the world leading EFL learners to believe that segmentals are more important than suprasegmentals. On the other hand, the participants in our study were EFL teachers so it seems that they had a better idea with respect to the relative importance of segmentals and suprasegmentals as opposed to the participants in Cenoz and Lecumberri's (1999) study who where 1st year 'English Studies' university students.

The relative importance of segmentals and suprasegmentals has been extensively debated in the relevant literature. For example, Field (2005) cites research

evidence that suggests a more important role for suprasegmentals than segmentals (see Field, 2005: 402)[188] and Dauer (2005: 546) points out that Jenkins's (2000) LFC "departs from current pronunciation methodology by emphasising segmentals (consonants and vowels) and downplaying the importance of suprasegmentals (rhythm, word stress and intonation)". Interestingly, we have seen that according to ELT writers, suprasegmentals are perceived as more important than segmentals for the comprehensibility of spoken language (Theme 6, Section 1.2.1) whereas according to ELT PRON writers, segmentals and suprasegmentals are equally important (Theme 3, Section 1.2.2). This research suggests that teachers are ready to embrace the view of ELT PRON writers as they attached importance to all pronunciation features for the learners' understanding and production of spoken English, albeit a bit less to consonants.

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[188] For example, Derwing, Munro and Wiebe (1998) who studied the effects of both segmental and suprasegmental instruction on learners' comprehensibility ratings and concluded that the latter had a greater effect on performance in communicative contexts (Field, 2005: 402).

5.2 Discussion for Research Question 2

5.2.1 Pronunciation Models

The vast majority of the teachers (92%) and the vast majority of the learners (96%) agreed on the selection of a *standard British accent* (RP) or a *standard American accent* (GA) or *both* as pronunciation models. More specifically, 39% of the teachers opted for RP, 32% for GA and 21% for both RP and GA. As for the learners, 39% opted for RP, 43% for GA and 14% for both RP and GA.

In the interviews, the teachers were asked to provide an explanation as to the teachers' overwhelming preference for RP and/or GA as pronunciation models. Their responses were allocated into three categories.

Category 1: *Focus on EFL exams, course books followed and listening material available* (10 teachers).

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the teachers interviewed accounted for the preference for those accents as models by referring to the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams, the listening material available and the course books used. For examples of teachers' responses see box below (for further examples, see Box 1, Appendix 5.6).

> Marios: All exams use some kind of British or American based accent so if you want a student of yours to take an exam you have to concentrate on one of the two varieties… and especially in Greece where you know everybody takes the exam.
>
> Aphroditi: …we depend on the materials. The materials for the exams are I would say standard English. Standard British or American English. Course books follow exams and we in a way this is our tool I cannot produce my own course book

Category 2: *Favourable attitudes towards standard NS models* (2 teachers)

A couple of teachers justified the choice of RP and GA as pronunciation model(s) on the grounds that those accents are traditionally viewed as most 'accurate' and 'correct' ways of pronouncing the English language (Aspa and Katrina).

Category 3: *Lack of confidence on behalf of non-native speaking teachers* (1 teacher).

There was one teacher, whose response, had to form a category on its own.

> Liam: I suspect it's insecurity. Because they [the teachers] are not themselves native speakers and therefore they would prefer to er on the side of safety.
> Vicky (interviewer): So you think they play it safe?
> Liam: They play it safe. Yeah. I think it's fairly reasonable.

Liam's statement cannot be dismissed as untrue but needs to be approached with caution: 43 out of the 47 teachers that completed the questionnaire chose RP and/or GA as their preferred pronunciation models; 36 out of those 47 teachers had Greek as their L1 and the remaining 11 had English as their L1.

The results of our study with respect to pronunciation models are in substantial agreement with the results of many of the studies reviewed as part of this thesis (Section 2.2, Chapter 2). Let us consider these results below:

First, the vast majority of the teachers that participated in our study claimed to use NS models, namely RP and/or GA, in their teaching of English pronunciation. **Indeed, the use of NS models seems to be common practice among EFL teachers in different contexts and, especially, in the context of Greece** (see Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997 for the case of Austria; Holliday, 2005[189] for the case of Taiwan; and, Sifakis and Sougari, 2005; Sifakis and Sougari, 2003; Hannam, 2005; Batziakas, 2008; Kanellou 2001 for the case of Greece). **This finding is far from surprising if we consider the fact that NS models have been and still are very prominent in all aspects of ELT; from teacher training courses to teachers' classroom practices and from course books and classroom listening material to EFL exams set by major examination boards.** In her review of the pronunciation models dealt with as

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[189] Holliday (2005) refers to the preference for British or American models of pronunciation put forward by a Taiwanese teacher and her Taiwanese students. The teacher, Kuo, says that "the native-speaker norm, to us, is the only reliable source and the target that we look to as the way of learning English" (Holiday, 2005: 166).

part of English language teachers' training courses, Jenkins (2000) has found that the

focus is on RP or GA (see quotes reproduced below):

> On many programmes – I have in mind certain short (for example, four-week) initial training courses, such as the Trinity College and UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) Certificates – the selection of a model is not dealt with at all. Rather, it is assumed that teachers need to be equipped with a cursory knowledge of one of the two main 'native speaker' prestige models, that is, RP or GA, regardless of where in the world they intend to teach subsequently. In British-based courses the assumption is that teachers will teach RP, and in American-based courses the assumption is that the teachers will teach GA.
>
> <div align="right">Jenkins, 2000: 199</div>

> On longer courses, whether British-based inservice courses such as the UCLES Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA), American pre-service master's degrees, or European (non-British) preservice undergraduate degrees, the assumptions are no different. The approach is still oriented towards educating teachers in either RP or GA or, occasionally, providing a choice of either; the knowledge base is simply less cursory.
>
> <div align="right">Jenkins, 2000: 199</div>

Interestingly, in Greece teachers need to teach both models, regardless of whether or

not they have been taught both models as part of their teacher training courses (that is,

if they have taken such a course), since some students take the Cambridge EFL

exams, some take the Michigan EFL exams and some take both. Jenkins (2000) also

points out that pronunciation courses as well as the overwhelming majority of

pronunciation course books and pronunciation materials on both sides of the Atlantic

feature NS models; productively, the focus is on how learners of English will be

intelligible to L1 receivers and, receptively, the focus is on how learners of English

will understand many aspects of NS pronunciation from sounds through assimilatory

features to shades of attitude expressed in pitch movements (Jenkins, 2000: 234).

Wrembel's (2005) review of commercially available English pronunciation teaching

materials[190] confirmed Jenkins's (2000) observation as to NS models being the target

model varieties taught:

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[190] Wrembel's (2005) review concentrated on commercially available materials designed specifically for pronunciation teaching, excluding EFL course books in which pronunciation is taught as one of the subcomponent skills, particularly because comprehensive studies of this area have been conducted (i.e. Szpyra-Kozlowska et al 2003).

> The overwhelming majority of the textbooks offer British English as a model accent (19), far fewer teach American English (10), while 2 textbooks offer the Australian accent…However, a very different trend is evident in the case of pronunciation courses available on CD-ROMS. Here American English prevails (11) and British English is far less prominent (4). Moreover, there are only single occurrences of Australian and Canadian English (2).
>
> Wrembel 2005: 422

Levis (2005) also recognises that most currently published pronunciation materials hold that "prestige native speaker versions of English are the proper models for pronunciation learning" (: 371). Furthermore, Matsuda (2002) found that standard American English was represented almost exclusively in her sample of EFL textbooks used in secondary and private senior high schools in Japan (: 437 cited in Garrett, 2009: 278). As for existing international tests of English, according to Davies et al (2003) they have not yet embraced EIL and "represent the old colonial Standard English of the UK, USA" (cited in Jenkins, 2006: 49).

Second, the vast majority of the learners in our study expressed their preference for (NS) models, namely RP and/or GA, in the mastery of English pronunciation. **The fact that EFL learners are strongly in favour of NS models of pronunciation has been demonstrated by research studies that have taken place in various expanding circle countries and in different teaching situations** (see Janicka et al, 2005, Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; and, Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005 for the case of Poland, Starks and Paltridge, 1996[191] and Matsuda, 2003 for the case of Japan, Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999 for the case of Spain, Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997 for the case of Austria and Kanellou, 2001 for the case of Greece). **A number of reasons have been provided by researchers in order to help account for EFL learners' overwhelming preference for NS models for pronunciation; the most influential one seems to be the learners' English language learning experience as**

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[191] Starks and Paltridge (1996) investigated attitudes of tertiary level Japanese students in New Zealand and found their preference to be a combination of American and British English with British English first and then American English (information obtained from Garrett, 2009).

it has been shaped by the models offered at schools and the materials available (see Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005; Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999). It has already been mentioned that a limitation of our study was the fact that it was not possible to interview a sample of the learners once the questionnaires had been analysed; the teachers were asked to justify the rationale for their choice of pronunciation models whereas the learners were not given the opportunity to do so. Nevertheless, it is likely that the learners of our study also held more favourable attitudes towards RP and GA since those accents were closer to their English language learning experience.

It is worth noting that the 'English Department' university students in Janicka et al (2005) were not only in favour of a NS model in terms of their own pronunciation but also declared that they would impose an American or British standard on their prospective students. So, it seems that not only do EFL learners favour NS models when they are learning the language; this attitude accompanies them later on too when some of them become EFL teachers themselves. **It seems that as long as NS models feature in teacher training courses, in ELT manuals and handbooks, in ELT PRON manuals, in EFL course books and the accompanying listening material and in the English language tests set by the major EFL examination boards, EFL teachers and learners will continue to view them as central in the mastery of English pronunciation.**

Third, the greater preference for RP over GA, as recorded in the case of the teachers of our study, has also been reported by other researchers. Hannam (2005) attributed the teachers' view that RP is more suitable and easier to use in the language classroom "to the availability of pre-produced samples" (: 5); Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) maintained that their learners held more favourable attitudes to

British accents (including RP) due to the abundance of learning materials in which RP was used as a model; Dalton-Puffer et al (1997) believed that their learners' preference for RP was due to the learners' familiarity with the particular accent in school or through travel. The geographical closeness of Poland and Greece to Britain and the greater abundance of materials grounded in RP which seems to be the case worldwide (see Przedlacka, 2005; Wrembel, 2005) may also help to account for the greater preference for RP over GA in Waniek-Klimczak's (1997), Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak's (2005), Sifakis and Sougari's (2003) and Kanellou's (2001) studies. As Przedlacka (2005: 18) puts it: "In Europe, the most popular model accent for EFL purposes has been, throughout the 20th century, RP" and since "RP also forms the basis of most English language teaching tapes and CDs, for both academic and general purposes… the accent is familiar, even to those who are only vaguely aware of its existence" (ibid: 18). **It seems that, in the European context, RP is at the heart of people's English language teaching and learning experience.**

Let us now consider the reasons why RP was more popular than GA for the teachers in our study and speculate as to why GA was slightly more popular than RP for the learners in our study. As far as the teachers are concerned, we can return to the interview data presented in Section 5.1.5; **the preponderance of RP in course book material up to pre-lower level, the fact that the Cambridge EFL exams have been traditionally more popular in Greece than the Michigan EFL exams, the geographical closeness of Greece and Britain, and, last but not least, the fact that Greek L1 teachers have been mostly exposed to RP as part of their training are all factors that may have shaped or influenced the teachers' choice of pronunciation models in this respect.**

As for the learners, their greater preference for GA over RP can also be interpreted with the help of the interview data since half of the teachers interviewed addressed this issue. For example, Sarah said the following:

> Sarah: I think that the British accent is more predominant within the course material I'm not sure about the reason behind it that I don't know perhaps its traditionalists who believe that perhaps the British accent is a little bit clearer and easier to understand but a lot of students disagree and they prefer the American accent 'cause it's the one they've been exposed to through different media.

The remaining five teachers also attributed the relative popularity of the American accent among the learners to the learners' exposure to the particular accent through the media; 'students very often listen to American English on the radio or TV… they are big fans of American movies' (Foteini) and a couple of teachers also mentioned that the students find the American accent easier to understand.

Interestingly, in Kanellou's (2001) study, RP was chosen by 89% of the teachers (11% chose GA) and 83% of the learners (17% chose GA) as the desired pronunciation model. The difference in the findings can easily be accounted for if we take into consideration the fact that about a decade ago the vast majority of the learners were preparing to sit the Cambridge EFL exams (and, consequently the teachers followed the Cambridge University EFL syllabus) whereas nowadays the Michigan EFL exams are also extremely popular (see interview data, Section 5.1.5); so, teachers find themselves helping learners prepare for the Cambridge and/or the Michigan EFL exams. Kanellou (2001) also claimed that more prestige was attached to the British English accent at the time but nowadays things seem to be changing and the American English is gaining more acceptance. Indeed, the learners' exposure to American English, through the internet, the movies, music, radio and TV, is making

American English more popular than it has been in the past for European learners of English. **So, it seems that even though the most influential model of English pronunciation in Europe has traditionally been RP (Wells, 1990; Trask, 1996 cited in Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999: 4), GA is experiencing a rise in its status in terms of teachers' and learners' attitudes. Of course, further research needs to be carried out in this area to confirm if indeed this is the case in other European contexts too or if it is unique to the Greek context.**

5.2.2 Pronunciation Performance Targets

According to the questionnaire data, ideally, teachers and learners would like the learners' pronunciation to come 'very close' to a native-like model but, in practice, they expect that it will come 'quite close'. Nevertheless, learners' wishes and expectations were found to be higher than the teachers'.

In the interviews, the teachers were asked to discuss the teachers' responses with respect to the 'ideal' and the 'practical' pronunciation performance target[192]. The following two categories emerged:

Category 1: *Aim is too high; the case of the 'ideal' versus the 'real' target; why some students nearly reach this target and others do not* (9 teachers)

The majority of the teachers' responses were found to belong to this category. Those teachers focused on the gap that often exists between theory and practice; see Sarah's response in the box below (for further examples, see Box 1, Appendix 5.7).

> Sarah: When you think about a teacher's target…you would like to have a higher target in order to push yourself as a teacher and your students and perhaps in reality we always fall short a little bit of our target ehm but to a satisfactory level.

A couple of teachers pointed out that this is especially true as far as the mastery of pronunciation is concerned; for example, Marios said that 'pronunciation might be the most difficult aspect of learning the language'. It was pointed out that some students will succeed in achieving a near native-like accent whereas others will not; students' language aptitude, motivation/desire (see Evanthia's and Liam's responses, Box below) and listening ability (Chara, Box 1, Appendix 5.7) were identified as important factors in this respect.

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[192] The relevant interview question was as follows: The teachers said that they would like their learners' accent to come 'very close' to a native-like model. However, they expect that it will only come 'quite close'. Why do you think this is?

> Evanthia: ok yes we aim high but not all learners can respond to this target. I have students for example if you listen to them you will think they are native speakers. However, these students have a special talent what we call language aptitude. When it comes to a language class the average student will not sound like this.
>
> Liam: Because some students are having the same lesson some students will turn out with a near native accent. And other students in the same class, same teacher same lesson will turn out with not such a good accent.
> Vicky(interviewer): What does this depend on?
> Liam: I would say that by and large it's desire. Whether they want it or not.

Category 2: *Not enough time spent on the practice of pronunciation* (4 teachers)

Interestingly, the teachers whose responses were allocated to this category expressed the view that either not enough time is spent on the practice of pronunciation in class (Angela, Box 2, Appendix 5.7) or learners do not have the opportunity to practise English outside class (see Maria's response, Box below).

> Maria: in Greece they only practise English 5 to 6 hours a week in English school. They don't speak English at home they don't speak English when they go shopping. I think that's how you improve your pronunciation… if you live in a country where you have to speak it and that's how it is improved. You can't improve a Greek student's only by practising English the times they come to school.

So, these teachers did not refer to specific learners' characteristics that seem to affect the mastery of NLP (like teachers' responses in Category 1); they referred to factors that had nothing to do with learners' characteristics.

It is possible that the view that there is usually a gap between 'theory and practice' (and that people's aims tend to be higher than their actual performance) is also shared by the learners of our study. **The learners may not be aware of all the factors identified by the teachers, 'amount of exposure to the language', 'time spent in class on the practice of pronunciation', 'language aptitude', 'desire' and 'listening ability' but may be aware of some of those. Nevertheless, the fact that the learners' ambitions and expectations are higher than the teachers' in the**

area of pronunciation performance targets may indicate that the learners are more ambitious whereas the teachers are more realistic.

Moreover, when the teachers and learners of our study were asked to choose between 'native-like pronunciation' (NLP) and 'accented international intelligibility' (AII), virtually all teachers and the majority of the learners opted for *AII* as the most important pronunciation goal; nevertheless, one third of the learners opted for *NLP*. A highly statistically significant relationship emerged between learners' and teachers' answers $\chi2$ (1, 374) = 17.801, $p < 0.001$ (alpha = 0.05); there was a much greater tendency among learners than teachers to regard *NLP* as the most important goal.

In the interviews, the teachers were asked to comment on the fact that *NLP* was chosen by 1/3 of the learners. Their responses were as follows:

Category 1: *Those learners' expectations are not realistic* (6 teachers)

Half of the teachers interviewed felt that those students' expectations were not realistic (e.g. Chara said that 'usually, they [the learners] think highly of their abilities and themselves') and pointed out that many students are not aware of the great number of factors and the complexities involved in the mastery of NLP; see Sarah's response in Box below (for further examples, see Box 3, Appendix 5.7):

Sarah: the teachers understand the practicality of getting to that level it's not just something that can be taught in the classroom perhaps it has to it involves living in the country perhaps for an amount of time it takes you years of practice going to university it goes beyond language schools… whereas as teachers we are more aware of the practicalities of the classroom and the constraints of time.

A couple of teachers felt that learners operate under the notion that reaching NLP is what is required, in other words, a necessary part of learning the language (see Box 3, Appendix 5.7); this notion may stem from the belief that language is a subject like any

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other and you can master it completely and 'gradually they realise that well it's a notion' (Aphroditi).

Category 2: *Those students aim higher; the reasons why* (5 teachers)

The teachers whose responses were allocated to this category tried to guess the characteristics of those students who opted for NLP, 'who had higher aspirations' (Evanthia). A couple of teachers said that some learners love the English language to such an extent that they want to imitate the pronunciation of NSs. Also, these are students who have higher aims in general; 'higher expectations of themselves when it comes to other subjects as well' (Evanthia, Box 4, Appendix 5.7). Marios referred to Lower+ students' higher expectations in general which also extend to the mastery of NLP, something they find as intrinsically rewarding; see Box below:

Marios: Proficiency students actually have higher expectations even concerning their pronunciation as well… I've seen that many proficiency students are actually learning for their own personal satisfaction. And part of the satisfaction you get from learning a language is getting the pronunciation right. That's what they tell me anyway. Some of them really want and they feel they've accomplished something. They have this sense of satisfaction when they can pronounce correctly words…

Marios's view helps explain the Lower+ students' slightly greater preference for NLP compared to –Lower students (Section 4.4.4). Another teacher, Liam, claimed that girls' desire to master NLP is much greater than boys' desire on the following grounds:

Liam: Good for them. That's encouraging. They were all girls (laughs) more girls…. Boys want to fit in with their peer group they don't want to stand out as being somebody who speaks really really well even if they can, they won't. …whereas girls you know they are perfectly happy to show off and be the only one.

Liam, who is British (his wife is also British) and has lived in Greece for over 30 years, told an interesting story in order to support this point; his son, Jack, is a fluent bilingual in English and Greek with NLP in both languages. When Jack was a

teenager, he would modify his English pronunciation in such a way as to resemble his Greek L1 friends' Greek-English pronunciation when conversing with his friends and referring to English computer football strategy games and so on. Liam has also found throughout his teaching experience in Greece, which spans three decades, that girls displayed a greater desire to master NLP than boys. 'By and large the best speakers are girls' Liam said and stated that he did not believe that girls had some sort of special talent over boys; it depended exclusively on desire; whether or not they wanted to sound native-like. Interestingly, as part of the questionnaire data of the study it emerged that female learners (M = 1.65, S.D = 0.800) would like their accent to come 'closer' to a *native-like model* compared to male learners (M = 2.01, S.D = 0.818), t (326) = 3.856, $p < 0.001$ (adjusted alpha = 0.016) and, also, there was a slightly greater preference among females for NLP compared to males χ^2 (1, 327) = 4,944, $p = 0.026$ (adjusted alpha is set at 0.016 here). Leather (1983) cited a number of factors that apparently "constrain learners' achievements in second-language pronunciation" (: 205) and one of them was the learners' sex. He wrote:

> Sex may also be a predictor variable. In a survey, female learners were more favourably disposed towards the prestige accent of L2 than males (Gussenhoven, 1979): the stronger orientation of women towards prestige speech in the mother tongue (Hudson, 1980) may carry over to the learning of other languages.
>
> Leather, 1983: 206-207

Finally, it is worth noting that a couple of teachers (Evanthia and Liam) were pleasantly surprised by the relatively high percentage of students who opted for NLP.

Qualitative questionnaire results

Let us now move on to the qualitative data results of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires; the teachers' and learners' responses in terms of justifying their chosen pronunciation performance target (NLP or AII). The teachers' main reasons

for their choice of *AII* as the most important goal for their learners comprised the following: a) their considerations in terms of an appropriate communicative goal; emphasis on successful communication (54%), b) realistic expectations in terms of target performance; mastery of a native-like accent is not a feasible target (31%) and, c) issues of origin, identity and character; the desire for their learners to retain a token of speaker's identity (11%). The learners' main reasons for their choice of *AII* as the most important goal for themselves comprised the following: a) their considerations in terms of an appropriate communicative goal; emphasis on successful communication (58%), b) realistic expectations in terms of target performance; mastery of a native-like accent is not a feasible target (12%), c) issues of origin, identity and character; the desire to retain a token of speaker's identity in particular, their Greek identity (16 %) and, d) limited goals (e.g. passing exams); this reason pointed to a purely utilitarian approach to the learning of English (4%).

It is striking that more than half of the teachers and more than half of the learners placed great emphasis on issues of intelligibility, comprehension and communication; reason (a) attracted the largest number of responses in the teachers' case (54%) as well as in the learners' case (57%). **Effective communication seems to be the first thing that comes to the mind of most teachers and learners who opted for AII as the most important pronunciation goal; however, it is interesting to note that pronunciation was not viewed as the most important element for effective communication by the teachers and learners of this study** (Section 4.3.1)

Furthermore, the perceived difficulty for the learners to achieve NLP was expressed by 1/3 of the teachers but only by 1/10 of the learners. This finding may help account for the learners' higher wishes and expectations compared to the teachers' in the area of pronunciation performance targets. It also gives further

support to the teachers' view that **learners' expectations in this area may not be realistic and/or that learners may not be aware of the great number of factors that may influence the mastery of NLP** (please refer back to the interview data of this section); **teachers are more likely to have a clearer understanding of the complexities involved in the mastery of NLP owing to their training or teaching experience.**

Also, in the case of the learners, the vast majority whose responses were allocated to the 'issues of origin/identity/character' category displayed a preoccupation with their Greek identity to the extent that 'Greek identity-national pride' had to be featured in its title; this was not the case in the teachers' similar category which only included general comments that did not mention a particular country or national identity. Of course, a simple explanation for this difference is that teachers were required to think and respond in terms of all learners in general whereas the learners were each asked to think about and respond in terms of themselves. Furthermore, the reader may recall that 8% of the learners that participated in the study did not have Greek as an L1. **Nevertheless, there was no learner who referred to their own national identity unless they were Greek; for example, there was no learner who claimed that he/she wanted others to be able to tell that he/she is Albanian when he/she speaks in English'.** This finding becomes a very interesting one when interpreted against the backdrop of the complex situation pertaining to migrants in Greece (see Section 3.1.1). **Is it possible that those learners who do not have Greek as their L1 do not to feel comfortable to express national pride in terms of their country of origin in the context of the EFL classroom in Thessaloniki, Greece? Or does this finding just reflect the need for migrants to socially integrate in the country they find themselves in?** As a Greek citizen, I can

testify that migrants often change their names into Greek ones in an effort to be more accepted by Greeks as well as to increase their chances for employment in Greece. Nevertheless, to pursue further this line of enquiry is not directly relevant to the interests of this thesis; nevertheless it can form the basis for future research in the area of ELT and migrant students in Greece, which to my knowledge is an area that has not yet been addressed by researchers.

Moving on to the learners' reasons for their choice of *NLP,* they comprised the following: a) notions of correctness/ accuracy; 'this is the appropriate/ right thing to do' (25%), b) effective communication is more likely to be achieved (22%), c) sense of achievement/ indication of high level of competence in English (17%), d) love for the English language & its pronunciation (16%) and, e) greater acceptance by native speakers; fitting in/ feeling more comfortable (9%). Interestingly, a couple of the teachers touched upon reason 'a' as part of their interpretation as to the reasons why some learners chose NLP and, also, two more teachers guessed reason 'd' (see interview data earlier in this section). Reason 'c' was also mentioned in the teachers' interviews especially in relation to those students who have chosen to go beyond the – Lower level. Reason 'e' is understandable, if we take into consideration the fact that nearly half of the learners that participated in the study may move to an English-speaking country 'for studies' as recorded in their responses to the 'contexts of use of English' question (Section 4.6.1). Reason (b) is rather puzzling as a person's oral discourse may be intelligible even if is not native-like. Perhaps, those learners felt that NLP gives them a greater sense of security in terms of their communication with other speakers of English.

Overall, **the fact that 1 out of 3 learners in our study chose NLP over AII is creditable. 1/4 of the teachers interviewed also expressed their admiration for**

this percentage of learners regardless of whether or not this target is reasonably high or even appropriate.

As the reader may recall, the supplementary categorisation of the teachers' and learners' responses yielded the following two thematic groupings: a) 'mentions of perfect/correct English' (20% of teachers' responses and 6.4% of learners' responses) and, b) 'affective items'; issues of 'self-regard' and 'regard by others' (10% of teachers' responses and 26% of all learners' responses).

The teachers and learners whose responses were allocated to category (a) referred to NLP as a 'perfect accent' and/or 'correct English' regardless of whether or not they opted for this performance target. If NLP is perceived as 'perfect pronunciation' what are the implications for AII as a pronunciation goal? Do the teachers aim for the former in order for their learners to reach the latter? Is NLP the 'ideal' goal and AII the 'realistic' one? Is this what was meant by the difference in teachers' and learners' scores in terms of 'how close they would like' the learners' accent to come to a native-like model as opposed to 'how close they expect that it will come' to a native-like model? **Moreover, the fact that some teachers still operate under the notion that NLP is perceived as 'perfect pronunciation' and as a component of an excellent command of the English language can be seen as an indication that the debate on pronunciation models and targets in the context of EIL has had little impact on teachers' views in the area of pronunciation performance targets.** This point will be revisited later on in this section.

For 1 out of 4 learners, how they see (or want to see) themselves and/or how they want others to see them affected their choice of pronunciation goal whereas only 1 out of 10 teachers considered the issue of 'self-regard/ regard' by others. It seems that the learners are more concerned with their 'image' and the

projection of their persona. Moreover, the reader may recall that more than half of the teachers (56%) made generalisations in their responses whereas less than one third of the learners (30%) did so. The majority of the learners spoke in personal terms. It seems that each teacher had to think in terms of appropriate pronunciation performance targets for different classes of learners whereas each learner had the luxury of thinking in terms of appropriate pronunciation performance targets for himself/herself. Against this backdrop, it should come as no surprise that there was a greater variety among learners' responses (2/3 chose AII and the remaining 1/3 chose NLP) than the teachers' responses (virtually all chose NLP) as **it makes sense for different learners to have different priorities or wishes. And, this is something that needs to be taken into consideration by curriculum designers, program co-ordinators, ELT materials writers, teachers and scholars when making decisions as to (or advocating the imposition of) certain pronunciation performance targets for all learners.**

At this point, it will be interesting to present the teachers' views on pronunciation models and targets once they were informed about the debate on pronunciation models and targets; in the course of the interviews, teachers were asked who they felt was the rightful owner of the English language and whether or not teachers should carry on using NS pronunciation models for English pronunciation (and try to get their learners to imitate those models)[193]. Interestingly, the majority of the teachers interviewed (8 out of 12 teachers) maintained their original position and agreed with the NS side of the debate. The responses of the teachers who adopted the 'NS side' of the debate were divided into three categories according to the reasons they provided:

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[193] For the relevant interview question, see Appendix 3.23 for 'Teacher Interview Questions'.

<u>Teachers who agree with the NS side of the debate on pronunciation goals</u>

<u>Category 1</u>: *Favourable attitudes towards NS accents as models; NSs are the rightful owners of English & native-speaking EFL teachers are important in terms of the students' mastery of pronunciation* (4 teachers)

The teachers whose responses were allocated to this category viewed English as a foreign language and since any foreign language belongs to its NSs whose pronunciation is the right/correct one this is also the case for English (examples of teachers' responses appear in Box 5, Appendix 5.7). Moreover, native-speaking EFL teachers were seen as better equipped for teaching English pronunciation (see Box 5, Appendix 5.7). Thus, NSs of English were not only viewed as the rightful owners of English but also very important and relevant in terms of helping learners master English pronunciation. **The view that NSs of English are better equipped to teach or act as models for pronunciation seems to be prevalent among the views of EFL teachers and learnes in Greece** (see Hannam, 2005) and has been reflected "in the choice by some Greek language schools/departments to put EL1 teachers in charge of the oral component, sometimes at the expense of appropriate qualifications or experience" (Hannam, 2005: 3). This practice has also been described by a few of the teachers interviewed in our study; for example, Sarah, an English L1 teacher, reported that she was mostly appointed as being in charge of the 'speaking' and 'listening' components of language lessons whereas her Greek L1 colleague was in charge of the 'use of English' (i.e. grammar and vocabulary) component. Also, Aspa, pointed out that students' parents often asked for English L1 teachers for their children to master pronunciation and Katrina said that the fact that she is a NS 'is an asset' to her students' parents (see Box 5, Appendix 5.7).

Category 2: *Adherence to NS models represents a higher & safer aim in terms of level of competence in English* (2 teachers)

A couple of teachers expressed their resistance to denouncing the NS based approach to the teaching of pronunciation on the grounds that, for them, NLP in the area of pronunciation targets mean 'aiming high and having higher expectations' whereas AII means 'aiming lower and having lower expectations' (see Box 6, Appendix 5.7). They felt that adopting the EIL side of the debate in their approach to teaching pronunciation would have an adverse effect on students' performance; as Maria put it: 'if we have a high level now and we get average results imagine if we lower the level then we'll get even lower results'.

Category 3: *NS models as a standard/ as a point of reference* (2 teachers)

Finally, a couple of teachers felt that even though nowadays there are more NNSs of English than NSs, NS models can still function as an appropriate point of reference and they are happy to use RP and/or GA as pronunciation model(s). For example, Aspa said that: 'they are right, yeah nowadays there are more non-native speakers of English but again you have to follow a standard. I mean if there isn't a proper way to pronounce a word then it would be confusing'.

Teachers who agree with the EIL side of the debate on pronunciation goals **but…**

The remaining 4 teachers seemed to understand and also agree with the EIL side of the debate (see Marios's response, Box 7, Appendix 5.7) **but, nevertheless, they expressed their ambivalence as to the implementation of the models and targets it entails in the language classroom.** The relatively young age of learners of English in Greece, the focus on the EFL Cambridge and Michigan exams, the course books and listening material available were all mentioned as deterring factors in this respect

(see Sarah's response, Box 7, Appendix 5.7). Liam's perspective, as a native-speaking

English teacher in Greece, is an interesting one (see Box below).

> Liam: As regards to English being owned by native speakers I don't think that's tenable anymore… I think yeah there are still people who say that the only way to speak in English is this but I disagree… **in practical terms of course the second [accented international intelligibility] is more important.** I mean so that people can be understood even if they still have a Greek accent this is more important than native. But as a goal for teachers when you are teaching them then I think it depends on the kids you see what my goal is **I would like them all to speak so well that everybody thought they are native speakers.**
> Vicky (interviewer): ideally
> Liam: Yeah ideally that would be my goal. If they don't want that for whatever reason then there's nothing I can do about it.
> Vicky: do you accept it or
> Liam: **I accept it as long as it there's no bar to understanding and so long as it doesn't make them sound ridiculous**
> Vicky: Like the 'Rooney' example you gave me [earlier]
> Liam: The 'Rooney' example. A young man who goes into a pub in England and starts a conversation about football is perfectly fluent and says 'did you see Rooney /ruːneɪ/ in Wembley /wembleɪ/?" People are going to laugh at the poor guy. That's appalling. You can't send people out so badly equipped.

He understands that in practical terms international intelligibility is the most

important goal but, nevertheless, the goal he sets for his learners includes the element

'so long as it doesn't make them sound ridiculous' which shows that he has the 'old-

fashioned', according to the EIL advocates, NNS-NS formula in mind. So, he adds a

new dimension to the concept of international intelligibility, one that takes into

consideration the issue of 'regard by others' where 'others' are NSs of English.

Moreover, speaking 'so well' in terms of his learners is equated with being able to

pass as NSs. **It seems that even in those teachers who display greater acceptance

of or tolerance towards the EIL side of the debate, native-speakerism is deeply

engraved in them and cannot be easily forsaken.**

      Let us now see the extent to which the results of our study in relation to

pronunciation targets agree or disagree with those of the studies reviewed in Section

2.2.

First, we have seen that EFL learners tend to view a foreign accent of English negatively, despite the fact that the particular foreign accent is the result of their L1, in a variety of contexts worldwide. Austrian learners of English viewed an 'Austrian accent of English' negatively (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997) and Japanese learners referred to a 'Japanese accent of English' as a 'necessary evil' (Matsuda, 2003). Polish learners of English frequently pointed to the need of "getting rid of the crappy Polish accent" and "hiding where you are from" (Janicka et al, 2005: 257). On the other hand, the Greek learners in Batziaka's (2008) study appeared sceptical towards externally imposed and unrealistic native norms and embraced a Greek-English accent[194]. As for our study, a number of those learners who opted for AII expressed a strong desire to preserve a Greek accent of English. Such results may, at first glance, appear rather contradictory but we need to take into consideration the following factors when comparing and interpreting those results:

(a) *The types of questions (and the phrasing of questions) asked to the learners of those studies*: the learners in our study were given the opportunity to not only choose between NLP and AII but also to comment on their choice; thus, 'Greek identity/ national pride' emerged as a sub-category of responses from those learners that opted for AII. On the other hand, the learners in Dalton-Puffer et al (1997) were not given this opportunity; the modified matched-guise test was used to uncover the learners' attitudes to native and non-native accents. Thus, we do not know how the learners of our study would have reacted towards a 'Greek-English' accent as part of a matched-guise test and we do not know how Austrian EFL learners would have responded to the 'NLP versus AII' question. How learners feel about the accent they

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[194] Unfortunately, this study was a small-scale one reported as part of an oral presentation and thus, not much information is available on the particular study.

listen to and how they feel about their own accent may be entirely different and it may not be possible to make any direct comparisons between those two.

(b) *Timing:* if the studies by Dalton-Puffer et al (1997) or Matsuda (2003) had been carried out more recently, they might have produced different results. Indeed, conducting an attitudinal study in terms of native and non-native accents of English in an expanding circle country in the 1990s and conducting one nowadays, now that Jenkins (2000) and other EIL advocates have expressed stronger than ever before the need for users of EIL to express their identity through the preservation of their L2 accent, might have made all the difference in terms of the conclusions drawn.

(c) *The age of the learners, their L1 and the learning purpose:* the learners in Dalton-Puffer et al (1997) were all adults with a special interest in the English language whereas the learners in our study were teenagers learning English for general purposes; it is possible that a native-like accent that does not embody any features of their L1 to be a higher priority for the learners in Dalton-Puffer et al's (1997) study than for the learners of our study. Also, this could be the case in terms of the learners in Janicka et al (2005), who were all adults and prospective teachers of English; according to Janicka et al (2005), this negative sentiment towards a Polish-English accent "may have been fuelled in those respondents by having their pronunciation criticized as 'foreign'" (: 257). As for the learners of Matsuda's (2003) study, having a Japanese-accent of English may pose a serious threat to the intelligibility of their oral discourse unlike having a Greek-accent of English which tends to be intelligible to all. Indeed, 45% of the students in Matsuda's (2003: 492) study "believed that the Japanese variety of English was not intelligible, although most of them never had opportunities to attempt to communicate with others in this

variety". It is possible that EFL learners are aware of which L1 English accents are more intelligible than others.

Second, native-like competence in pronunciation seems to be the goal in English language teaching and learning in a variety of contexts in expanding circle countries. For example, nearly all learners in Janicka et al (2005) claimed to aspire to a native-like accent. The findings of Janicka et al (2005) and Dalton-Puffer et al (1997) are not surprising as the learners in both studies were prospective EFL teachers. Interestingly, as part of the questionnaire data of our study, it emerged that 3 learners who opted for NLP did so on the grounds that they aimed to become EFL teachers[195]. Furthermore, as part of the interview data of our study, it emerged that according to 1/3 of the teachers' interviewed, NSs of English had an advantage over NNSs of English in teaching and acting as a model for pronunciation. Liam, a school principal and teacher, went as far as to declare that 'if somebody turned up for an interview for a job at the school' and did not have a native-like accent, he 'wouldn't hire them anyway' on the grounds that 'it tells you quite a lot about them, about their attitude to language'.

Such findings, raise a very important question; which pronunciation standard to be used for the EFL teacher? According to Majer (1997), "native-like pronunciation is a logical target of advanced foreign language instruction, particularly expected of prospective teachers" (: 28-29 cited in Sobkowiak, 2005: 143) and according to Huttner and Kidd (2000: 75), "the mainstream attitude in educational circles is still a preference for native or near-nativeness of teachers of English" (cited in Sobkowiak, 2005: 142). It seems that Gimson's view in relation to this matter is

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[195] One learner wrote: 'it is essential for me to sound like a native speaker of English as I intend to become an EFL teacher'.

still very much prominent nowadays despite the claims of the EIL and LFC advocates

against this (see quotes below):

> Gimson
> The foreign teacher of English constitutes a special case. He has the obligation to be as clear as possible about the model towards which he is aiming and to present to his students as near an approximation to that model as he can. Particularly if he is dealing with young pupils, his students will imitate a bad pronunciation as exactly as they will a good one; if he is using illustrative recorded material, his own pronunciation must not diverge markedly form the pronunciation used in it.
>
> <div align="right">Cruttenden, 2001: 299</div>

> Jenkins
> The optimum teacher… is often a bilingual English speaker who shares her students' L1. This teacher will have acquired the core pronunciation features but will also have clear traces of her regional accent. She thus provides a more pedagogically realistic and sociolinguistically reasonable model for her students.
>
> <div align="right">Jenkins, 2002: 101</div>

Nevertheless, the wish for native-like competence in pronunciation does not seem to be restricted to those learners studying towards becoming EFL teachers; the teachers in Hannam's (2005) study viewed a Greek-English accent negatively and hesitated over using it as a model for their learners. Also, the majority of EFL learners in Timmis's (2002) and in Kanellou's (2001) study expressed the desire to aspire to NLP. A similar pattern was observed in our study when the participants were asked 'how close would you like your [learners'] accent to come to a native-like model?' teachers and learners alike replied 'very close'.

Third, when teachers and learners are given a direct choice between native-speaker competence in pronunciation and accented international intelligibility, things get rather complicated. When the participants in our study were asked to make this choice virtually all teachers opted for AII along with the majority of the learners. This is relatively surprising since teachers and students alike replied that they would like the learners' (or their accent respectively) to come 'very close' to a native-like model in the previous questionnaire question. **So, it seems that not only 'what you ask' but also 'the way you ask' affects participants' answers;**

in other words, the phrasing of the questions posed to the participants can have an effect on the participants' answers. Similarly, the majority of learners in Waniek-Klimczak's (1997) study did not opt for NLP; only 43% (less than half) said that the goal of pronunciation teaching should be the achievement of NLP. The slightly larger percentage of learners (43%) in Waniek-Klimczak's (1997) study opting for NLP compared to 33% of the learners in our study could be attributed to the different 'learning purpose'; the learners in Waniek-Klimczak's (1997) study were prospective EFL teachers as opposed to the learners in our study who were studying English for general purposes. On the other hand, the majority of the learners (78%) in Kanellou's (2001) study wished to acquire NLP and the majority of the learners (67%) in Timmis's (2001) study expressed the desire to achieve NLP. The fact that Kanellou's (2001) study comprised only Lower+ level learners whereas in our study the majority of the learners were –Lower helps explain the discrepancy in the results; as it emerged in our study, more Lower+ level learners chose NLP than –Lower level learners. Also, both Kanellou's (2001) and Timmis's (2002) studies were carried out nearly a decade ago and the EIL side of the debate on pronunciation models and targets may have had a greater influence on the results of recently completed studies.

Fourth, it seems that there is a greater tendency among learners to consider NLP as the more appropriate goal than among teachers; fewer teachers than learners wish for the learners to acquire NLP (see Timmis, 2002; Kanellou, 2001, and our study). In Timmis's (2002) study, 67% of all learners chose NLP as the more desirable outcome whereas only 27% of all teachers did so. Also, in Kanellou's (2001) study more learners (78%) than teachers (39%) wished for the learners to acquire NLP. Finally, in our study, virtually no teachers chose NLP as opposed to 1/3 of the learners. Such results can be viewed as an indication that "teachers are moving

away from native-speaker norms faster than students are" (Timmis, 2002: 248). Also, it is interesting to note that while in both Kanellou's (2001) study and our study, more learners than teachers opted for NLP, in our study the percentages have dropped even further; in Kanellou's (2001) study, more than 2/3 of the learners and more than 1/3 of the teachers opted for NLP whereas in our study, 1/3 of the learners and virtually none of the teachers opted for NLP. This may be viewed as an indication that the percentage of teachers and learners opting for NLP will continue to drop as time goes by. At this point, it is interesting to note Penny Ur's comment on Kanellou's (2001) result in terms of the learners' greater preference for NLP compared to the teachers; "the learners have not caught up yet" (Ur, 2004)[196].

Timmis (2002) reported that the choice of NLP was not restricted to those learners, who use, or anticipate using English primarily with NSs. This finding is contrary to Waniek and Klimzcak and Klimczak's (2005) finding that whether or not students are likely to communicate with NSs had an effect on whether or not they were concerned with the mastery of native-like speech patterns; they concluded that 'Economics and Science' students would mainly use English for international communication and, were, thus, less concerned with native-like speech patterns.

Let us now draw comparisons between the teachers' and learners' reasons as to choosing NLP or AII in Timmis's (2002) study and our study. Timmis (2002) stated that while the main motivation of the majority of students was the ability to communicate, "the rather traditional idea of 'mastering a language' survived, at least among a minority" (: 248). As for the learners of our study who opted for NLP, 1/4 were concerned with 'effective communication' and, also, 1/4 could be viewed as in favour for this rather traditional idea of 'mastering a language' as their responses

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[196] This was a comment made by Penny Ur regarding the results of Kanellou's (2001) study presented as part of Kanellou's talk at the 25th TESOL Annual Convention in Athens, March 2004 (Ur was the one of the plenary speakers at that event).

fitted a category labelled 'this is the appropriate/ right thing to do'. Also, as part of the teachers' interview data in our study, it emerged that the learners who opted for NLP may share the belief that language is a subject like any other and you can master it completely. Some of the students in Timmis's (2002) study who opted for NLP saw it as a benchmark of achievement; a similar category labelled 'sense of achievement/ indication of high level of competence in English' emerged in the case of the students of our study who opted for NLP. For some other students in Timmis's (2002) study their motivation for NLP was more integrative; as one of the students said: "If I work in an English company, maybe some nasty client would insult me: 'Ah, she's no native'" (Timmis, 2002: 242). A similar category emerged in the case of the learners in our study labelled as 'greater acceptance by native speakers; fitting in/feeling more comfortable'.

Turning to Janicka et al (2005) and the arguments provided by the learners in favour of near-native competence, we can observe the following similarities between their study and our study: for the learners in Janicka et al (2005), the willingness to achieve perfection in terms of native-like quality was quoted, near-native competence was perceived as "a mark of education" (: 257) and "proof of proficiency" (a bad accent means your English is bad in general) (: 257); this view seems to correspond to the category labelled as 'sense of achievement/ indication of high level of competence in English' in the case of the learners of our study. Also, for the learners in Janicka et al (2005), "the ability to understand and be understood" (: 257) was also important and this view seems to correspond to the category labelled as 'effective communication is more likely to be achieved' in the case of the learners of our study. A further argument in the case of the learners in Janicka et al (2005) concerned the view of near-native pronunciation as "part and parcel of a language" (: 257) which

seems to correspond with the category labelled 'notions of correctness/accuracy; 'this is the appropriate thing to do' in the case of the learners of our study.

As for the reasons given by teachers and learners for opting for AII, the following emerged in Timmis's (2002) study: the perceived difficulty in achieving a native-like accent; "some of those [students] who had opted for Student B [accented international intelligibility] had done so out of realism rather than preference" (: 243) and "many teachers were choosing what they regarded as the more *realistic*, rather than the more *desirable* outcome" (: 243). Interestingly, this reason was also given by the teachers as well as the learners who opted for AII in our study; 31% of the teachers' answers and 12% of the learners' answers were found to belong to a category labelled 'realistic expectations in terms of target performance; mastery of a native-like accent is not a feasible target'. This perceived difficulty in terms of the mastery of NLP needs to be addressed further. Apart from Timmis's (2002) study and our study, the fact that the majority of students in Waniek-Klimczak's (1997) study did not aim at native-like speech patterns was also interpreted as "a sign of the students' judgement as to the possibility of reaching the goal of a native-like accent". As part of the interview data of our study, the factors identified by the teachers as playing a role in the achievement of a NLP were as follows: 'language aptitude', 'desire', 'listening ability' and 'amount of exposure to the language'. According to the teachers, these factors influence the learners' performance in terms of the mastery of NLP and help account for the fact that while teachers and learners would like the learners' pronunciation to come 'very close' to a native-like model, it will only come 'quite close', at least as far as the majority of the learners are concerned. Quantity and quality of exposure to the target language along with individual differences in motivation, aptitude and affect have been noted as playing a part in the mastery of

native-like pronunciation (see Munro and Bohn, 2007; Derwing and Munro, 2005; Piske, MackKay & Fledge, 2001; Ioup et al, 1994 cited in Derwing and Munro, 2011: 4). Baker and Murphy (2011: 40) cite Scarcella & Oxford (1994) for sociocultural factors such as the desire to maintain an L1 accent or acquire a native English accent; for affective factors such as the learners' attitudinal and emotional states they cite Brown (2008).

Interestingly, the most frequently cited factor, the 'age' factor, was not mentioned by the teachers in our study. The relationship between age of L2 learning (AOL) and mastery of L2 pronunciation is described by Munro and Bohn (2007) as follows:

> "late" second language learners – those who acquire a language after early childhood – typically show different patterns of L2 perception and production than "early" learners. As a result, "late" second language users are often readily identified because they typically speak with a foreign accent. Many researchers have investigated the relationship between AOL and accent… they support the dictum that, at least in terms of nativeness of pronunciation "earlier is usually better" in second language learning.
>
> Munro and Bohn, 2007: 7

Indeed, "numerous studies[197] have shown that most people who acquire a second language after early childhood are likely to exhibit nonnative patterns of pronunciation" (Derwing and Munro, 2005: 383). Breitkreutz et al (2001) also note that despite recent studies (e.g. Bongaerts, 1999) that have shown that some adults have a remarkable facility to produce a second language learned after puberty without a detectable accent, "such learners are few and far between… and generally their first language is closely related to their second" (: 53). They point out that the fact remains that "extensive research has shown that the likelihood of acquiring a native-like

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[197] A number of studies that support the hypothesis that children have an advantage over adults in pronunciation learning are the following: Asher and Garcia (1969), Fathman (1975), Seliger et al (1975), Suter (1976), Oyama (1976) and Cohrane (1977) all cited in Leather (1983: 205).

accent after puberty for most people is extremely slim"[198] (ibid: 53). Sifakis and Sougari (2005) noted a diminishing focus on accent for the teachers in their study as the learners get older; primary level teachers believed that attaining a native-like accent is very important whereas upper-secondary level teachers considered it less important. It is my view that most (if not all) EFL teachers worldwide are aware of the 'age' factor in the attainment of NLP and I wonder to what extent this may have influenced the teachers' responses in our study. For example, if our sample comprised teachers who taught primary school students (children) rather than high school students (teenagers), perhaps more teachers would have opted for NLP. Moreover, teachers' awareness of the 'age' factor may raise additional questions pertaining to the issues explored when dealing with RQ1 of this thesis; for example, could this be one of the reasons why the teachers in Nunan (1988) chose to concentrate more on vocabulary than pronunciation? Also, could it be the case that the teachers in Peacock's (1999) study did not have great faith in the learners' ability to achieve a high level of competence in pronunciation and, thus, placed less importance on an excellent accent than the learners?

Fifth, despite the emergence of EIL, which has led to the questioning of teachers' and learners' strict adherence to NS norms and the development of the LFC, there is still a prevailing preference for native-language norms over the non-native ones among NNSs. NSs are still viewed by EFL teachers and learners as the owners and custodians of the English language and native-like competence in pronunciation is still viewed as the benchmark of perfection. Contact with NSs was viewed as central to the acquisition of pronunciation by the learners in Cenoz and Lecumberri's (1999) study. Matsuda (2003) concluded that for the Japanese high

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[198] See Flege, Frieda & Nozawa, 1997; Flege, Munro & McKay, 1995; Scovel, 1988 all cited in Breitkreutz , Derwing and Rossitter, 2001: 53.

school students of her study "English is the property of native English speakers (Americans and British, more specifically), and the closer they follow the native speaker's usage, the better" (: 493). 70% of the teachers in Sifakis and Sougaris' (2005) study said that English belongs to NSs or to people with NS competence. Sifakis and Sougari (2005) concluded that "although the spread of English implies a deemphasis of NS norms, our study has shown that NS norms are still dominant in Greek teachers' beliefs about their own pronunciation and teaching" (: 483) and speculated that "in all probability, the situation described in this article, is repeated in many other expanding circle countries" (: 483). Indeed, our study has provided further evidence to support the assumption made by Soufakis and Sougaris (2005) study at least, in terms of the Greek context; the majority of the teachers interviewed (8 out of 12) agreed with the NS side of the debate on pronunciation goals; NSs were seen as the rightful owners of the English language and native-speaking English teachers were seen as better equipped for teaching English pronunciation. And, even those teachers (4 out of 12 teachers interviewed) who seemed to agree with the EIL side of the debate in principle, hesitated about following it in practice. Interestingly, these 4 teachers from our study are not alone; Jenkins (2007) reported an interview study of 17 NNS teachers from nine countries who appeared to respond favourably to using EIL models in theory but felt that they were impractical to use in their classrooms citing negative pressure from higher levels of administration – government, educational institutions, and parents – who preferred the modelling of NS English accents[199]. As far as the Greek context is concerned, Sifakis and Sougari (2005) noted the teachers' strongly norm-bound perspective and focus on the teaching of standard NS pronunciation norms even though, and perhaps paradoxically so, some of them

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[199] Information obtained from Baker and Murphy, 2011: 36.

believed that intelligibility was the most important pronunciation goal. This was also the case in our study; the overwhelming preference of teachers for NS models and the teachers' wish for learners' pronunciation to get 'very close' to NS model have been noted along with the teachers' choice of AII over NLP as the most important pronunciation goal. Sifakis and Sougari (2005: 483) partly attributed the EFL teachers' norm-bound views on pronunciation teaching to the following two factors: the teachers' immediate identification of any language with its NSs (something which was reinforced by the country's diglossia and recent immigration inflow) and the teachers' lack of awareness of issues related to the international spread of English. Interestingly, the interview data gathered in our study provided further evidence relating to those two factors identified by Sifakis and Sougari (2005); moreover, the recent 'diglossia' situation, described by Sifakis and Sougari (2005: 472) as the clash between 'kathareouva' which heavily draws on the lexis and syntax of ancient Greek and is therefore more formal, scholarly and prestigious and 'demotiki' which borrows heavily from neighbouring languages and is therefore more informal, less prestigious and used for everyday communicative purposes was also noted by a couple of the teachers interviewed in our study. Sifakis and Sougari (2005) wrote that this clash was politically resolved in the 1980s "when the Greek state officially recognised the demotic or less formal variety" (: 472). Sifakis and Sougari (2005) wrote the following:

> This diglossic history (i.e., the distinction between a high and a low variety) is still evident today in the widespread critique of native speakers' "bad" uses of modern Greek and in the conviction that Greek should rid itself of the solecisms that spring from inadequate knowledge of the language and even the contaminating linguistic invasion of English words and phrases (Papapavlou, 2002). For our research, this norm orientation of Greek native speakers probably also characterises the beliefs of Greek teachers of English.
>
> Sifakis and Sougari, 2005: 472

Sifakis and Sougari (2005) also viewed the massive inflow of foreign immigrants as an additional reason that may have led the teachers in their study to support the

primacy of NS models: "if the Greeks feel that the purity of their own language is threatened by the languages of the immigrants, they are probably more likely to uphold strong views about the importance of inner-circle norms for the international lingua franca" (: 473). It is worth noting that in Sifakis and Sougaris's (2005) study all EFL teachers had Greek as their L1 whereas in our study nearly 1/4 of the teachers had English as their L1.

Moving on to notions of 'correct' and 'perfect' English, interestingly, the learners in Matsuda's (2003) study viewed a Japanese accent of English as an 'incorrect' form or version of English which deviated from the 'real' English of NSs. Also, Timmis (2002: 243) found that "there is clearly still a feeling among a number of teachers that native-speaker competence is the benchmark of perfection". As part of the questionnaire data of our study it emerged that a number of teachers and learners shared the notion that NLP is the 'perfect' or 'correct' pronunciation regardless of whether or not they opted for NLP[200]. Moreover, as part of the interview data of our study a couple of teachers expressed the view that imposing NLP as a goal entails 'aiming higher and having higher expectations' whereas imposing AII as a goal entails 'aiming lower and having lower expectations'. This particular view in terms of pronunciation goals, which can be translated as 'striving for the best' in which 'the best' means NLP, has been argued extensively by Remiszewski (2005) who dismisses the claim of the proponents of the LFC that "EFL learners do not need native speaker models just because they hardly ever meet native speakers" as "suspiciously reductionist" (: 301). According to Remiszewski (2005), the argumentation in favour of the LFC, advanced by Jenkins, "refers to only one, narrowly defined type of learner" as follows:

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[200]Please see additional categorisation for teachers' and learners' qualitative data (Section 4.4.3.2, Chapter 4).

> That learner has a specific mental mindset along with a fairly concrete emotional and intellectual set-up. The nature of this intellectual set-up is not a matter of chance, because the way that the learner has been described makes him an ideal recipient of the LFC proposal. What are his characteristics? He has a well-developed sense of ethnic/ national ego, which, at the conscious or subconscious level, prevents him from attaining the native-like accent of a foreign language. Moreover, this learner's articulatory motor skills are reduced to the point where learning certain English sounds becomes simply impossible. At best, it takes such a learner a significant amount of time to master them. Also, this learner neither wants nor needs to pursue authentic English accents.
>
> <div align="right">Remiszewski, 2005: 304-305</div>

Remiszewski (2005) goes on to present evidence that many EFL learners worldwide do wish to pursue authentic accents of English and are not necessarily concerned about their own language egos in pursuing this goal – for example, he refers to the Korean learners in Gibb's (1999) study and also to the learners of Matsuda's (2003) study. Remiszewski (2005: 307) maintains that "mastery in a foreign language is a sign of excellence" and "officially convincing learners that they can slack a bit and things will be fine anyway is doing them disservice". Remiszewski (2005) compares the mastery of language to the mastery of other skills; he writes:

> …once somebody takes up the challenge of learning a skill, be it driving a car or playing basketball, one normally – consciously or unconsciously – accepts that the eventual attainment will fall somewhere on a graded scale of proficiency in this skill. I have not yet met a person, who, upon taking up driver's training, did not express the sincere wish to master the skill well. The question of whether they would be willing to invest what is necessary to reach the level of a Finnish rally champion is another thing – that might seem like a waste or resources. But the fact remains that one normally starts from one end of the scale and strives to get as close to the opposite end as possible within available resources (time, energy, motivation). The fact that the average performance in a skill always fall short of the best does not mean that this average marks, or that it should mark, the point of the intended goal. I don't see why learning a foreign language should be different in this respect. The problem in the LFC debate, as I understand it, lies in accurately identifying the scale of proficiency presented to the learner.
>
> <div align="right">Remiszewski, 2005: 299-300</div>

Timmis (2002: 249) also claimed that "while it is clearly inappropriate to foist native-speaker norms on students who neither want nor need them, it is scarcely more appropriate to offer students a target which manifestly does not meet their aspirations". Timmis's (2002) claim can be viewed as an indirect accusation of the LFC proponents as wishing to impose the AII goal on all learners. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Jenkins has recognised that the LFC may not be the most

appropriate goal for all learners; as part of her (2005) paper entitled 'Misinterpretation, Bias, and Resistance to Change: The Case of the Lingua Franca Core' which appears in the same volume as Remiszewski's (2005) paper, she makes it clear that those who promote the LFC have been wrongly accused of prescribing the LFC for all learners of English:

> I have no desire to patronise those learners who wish to sound 'native-like' by telling them they should/need not go to such lengths: it is their decision not mine.
>
> Jenkins, 2000: 161

> …it will be important not to patronise those learners who, having heard the arguments, still wish to work towards the goal of a native-speaker accent, by telling them they have not need to so.
>
> Jenkins, 2002: 101

It seems that for Jenkins (2000, 2002) the onus is on the learners to decide which pronunciation model they would like to follow and which performance target they would like to set for themselves. Of course, how realistic her position is given the fact that many EFL are children or teenagers (just like the learners in our study) and decisions as to models to be followed and targets to be set are often made by others (teachers, curriculum designers, course book writers, materials creators) and, also, determined by the models and targets represented in EFL exams, is questionable.

As we have seen, the general consensus among ELT writers is that achieving a native-like standard is not needed; it is sufficient to succeed in being understood, and, thus, retaining a foreign accent is acceptable as long as intelligibility is not threatened (Theme 7, Section 1.2.1) This view seems to represent what has been termed as AII and which was chosen over NLP by virtually all the teachers and 2/3 of the learners in our study. Of course, **the fact that a native-like competence in pronunciation is 'not needed' does not mean that it is 'not wanted' by some learners and that it will not be 'achieved' by some of those learners; nor should it mean that it is wrong to help those learners who wish to master NLP to try to do so.** After all,

even the proponents of the LFC have recognised (see Jenkins, 2000; 2002) that there will always be those learners who wish to master NLP. **The percentage of those learners may be lower nowadays than it was a decade (or more) ago but such learners who wish for a native-like standard in pronunciation and can achieve such a standard have not ceased to exist and, I anticipate that, they will never cease to exist.**

5.3 Discussion for Research Question 3

5.3.1 Pronunciation Teaching Methods

There was a considerable range in terms of 'frequency of use' of the pronunciation teaching techniques included in the questionnaire. The teachers claimed to 'often' employ the following methods: *individual responses from each learner in class*, *production/articulation exercises* and *listening to authentic spoken English.*They claimed to 'sometimes' use the following methods: *choral responses from all learners in class together*, *pronunciation practice before/ as part of/ after 'speaking activities'* and *teaching the phonological rules of English.*. Finally, they claimed to 'rarely' use *ear-training (discrimination) exercises between similar sounding phonemes, the IPA symbols*, *the language laboratory* and *pronunciation software programs.*

In the interviews, all teachers were presented with the aforementioned questionnaire results and were asked if they could explain why certain methods were more popular over others as well as the reasons behind their chosen practices. Let us begin with those pronunciation teaching methods that, according to the questionnaire results, were the least popular in terms of frequency of use.

Pronunciation software programs

The teachers claimed to 'rarely' or 'never' use *modern computer technology (pronunciation software programs)* for the practice of pronunciation (M = 4.30, S.D = 1.072). In the interviews, the majority of the teachers (8 out of 12 teachers), identified problems with the use of pronunciation software programs and computers in general. Claire and Maria claimed that they were not confident in using computer programs (for example, Claire said: 'I am not computer friendly') and, thus, refrained from using computers in general. Marios, Aspa and Chara said that pronunciation practice

via software is time-consuming and thus, they had to ask students to come in and practise by themselves outside class hours. Many students (and their parents) complained because they thought it was a 'waste of time' (Aspa) and, thus, many failed to co-operate (Aspa and Chara). Aphroditi and Evanthia questioned the usefulness and effectiveness of pronunciation software programs as well as the practicality of adopting them in class. Aphroditi felt that such programs are 'very good for individual work for some students who aim at perfection but not for class' (see Box 1, Appendix 5.8 for the relevant interview excerpt). Finally, Maria, Marios and Sarah referred to problems concerning the total number of computers owned by a language school, 'they [the language schools] will have some computers which are not enough' (Marios), and the ensuing scheduling problems as to the use of computers by students in class: 'computers are not available for pronunciation exercises because they are being used for example by students who are learning how to use computers for the computer exam' (Sarah).

Despite the constraints as to the use of computers in class mentioned by most of the teachers interviewed, 4 teachers claimed to often use pronunciation software in class (Angela, Katrina, Liam and Foteini). Interestingly, 3 out of those 4 teachers said that they had been doing so for the past 1 or 2 years (Box 2, Appendix 5.8) which helps explain the relatively contradictory finding between the questionnaire data result and the interview data result in this respect; there was a 2 1/2 year gap between the completion of the questionnaires and the conduction of the interviews. Thus, had the questionnaires been completed in 2011 or even later, we could anticipate a different score in terms of computer technology for the practice of pronunciation. More schools have computers nowadays than they did a couple of years ago. Also, more children (if not all) have an e-book and CD-ROM they can use outside class in order to listen to

the pronunciation of words and phrases at home and practise pronunciation by themselves outside class. As Katrina put it: 'in the past we didn't have this. We didn't do it. But things are changing'.

The advantages of using computer technology for the practice of pronunciation have been pointed out by a number of writers of ELT manuals (Theme 10, Section 1.2.1) and ELT PRON manuals (Theme 8, Section 1.2.2). Moreover, the advantages of computer assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) software for improving EFL learners' pronunciation have been studied extensively by researchers[201] and the main advantages were found to be the following:

> The untiring, non-judgemental nature of the computer allows students unlimited opportunities to review any part of the materials and receive additional assistance provided by the system. CAPT software enables students to study autonomously, choosing what function to use and how often they use it. On the other hand, teachers also benefit from employing CAPT software in their pronunciation classes as it can give students drilling practice, which teachers consider tedious and time consuming. Last but not least, CAPT systems offer an interactive learning environment in a range of modes: whole class, small group or pair, and teacher to student (Pennington, 1999).
>
> Tsai, 2006: 2

Against this backdrop, the interview data findings of our study that computers are a new addition to many classrooms and that the students nowadays have an e-book and a CD-ROM they can use for the practice of pronunciation at home are very promising ones. On the other hand, the questionnaire finding regarding the teachers' reported use of computer technology/pronunciation software programs was a very disappointing one and, also, in sharp contrast with the finding of Breitkreutz et al's (2001) study in which more than half of the respondents indicated the use of computer labs to such an extent that pronunciation software featured as the most widely used method in the Canadian ESL programs surveyed. **It is striking that in our study pronunciation software featured as the least frequently employed method; however, it seems**

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[201] Molholt, 1988; 1990; Harless et al, 1999; Holland et al, 1999; Kaplan et al, 1998; LaRocca et al, 1999; Eskenazi, 1999a, 1999b; Neri et al, 2002; Butler-Pascoe & Widburg, 2003; Kim, 2006 all cited in Tsai, 2006: 1-1.

that computer technology/pronunciation software programs will increasingly become more popular in the context of ELT in Greece.

Language laboratory

The teachers claimed to use the *language laboratory* 'rarely' (M = 4.14, S.D = 1.037). In the interviews, it emerged that, according to the majority of the teachers interviewed (8 out of 12 teachers), in many language schools there is no language lab, for example, Evanthia said 'we don't have language laboratories any more the kind of we had before where we did drilling and so on these don't exist'. Also, one teacher questioned the effectiveness of the language laboratory for pronunciation instruction, as follows:

> Liam: Artificial environment… and also a lot of drills. And there's no transfer. It's a complete you sit in a cubicle and like a prisoner I'm not in favour of the language laboratories at all. Maybe I had a bad experience with them. I learned Russian at Sandhurst [more than 30 years ago] with a language laboratory and I never felt comfortable with it.

According to the questionnaire and interview data of our study, the language laboratory for pronunciation practice has been abandoned. Also, in Breitkreutz et al's (2001) study, only 27% of the respondents indicated the use of language labs (with tape-recorders). On the other hand, in Peacock's (1999) study more students than teachers were found to believe that the place to acquire a good accent is the language laboratory (: 259). A likely explanation for the finding of Peacock's (1999) study is that his study was carried out more than 10 years ago and if replicated today it would yield different results.

It seems that despite the proposal for several different ways of pronunciation practice in a language laboratory setting by ELT PRON handbook writers (Theme 8 Section 1.2.2), the language laboratory is either 'dead' or being replaced by modern

computer technology and the use of pronunciation software programs (see Celce-Murcia et al, 1996: 312 for a discussion of the latter).

IPA symbols

The teachers claimed to 'rarely' teach *the IPA symbols* to their students (M = 3.72, S.D = 1.425). I anticipated that those teachers who had not attended a phonetics course and/or had not received any training in the teaching of pronunciation would be the ones to refrain from teaching the IPA symbols because they would not be familiar with the symbols and, also, because they would not be aware of their potential value for pronunciation instruction. However, no statistically significant differences were found in the scores of the teachers who had done a course in English phonetics and those who had not; also, no statistically significant differences were found in the scores of the teachers who had received training in the teaching of pronunciation and those who had not. The interview data helped reveal the reasons why the IPA does not seem to be a popular tool for pronunciation instruction in the case of our study. The teachers' responses were divided into the following two categories:

Category 1: *The IPA symbols are superfluous/not very useful* (7 teachers)

The teachers whose responses were allocated to this category said that the IPA symbols are no longer needed as students do not use dictionaries anymore; they have CD ROMS instead of dictionaries and/or use internet search engines to listen to the pronunciation of words. Liam's view (Box below) is an interesting one (see Box 3, Appendix 5.8, for further examples).

> Liam: As a student as a native speaker it was just a different way of writing a clearer way of writing. But it's of no practical value at all. The thing about English is you see…
> English spelling is a picture. It doesn't really make any kind of sense… I don't think it's a major problem people are quite used to this notion of
> Vicky (interviewer): spelling does not correspond to
> Liam: yes I mean I would certainly be in favour of a spelling reform of English… but teaching the symbols God no (he laughs).

<u>Category 2:</u> *The IPA symbols are too difficult for the students to learn* (4 teachers)

The teachers whose responses fitted this category felt that the symbols were difficult for the students to learn; the students tend to find them confusing or scary. For example, Marios said that the students think they are too hard to learn…so it takes time to convince them and furthermore to consistently use it.' Maria went as far as to say that sometimes she uses the Greek alphabet for the phonetic representation of English words because many parents, who help their children do their homework, do not know how to read this kind of phonetics; so in addition to the students, the parents also find the IPA symbols confusing (see Box 4, Appendix 5.8). Interestingly, Wells (1996) wrote that the easiest transcription system for the beginner is arguably a respelling using the orthographic conventions of the L1 and went on to draw attention to a major drawback of this method (i.e. treating English as if its sound system and the sound system of the learner's L1 were the same) and to problems associated with this approach (e.g. having to devise ways to symbolise those sounds of English that are not found in the learner's L1). Overall, the vast majority of the teachers interviewed (10 out of 12) claimed to either not teach the IPA symbols at all for the reasons described above or to only teach few a few basic ones. For example, Angela said that 'if we decide to teach them we only teach the basic ones… five or six of them'. However, there were 2 teachers who claimed to use them a lot; Aphroditi, who said that she referred to the phonemic chart (hanging on the wall of her classroom) frequently during language lessons, and Evanthia (see the Box below).

<u>Evanthia:</u> for example in 'a junior' we teach four basic symbols in 'b junior' a few more and then later on I add extra. For example, I even teach the /i: / in 'bee' and 'see'.
<u>Vicky (interviewer):</u> How do the students respond?
<u>Evanthia:</u> Great.
<u>Vicky:</u> **How would you account for the fact that most of your colleagues don't teach them?**
<u>Evanthia:</u> **Maybe they are under the wrong impression that these symbols are difficult for the students to learn. But the secret is to start slowly and from the beginning**. And, we don't face any problems. Each year a bit extra with the companion as well and everything works out fine… students need to be gradually introduced and learn only those symbols that are essential those that you need. And then it's not difficult. It's simple. That's the secret.

According to many ELT handbook writers, if learners are taught phonetic transcription, they can work out the pronunciation of a new word by themselves when consulting a dictionary (Theme 9, Section 1.2.1) Since dictionaries have been replaced by CD ROMS for many (if not all students), it seems that this specific use of IPA symbols is rather outdated in the context of TEFL. ELT PRON handbook writers (Theme 5, Section 1.2.2) also outlined the advantages of using the phonemic alphabet as a tool for teaching pronunciation and even proposed and described a great variety of activities to familiarise learners with IPA symbols. Nevertheless, the interview data presented in this section highlighted the cons of using the IPA symbols in class. Interestingly, James (1986) discussed the pros and cons of using phonetic notation and, as part of the perceived disadvantages, he noted that IPA symbols may be confusing and overload young learners; a point also addressed by the teachers interviewed in our study. Of course, it is possible that the IPA may have appeared as too 'academic' and 'remote' to many of the teachers of our study and it may well be the case that many were not aware of the advantages that the use of IPA symbols can offer. It is interesting to note that Wells (1996) discussed the usefulness and importance of phonetic transcription for people studying languages and pointed out that there are many language teachers who appear to be far from converted. Wells (1996) describes the principal reason for using phonetic transcription, as follows: "when we transcribe a word or an utterance, we give a direct specification of its pronunciation. If ordinary spelling reliably indicated actual pronunciation, phonetic transcription might be unnecessary; but often it does not". Thus, "for the language learner a passive acquaintance with phonetic transcription enables him or her to extract precise and explicit information on pronunciation from a dictionary, bilingual or monolingual" (Wells, 1996). "Without this information, a learner risks being

misled either by an inadequately trained ear or by the dazzling effect of the ordinary spelling", he continues (ibid: 1996). Similarly, Tench (1992) argued that, teachers need phonetic symbols above all, but learners can benefit from them too; "the main reason for needing phonetic symbols is for reference purposes: they provide a simple record of the pronunciation of words, phrases and pieces of text" (: 96). For Tench (1992), phonetic symbols are useful in class for three reasons: first, as a record of pronunciation, second, as 'tools' when dealing with pronunciation issues and, third, in transcription (: 98).

Ear-training/ discrimination exercises

The teachers claimed to employ *ear-training/ discrimination exercises between similar sounding phonemes* 'sometimes' or 'rarely' (M = 3.51, S.D = 1.140). The interviews generated mixed reactions from the teachers in terms of the perceived usefulness of those activities. 1/3 of the teachers (4 out of 12 teachers) regarded such activities as important and would like to do them in class but often could not do so due to time constraints (see Box 5, Appendix 5.8 for examples of responses). 1/4 of the teachers (3 out of 12 teachers) were not convinced as to the value of those activities. For example, Liam dismissed those exercises as ineffective on the grounds that 'there is no transfer; 'you can do it you can make a point of it you can get them all saying 'leave' 'live' five minutes later when they are speaking it comes out the same way (the relevant interview excerpt appears in Box 6, Appendix 5.8). And, Marios thought that similar sounding phonemes do not really impede comprehension as the listener can work out the meaning(s) from the context. The view that where contextual or cotextual information is available, it is likely to clarify meaning where pronunciation has failed to do so has been proven wrong by Jenkins (2002); as part of

her analysis of instances of miscommunication among NNSs of English she concluded that "in interlanguage talk this appears not to be the case". Jenkins wrote:

> In NS-NS interaction and in interaction where one or more participants are fluent bilinguals, receivers regularly (though not always) make use of contextual and cotextual information as aids to the clarification of meaning. On the other hand, when the receiver and speaker are both NNSs, the receiver tends to focus on the acoustic signal and direct his or her effort to decoding what has been heard. Where this does not tally with visual and other extralinguistic cues, or with the context then, time and again in my ILT data, the receiver adjusts the context and/or cotext to bring them into line with the acoustic information rather than vice versa.
>
> Jenkins (2002: 90)

ELT handbook writers recommend the use of ear-training/discrimination between similar sounding phonemes exercises (Theme 10, Section 1.2.1) and such exercises are encountered in the vast majority of ELT PRON handbooks (Theme 9, Section 1.2.2) It is rather disappointing that such exercises are not often done as part of the English language lesson in Thessaloniki, Greece and even more disappointing that there are teachers who think that such exercises are not very important. Of course, one could argue that teachers may feel that 'ear training activities' are not productive enough or that perhaps –Lower and +Lower level learners are far too advanced for this kind of exercises. Nevertheless, learners still have to learn to hear the difference between similar sounding phonemes or different intonation patterns; these kinds of things need to be taught somehow.

Phonological rules of English

The teachers claimed to 'sometimes' teach the *phonological rules of English (i.e. stress placement, spelling to sound rules* to their students) (M = 3.26, S.D = 1.170). In the interviews, there was one teacher who claimed to teach phonological rules a lot because 'they are easy and simple to follow' (Angela) and another teacher who claimed to never teach them at all (Maria). Sarah and Liam claimed to teach them if the need arose, for example, if they detected a mistake; 'I don't teach them formally

but naturally if it comes up yes' (Liam). Chara claimed to teach them depending on 'how much time you have in class'. And, finally, 4 teachers claimed that the learners do not need to be taught phonological rules, they just pick up the pronunciation of words and phrases naturally during the process of the lesson; see for example, Katrina's response in the box below (for another example, see Box 7, Appendix 5.8).

Katrina: Well, you know I think that comes up naturally. I mean a teacher would children automatically learn that it is <u>mo</u>ther and rarely will you hear students say mo<u>ther</u>.
Vicky: So you don't actually need to teach them
Katrina: No, I don't think it actually ever popped up

Katrina's response is an interesting one because it can be viewed as an indication that the teachers in our study understood 'phonological rules' as referring to stress placement rules rather than spelling to sound rules. Indeed, it emerged in the course of the interviews that stress placement rules were, if not the only ones, the first ones that came to teachers' minds once 'phonological rules' were mentioned. This was interesting to observe as it comes in sharp contrast with the views of a great number of ELT PRON handbook writers who focus a great deal on the importance of helping learners become familiar with rules for predicting spellings from sounds and vice versa (Theme 6, Section 1.2.2).

There are those writers who argue for the need of explicit instruction of those rules (e.g. Kelly, 2000) and others who also believe in the implicit presentation of those rules (e.g. Fitzpatrick, 1995). Nevertheless, the general consensus among ELT PRON handbook writers is that students need to be taught phonological rules (or figure them out for themselves through careful exposure to spelling patterns in a systematic way and so on) including spelling to sound rules and stress placement rules. It is worth noting that Wells (1996) has recognised that the various spelling-to-sound rules, which help learners pass from the written form of an English word to the

spoken form, are complicated and have many exceptions and, thus, "in practice it is necessary to learn the pronunciation of many words individually". Given this information reproduced from Wells (1996), it seems unfair to cast blame on the teachers of our study either because they seem to focus more on i.e. stress placement rules than spelling-to-sound rules or for not teaching spelling-to-sound rules at all. Interestingly, as part of Fraser's (2000) survey, there were some teachers who gave explicit instruction in the phonological rules of English, some others who mainly worked through listening to authentic materials and others who questioned the need for explicit pronunciation instruction. It seems that while ELT PRON handbook writers agree on how pronunciation should be taught, at least in this respect, this is not the case for EFL teachers.

Pronunciation practice and speaking activities

Pronunciation practice before/as part of/after speaking activities took place 'sometimes' (M = 2.89, S.D = 1.238). In the interviews, the teachers agreed that this was the case. Teachers engaged in pronunciation practice in relation to 'speaking activities' depending on the time available; e.g. 'yes, there isn't [enough time] that's why it happens sometimes' (Angela). Sarah claimed to practise pronunciation after 'speaking' activities once she detected a mistake. It seems that Sarah's approach is a sensible one; pronunciation practice as and when needed in relation to 'speaking' activities, for example on the spot instruction, would be beneficial for all learners.

Individual responses versus choral responses

A highly statistically significant difference was found in the teachers' scores between *choral responses from all learners in class together* and *individual responses from*

each learner in class, in terms of frequency of use, *t* (45) = 5.634, *p* < 0.001. The teachers claimed to use *individual responses* more often (M = 1.60, S.D = 0.901) than *choral responses* (M = 2.79, S.D = 1.444). *Individual responses* were also preferred over *choral responses* by most of the teachers interviewed (9 out of 12 teachers). The teachers found choral responses to be more challenging as to detecting students' mistakes (Maria), less indicative of students' individual abilities (Katrina) and artificial (Liam). For teachers' responses, see Box 8, Appendix 5.8. Also, many of the teachers who used both choral and individual responses (6 out of 12 teachers) pointed out that the determining factor in terms of whether to engage in choral or individual responses was the students' age. They felt that choral responses were better suited to younger learners and individual responses were better suited to older learners (see Box 9, Appendix 5.8). This finding also helps explain the greater preference for individual over choral responses as it emerged from the questionnaire data; teachers had to complete the questionnaires in relation to the techniques they used for 'older' learners (i.e. –Lower and Lower+ learners). Nevertheless, there were 3 teachers who expressed a clear preference for choral responses over individual ones. Fotini found individual responses to be more time-consuming, Marios thought that choral responses are better because they offer a 'psychological boost' and Aphroditi also felt that choral responses offer a non-threatening way for extensive pronunciation practice and, overall, more practice in less time compared to individual ones (see Box 10, Appendix 5.8).

The general consensus among ELT PRON handbook authors seems to be that learners should engage in choral as well as individual responses and that choral repetition should precede individual repetition (Theme 10, Section 1.2.2). However, a reasonable argument in favour for individual responses to precede choral ones has

been noted by Tench (1981). Tench (1981) discusses the advantages and disadvantages associated with each method in detail; for example, an advantage of the choral response is "the immediate increase in the number of active responses per learner; the disadvantage is that any fault of an individual learner is usually completely masked by the volume of the choral response" (: 29). Tench (1981) proposes the following procedure:

> This disadvantage is reduced if quite a number of individual responses precede the choral response; by this procedure, the teacher can satisfy himself that at least a certain proportion of the class will respond accurately, and those learners who had actually not had an opportunity to respond themselves will at least have been exposed to the (correct) stimulus and the (correct or corrected) response a few times already. A choral response does not mean, obviously, the termination of individual responses, and so the teacher may proceed with individual responses afterwards.
>
> Tench, 1981: 29

Tench (1981) proceeds to propose further ways for integrating choral and individual responses; his suggestions help reduce the disadvantages associated with each method while benefiting from the advantages associated with each method (see Tench, 1981: 29-35). Indeed, it seems that the integration of choral and individual responses is one of the most effective methods for the practise of pronunciation and it is a shame that this practise does not seem to be followed by the teachers of our study.

Listening to authentic spoken English

Listening to authentic spoken English = real (tape or video recorded) conversations among speakers instead of scripted ones (e.g. British/ America radio or TV) was 'often' done as part of the English language lesson (M = 2.04, S.D = 1.250). This finding was also confirmed by the teachers' interview data albeit a couple of the teachers pointed out that such material was 'pre-decided' and 'textbook-based'. We have already seen that the priority attached to certain accents over others reflects the priorities of the exams distributed by the major EFL examination boards and the

priorities of the course books and accompanying listening material. Thus, as much as the questionnaire finding regarding the frequency of learners' exposure to authentic English as part of the English language lesson seems to be a promising one, and one which is in line with current thinking of ELT PRON pedagogy (Theme 7, Section 1.2.2), this is not necessarily the case. It is commendable that learners have the opportunity to listen to 'authentic English' in class but at the same time the listening material needs to be improved in order to cater for the inclusion of a much wider variety of English accents than the ones currently found in the listening materials used.

Production exercises

The teachers claimed to 'often' employ *production/ articulation exercises (i.e. reading aloud activities, drilling and imitation exercises)* (M = 1.87, S.D = 0.057). This finding was also confirmed by the interview data; for example, Angela said that such exercises are an essential part of every English language lesson. This finding is a very promising one as "the basic strategy in pronunciation teaching is imitation, whether teachers are dealing with beginners or more advanced learners" (Tench, 1981: 21)[202] and imitation activities are prevalent in many ELT PRON manuals (Theme 10, Section 1.2.2). Furthermore, many ELT PRON manuals writers describe 'drilling' and 'reading aloud' activities (Theme 10, Section 1.2.1).

On the other hand, while some ESL teachers in Fraser's (2000) study claimed to still use 'drilling' exercises, the majority of teachers (59%) in Breitkreutz et al (2001) disagreed with the drilling of minimal pairs. Nevertheless, it must be noted

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[202] Tench (1981: 21) states that "the learner needs to be able to imitate the teacher's pronunciation of whole utterances in context, imitating not only the features of consonants, vowels and diphthongs, but rhythm and intonation too" and proceeds to describe in great detail how an intensive imitation procedure aimed at beginners (or intermediate and advanced level learners) may be successfully conducted by the teacher in the classroom.

that the respondents in that study were asked whether or not they agreed that "drilling minimal pairs is the best way to teach pronunciation" (ibid: 55), so the fact that 59% disagreed that it was 'the best way' does not necessarily mean that it is not 'one of the ways' to teach pronunciation.

Phonological perception and production

We have seen that according to ELT handbook writers, receptive awareness precedes productive competence in L2 phonology and, thus, teachers should first concentrate on recognition activities and then on production activities to help improve students' pronunciation (Theme 5, Section 1.2.1). This view was also shared by ELT PRON handbook writers (Theme 2, Section 1.2.2) who first included activities that focused on receptive phonology and then activities that focused on productive phonology. As part of the interviews of our study, all 12 teachers agreed that reception should precede production in terms of pronunciation practice and justified this view either by saying that they find this method 'easier' to follow or that this is the natural process in learning any language just as happens with first language acquisition (for examples of teachers' responses, see Box 11, Appendix 5.8).

The relationship between perception and production has been addressed by researchers and "numerous studies have suggested that many L2 production difficulties are rooted in perception [and] evidence also indicates that appropriate perceptual training can lead to automatic improvement in production" (Derwing and Munro, 2005: 388). Derwing and Munro (2005) cite the work by Bradlow et al (1997) who demonstrated that when Japanese speakers were trained to perceive the /r/ -/l/ distinction, their productions automatically improved even when no production training was provided. Indeed, such findings are very interesting because they point to

the importance of phonological perception as the first step in the mastery of L2 pronunciation. Baker and Trofimovich (2006) discuss in detail the relationship between L2 perception and production. They begin their paper by writing:

> Does accurately *perceiving* second-language (L2) vowels and consonants ("sounds") help in accurately *producing* them? In other words, is there a direct relationship between perception and production when learning an L2? Most L2 speech learning theories are based on the assumption that these two skills are related and that accurate perception precedes or is necessary for accurate production. … Although the nature of the relationship between perception and production is still unknown and heavily debated (Fowler, 1996; Lindblom, 1996), support for the interdependence of perception and production is more positive than negative (Fox, 1982).
>
> Baker and Trofimovich, 2006: 231-232

They go on to describe the three hypotheses about the relationship between speech perception and production that have been advanced to this day. In a nutshell, the first one holds that accurate perception is at least one necessary component of accurate production, "which translates into perception abilities usually surpassing, and therefore "preceding", production abilities" (Baker and Trofimovich, 2006: 232). The second one refers to production and perception as being interdependent and developing simultaneously; this hypothesis assumes that "perception entails the ability to visually detect distal articulatory properties of speech (i.e. tongue movement) and maintains that perception and production are always aligned, so that perception never surpasses, and therefore never precedes, production and vice versa" (ibid: 233). The third hypothesis states that "accurate production precedes accurate perception, so that some speech contrasts are maintained in production before they are actually perceived" (ibid: 233). Since the first hypothesis is the most widely accepted one, it should come as no surprise that the views of ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers as well as the views and practises of the teachers in our study adhere to the principles of the first hypothesis.

Pronunciation teaching and learners' needs

According to ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers, the decision as to what kind of pronunciation teaching techniques to employ should depend upon an analysis of learners' needs and a consideration of variables such as learning purpose in a specified teaching context (Theme 8, Section 1.2.1; Theme 11, Section 1.2.2). In the interviews, the teachers were asked what their decisions as to the teaching of pronunciation (e.g. time spent in class on the practice of pronunciation) were based on; did they analyse the learners' needs (e.g. why their students were studying English)? The teachers' responses were grouped into two the following categories:

Category 1: *The need to prepare for and help students succeed at EFL exams* (11 teachers[203])

Virtually all teachers interviewed agreed that the pronunciation syllabus was mainly based upon the need for the students to succeed at those exams. The course books used, the activities completed and how much time was allocated to the practice of pronunciation greatly depended on exam preparation. For example, Marios attributed the relatively little time devoted to the practice of pronunciation compared to the practice of other skills to the relatively less priority attached to 'speaking' as part of the EFL exams (see Box 12, Appendix 5.8 for examples of teachers' responses).

Category 2: *"I teach pronunciation when the need arises to do so; to deal with common problem areas/ when I detect a mistake in class and so on"* (7 teachers)

For Katrina, learners ought to have mastered pronunciation by the time they reach 'lower' level and thus she teaches pronunciation if the need arises to do so. Aphroditi claimed to focus on those pronunciation problems of advanced learners that may threaten intelligibility. Marios focused on the pronunciation of 'tricky' words and

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[203] There was one teacher, Claire who claimed that "personally I don't put a lot of emphasis on pronunciation because there are too many pronunciations" and went on to talk about how there are too many English accents as far as NSs are concerned.

even pointed out that the practice of pronunciation is not a part of every lesson (unlike syntax and vocabulary). Evanthia checks the students' pronunciation while engaged in other activities and if she identifies any problems, she does pronunciation exercises to rectify those problems. Sarah also deals with pronunciation problem areas as they come up and even teaches rules for future reference. Liam deals with those pronunciation problems that may impede intelligibility from the perspective of NSs and also with certain English words that are heavily influenced by a Greek accent of English even if they have no adverse effect on intelligibility (the teachers' responses appear in Box 13, Appendix 5.8).

This particular finding that the interview data yielded alludes to the finding of MacDonald's (2002) study that researched the perspectives of 8 ESL teachers in language centers in Australia; many teachers mainly addressed pronunciation issues when intelligibility was compromised. "Most [teachers] relied on ad hoc approaches to teaching pronunciation, typically dealing with pronunciation issues as the need arose in class or as stand-alone activities disconnected from the rest of the lesson" (Baker and Murphy, 2011: 34).

Moreover, a couple of teachers made it clear that they favour an implicit approach to the teaching of pronunciation (an example appears in Box 14, Appendix 5.8). Liam is in favour for teaching language naturally as it comes up and dislikes artificiality; he even refrains from teaching grammatical rules. Aphroditi also claimed to favour an implicit approach to the instruction of pronunciation, unless pronunciation practise was done in a fun and meaningful way; nevertheless, she taught pronunciation explicitly if the need arose to do so (see Box 15, Appendix 5.8). It is worth noting that Aphroditi learned English and Liam learned Russian when the audio-lingual method was in vogue. Thus, their dissatisfaction with explicit

pronunciation instruction may stem from their view that this kind of instruction entails the use of mechanical and 'artificial' activities. Interestingly, Kanellou (2001) found that even though the majority (70%) of the teachers in her study did not teach pronunciation at all (they thought that students would 'pick up' pronunciation in the course of the language lesson), at least some of them, would be prepared to do so, if they had access to more 'communicative' and 'fun' activities. The situation regarding explicit pronunciation instruction seems to have changed in the context of ELT in Greece nowadays; it seems, more teachers teach pronunciation explicitly nowadays than they did 10 years ago; as Angela put it: 'I believe that most of the teachers teach pronunciation to some extent'. Sarah sums up what she thinks to be the teachers' approach to the instruction of pronunciation in terms of advanced learners of English (see box below):

> Sarah: from my experience and talking to other teachers, I think that pronunciation is taught as needed in the classroom so perhaps it's a response to common errors or mistakes or difficult vocabulary that might be introduced in that particular unit or chapter rather than being an explicit exercise that is being taught by the teacher unless it comes up in the course book.

Overall, it seems that the teachers of our study take consideration of their learners' needs and adapt pronunciation instruction accordingly. The immediate need for learners is to prepare for and succeed at the exams set by the major EFL examinations boards. The teachers try to meet this demand by following course books on exam preparation and doing pronunciation exercises as presented in the material available. Also, it must be noted that the teachers were asked to respond with respect to advanced learners of English; such high level learners usually have an established pronunciation and thus, the teachers address pronunciation problems as they arise in the course of the lesson and try to deal with

those either by correcting students accordingly/ doing pronunciation exercises/ presenting rules. **Overall, the teachers of our study seemed to take into consideration variables such as learning purpose, the learners' level of competence in English and the learners' age and plan pronunciation instruction accordingly.**

Teachers' phonological knowledge and pronunciation training

According to ELT (as well as ELT PRON) handbook writers, teachers need to have knowledge of English phonetics and phonology (Theme 9, Section 1.2.1; Theme 1, Section 1.2.2) and should be aware of a variety of techniques and procedures for teaching of pronunciation (Theme 1, Section 1.2.2). This view is also shared by other experts in the field; for example, Tench (1981: 109) argued that "a teacher with a knowledge of phonetics is in a better position to understand and assess pronunciation problems, devise remedies for them, and handle them in class than a teacher without such knowledge". Also, according to Morley (1994) all teachers need to receive training on how to teach pronunciation either in teacher-training programs or through their participation in conferences and in-service training sessions and by means of self-instruction with the use of teacher reference books and student texts. It seems that little has changed since Parish (1977: 311) declared that "the teacher's professional inventory should clearly include a comfortable acquaintance with basic articulatory phonetics and with the phonological system of English" and that teachers must have an up-to-date command of the wide range of techniques and activities available for the teaching and practice of pronunciation (ibid: 1977). The fact that his view does not seem to have been affected by the passing of time makes the case for EFL

teachers having knowledge of phonetics and phonology and training in the teaching of pronunciation even stronger.

Unfortunately, the questionnaire results of our study demonstrated that nearly half of the teachers (49%) had never attended a course in English phonetics. Those that had attended one rated it as 'very useful' (M = 2.21, S.D = 0.977) in terms of preparing them for the teaching of pronunciation in the language classroom. Moreover, the majority of the teachers (72%) had never received any specific training in the teaching of English pronunciation. Those that had rated it as 'very useful' (M = 2.18, S.D = 0.874).

In the interviews, the teachers who had done a course in English phonetics were asked if they felt that it gave them a sense of confidence/a good idea of what they were talking about when it came to pronunciation in the language classroom. Opinions were divided; Katrina and Liam said that it did not. For example, according to Angela the course she did was very short and, thus, did not give her much confidence; 'I would have liked to have done more'. On the other hand, Aphroditi and Evanthia replied that it did: 'yeah that's the foundation for my knowledge of the language although I don't remember much but I think it's like you learn the basic things at primary school and then you use them without thinking about it' (Aphroditi). The teachers that had not done a phonetics course were asked if they would like to do one. Four teachers considered this to be a good idea; for example, Sarah said 'I think this is something I would be interested in whether that would have helped me with my teaching here in Greece I'm not sure but maybe if I went to a different country maybe this is something I would have learned and perhaps used'. Sarah's view is an interesting one which can be seen as an indication that a knowledge of English phonetics does not seem to be necessary or valued in order to teach pronunciation in

Greece; of course one could attribute her view to the fact that she is a NS of English and, thus, may feel very confident in terms of her speaking abilities; nevertheless, her view may indicate that all pronunciation exercises are pre-determined by the course book writers and not much of an intervention on the part of the teacher is required. Claire was not sure: 'I don't know if it would have made a difference or if it would have helped me or maybe I don't understand what the course consists of'. It is important to note that Claire did not possess any English language teaching related qualifications and that is probably the reason why she did not understand what a course of English phonetics might include. Finally, Maria, was negative as to attending such a course.

Also, those teachers[204] who had not received any practical pronunciation training were asked if they would like to do so. Six teachers replied that they would have liked to have done so. For example, Angela, said that she would have loved to have had practical training because her teaching of pronunciation had mainly been based on actual classroom experience depending on whether or not what she had done one year proved to be right or not: 'I mean I finished my degree and I got into the classroom' (see Box 14, Appendix 5.8 for the relevant interview excerpt). A further two teachers, Katrina and Maria felt that they did not need to receive any training in the teaching of pronunciation; for example, Maria said that it would be of no use for her in class since not enough time is allocated to the practice of pronunciation.

Interestingly, the lack of teacher training in terms of pronunciation is not confined to the Greek ELT context; Breitkreutz et al (2001) found that even though the majority of ESL instructors (73%) of their study in Canada did teach pronunciation, only 30% had any pedagogical training in this area. Fraser (2000)

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[204] Please note that only one of the teachers interviewed had received training in the teaching of pronunciation and that teacher (Sarah) would liked to have done more: "this is something I would prefer to develop and further study".

found that that many of the ESL instructors of her study in Australia lacked confidence and/or skill in teaching pronunciation because they had received little training in the area; and even those that had received training, were taught many standard methods of pronunciation teaching which proved less than effective. Fraser (2000) also found that many of the teachers she interviewed "had little knowledge of cross-linguistic phonology or speech perception issues that are highly relevant to pronunciation teaching" (: 29). Fraser (2000) argued for the importance of phonetically trained teachers as follows:

> Learners are most helped by teachers who themselves can appreciate and imaginatively explore what the sounds seem like to learners, gradually leading them to more appropriate ways of thinking about English pronunciation…It is also necessary to be able to articulate what one does. This requires understanding of cross-language –as well as English – phonetics and phonology, and of speech perception and production (psycholinguistics). It also requires an ability beyond simple reproduction of this knowledge in technical terms, which are unlikely to be meaningful to learners.
>
> Fraser, 2000: 26

Derwing and Munro (2005) referred to the study of Burgess and Spencer (2000) who called for more pronunciation training for teachers in Britain as well as to MacDonald (2002) who cited several studies in Australia indicating that many teachers did not teach pronunciation "because they lack confidence, skills and knowledge" (MacDonald, 2002: 3). Baker and Murphy (2011) point out that even though the need for a solid foundation in linguistic knowledge of phonology for teachers of English has been advocated by numerous specialists over decades (Celce-Murcia et al, 2010; Morley, 1991; Murphy, 1997; Parish, 1977 all cited in Baker and Murphy, 2011: 41), to date "scarcely any research has been conducted that explores pronunciation teachers' knowledge of phonology or the characteristics of contemporary pronunciation methodology" (: 41). It seems that **our study contributes to this neglected area of applied pronunciation research and will, hopefully, stimulate future researchers to also explore the extent to which EFL teachers have**

knowledge of phonetics and phonology and have received training in the teaching of pronunciation in different teaching contexts worldwide. And, if the lack of a foundation in the knowledge of phonetics and phonology as well as the lack of training in the teaching of pronunciation is found to apply to many teachers in different teaching situations, this is an issue that needs to be addressed and acted upon.

This is extremely important as the consequences of inadequately prepared and trained teachers in the area of pronunciation are many; Derwing and Munro (2005) point out that, in some instances, students simply do not receive any instruction, or they are directed to focus on the most salient characteristics of their accent, regardless of their influence on intelligibility. Moreover, those untrained instructors who choose to teach pronunciation may rely too heavily on pronunciation textbooks and software without regard for their own students' problems. This strategy is problematic as, for example, teachers who do not have a foundation in either linguistics or pronunciation research may not be able to make wise choices with respect to computer software, whether it is specifically intended for pronunciation instruction or not. Also, ESL instructors who have not had opportunities for professional development in pronunciation teaching may develop some teaching strategies that actually have little or no value or that may be counterproductive and, of course, those teachers who lack a knowledge of phonetics may be responsible for ESL learners' pedagogical misdirection when they are taught how to distinguish between minimal pairs (see Derwing and Munro, 2005: 390 for a detailed discussion of these matters). Other researchers have also supported the importance of teachers having a background in phonological knowledge and having received training in pronunciation (see Tsai, 2006 and Gilner 2008).

Students cannot receive proper and adequate pronunciation instruction unless teachers possess the expertise and knowhow which allows them to anticipate and recognize problem areas, identify and impart relevant information, and design and implement appropriate instruction; in other words, teachers need grounding in the phonetic/ phonological systems of both the L1 and L2 as well as familiarity with teaching techniques (Brinton et al, 2005; Burgess and Spencer, 2000).

<div align="right">Gilner, 2008: 104</div>

Interestingly, as it emerged in our study, those teachers who had a background in phonetics and pronunciation training did not respond differently in a statistically significant way to any of the questionnaire questions concerning pronunciation teaching techniques. It seems that the preoccupation with EFL exam preparation as well as using course books as a guide to teaching pronunciation ensured that teachers' practices did not diverge much from one teacher to another. Nevertheless, that is not to say that in the context of TEFL in Thessaloniki, Greece, a phonetically trained teacher is not superior to one who has not received any training. Had we engaged in classroom observation we may have noticed different teaching styles; for example, those teachers who had knowledge of phonetics would have been better able to explain and demonstrate how a particularly difficult sound is produced.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

6.1 Pronunciation Status & Role

The rising status of pronunciation in ELT

Overall, this thesis has presented sufficient evidence to suggest that pronunciation is on the rise again in the light of four different sources: first, recently published and currently used 'English Language Teaching' and 'Applied Linguistics' manuals and handbooks; second, empirical investigations into EFL/ESL learners' attitudes conducted in the last two decades, third, the research reported in this thesis and fourth, Jenkins's (2000, 2002) works and the place of pronunciation within EIL.

1) *ELT and AL manuals and handbooks*

We saw that the vast majority of recently published and currently used ELT manuals and handbooks include a part/chapter/section that deals with pronunciation even if earlier editions of the same books did not; this can be viewed as an acknowledgement that pronunciation is currently viewed as an important aspect of second language proficiency. Also, further evidence that shows that pronunciation is increasingly noted as playing an important part in EFL listening and speaking pedagogy was provided in the form of 4 themes (see *Themes 1, 2, 3 & 4,* Section 1.2.1) that emerged from my analysis of 29 books and 11 book chapters.

2) *Empirical investigations into EFL/ESL learners' attitudes*

A number of research studies demonstrated that great importance is assigned to pronunciation by EFL/ESL learners in a variety of contexts worldwide (Willing, 1988; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Peacock, 1999; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999; Peacock, 1999; Fraser, 2000; Kanellou, 2001; Sobkowiak, 2002; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak, 2005).

3) *The research reported in this thesis*

Overall, the results of our study demonstrate that pronunciation is viewed as an important element in the development of learners' speaking and listening skills by EFL learners and teachers in Thessaloniki, Greece. The teachers' and learners' perceptions with respect to the status of pronunciation, as recorded in this study, serve as a further indication that pronunciation is on the rise in the EFL curriculum once again.

4) *Jenkins's (2000, 2002) works and the place of pronunciation within EIL*

The great importance attached to pronunciation for successful communication as advocated by Jenkins and the proponents of the LFC have made a great contribution in terms of enhancing the status of pronunciation. We have seen that according to Jenkins (2000, 2002), pronunciation is the most important critical factor in miscommunication among NNSs of English. Furthermore, the importance of pronunciation within EIL has been addressed by Sifakis and Sougari (2005), as follows:

> Pronunciation is important within EIL for two reasons. First, establishing mutual intelligibility among NNSs is an important goal… for communication between NNSs to be mutually intelligible, speakers must be able to produce segmental and suprasegmental speech elements that their interlocutors can recognise (Jenkins, 2004). …Second, pronunciation plays a central role in EIL because how people sound is closely related to others' perceptions about their sociocultural identity (Morgan, 1997).
>
> Sifakis and Sougari, 2005: 469-470

Nevertheless, it was Jenkins (2000) herself who foresaw that the status of pronunciation was going to be enhanced in the context of EIL, as follows:

> Phonology has long been marginalized in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. But I suspect that it is about to experience a revival as the world's English speakers begin to appreciate the major contribution to international communication made by the phonology of English as an International Language.
>
> Jenkins, 2000: 235

The fact that pronunciation seems to be on the rise again has also been recognised by other scholars, within this first decade of the new millennium; from Fraser (2000) to Derwing and Munro (2011). Fraser (2000) wrote that:

> Over the last ten years or more, the pendulum has been swinging back, and there has been a gradual increase in interest in pronunciation, which is now reaching a crescendo internationally, as people acknowledge the importance of pronunciation to learners' experience of their new language, and to their progress in other aspects of language learning: those who can talk easily can increase their practice far more effectively than those who cannot.
>
> <div align="right">Fraser, 2000: 33</div>

Breitkreutz et al (2001: 51) noted "the recent renewal in interest in pronunciation that is reflected in research and teacher resource books" and wrote that the inception of a Pronunciation Special Interest Group in TESOL and the publication of a variety of new student materials in both book and CD-ROM format "point to the re-emergence of pronunciation" in the ESL classroom. Linguagem and Ensino (2002: 94) also wrote that "pronunciation instruction is increasingly being recognised as one of the most important components of the L2 classroom". And, Derwing and Munro (2011) made the following statement as part of their paper in *SPEAK OUT!*, the newsletter of the IATEFL[205] Pronunciation Special Interest Group (PronSIG):

> Until recently, L2 pronunciation instruction was largely ignored by researchers and by many classroom practitioners. However, a resurgence of interest in this topic is now apparent, and is exemplified by conferences devoted exclusively to pronunciation issues, interest in groups, and publications such as Speak Out! These developments, along with new technology in pronunciation teaching offer great promise…
>
> <div align="right">Derwing and Munro, 2011</div>

For further information on PronSIG, SPEAK OUT!, increased interest in pronunciation as reported by major conferences in the area of ELT (as well as international conferences devoted exclusively to pronunciation issues), interested readers can see Appendix 6.1.

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[205] ' IATEFL' stands for 'International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language'.

<u>Towards the establishment of a rightful place for pronunciation in ELT</u>

Given the rising status of pronunciation in EFL speaking and listening pedagogy as manifested in ELT and AL manuals, as reflected in research studies, as demonstrated by our research and as recognised by scholars in the field of ELT, **it is now timely to seek to establish a rightful place for pronunciation in order to avoid re-living the past**. **We have experienced the rise and fall of pronunciation in the language curriculum and now that pronunciation seems to be on the rise again, it is important for scholars, researchers, language teachers and teacher trainers to seize this opportunity and try and establish a rightful place for pronunciation in ELT.** I will take as my point of departure Levis's (2005) statement that "pronunciation deserves neither to be unfairly elevated to the central skill in language learning nor to be banished to irrelevance" and demonstrate how this thesis can be seen as the first concrete step in this direction.

Let us begin by exploring the relationship between phonology and spoken production in English. Phonology is an extremely important element in the perception and production of spoken English because it provides a spoken, distinguishing form for every consonant, vowel, morpheme, word, phrase, clause and type of discourse. Phonology embraces it all: word stress, rhythm and intonation or, in other words, segments, syllables, words, phrases, intonation groups and phonological paragraphs. As Tench (forthcoming) put it:

> The phonology of a language is not simply the *signifiants* [= 'expression', or sound] of the thousands of lexical items and their morphological variations, but also the physical expression given to higher units – phrases and groups, clauses and sentences, and discourse, by means of articulation and prosody, principally rhythm and intonation.
>
> Tench (forthcoming)

Thus, phonology operates at the level of words, the level of groups and phrases, the level of clauses and sentences and the level of genres. For example, just as words

have to be pronounced, phrases also have to be pronounced. In the *phonology of words*, we look at consonants, vowels, word stress and also phonotactics; Tench (forthcoming) defines phonotactics as "the specification of permissible distributions and combinations of vowels and consonants in a language". Moreover, we know that words are stored in the mind in many different ways; one of them is phonologically. Chunks of words are also stored in the mind phonologically; Wray (2000, 2008) has produced ground breaking work in the area of formulaic language but has not worked on the phonology of this. The phonological features of those chunks display features of *phrase phonology*. Furthermore, we use phrases to be more specific about our references; for example, nominal phrases and adverbial phrases. Within the phrase we may also have elision, assimilation and epenthesis which can be viewed as distinctive features in the phonology of phrases. Words belong together as a single phrase and rhythm acts at the level of phrases; it binds words together in phrases and also separates phrases from phrases. Thus, rhythm acts as a boundary between one phrase and another. And, by rhythm, we do not just mean the strong beat but also, for example, the quickening of pace before the strong beats; the pace of articulation before a strong syllable is quicker[206]. If the intervening word is said quickly, it belongs to the following phrase and, if it is said slowly, it belongs to the preceding phrase. Thus, rhythm is not just a matter of counting the number of beats; it also embraces the stress of the referred units. I also need to note that phrases work together as units within a clause. Now, as far as the *phonology of clauses* is concerned, perhaps its most distinctive feature is intonation. Intonation acts at the level of clauses; just like rhythm in the case of phrases, it binds clauses together and, again, it separates one clause from another. Finally, we can also have a *phonology of discourse* as a kind of

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[206] For more information see 'Better English Pronunciation' (1980) by O'Connor.

genre which has its own distinguishing sounds (prosody). For example, if you switch on the radio, you will find that the 'weather forecast' sounds different from the 'news'. Also, a 'children's story' sounds different to a 'racing commentary' and, of course, 'prayer' has its own distinguishing sound as a distinctive genre of spoken discourse (for further information on how phonology provides the evidence for different types of discourse, see Tench, 1990: 476-514). It is worth noting that Tench (2011) distinguished between the 'phonology of words' which includes vowels, consonants, word stress and features of phrase phonology (e.g. elision) and the 'phonology of discourse' which includes rhythm and intonation. **Thus, phonology is seen as operating at and being highly relevant to the level of words as well as the level of discourse.**

Phonology; the indispensable servant

So, what is phonology for? What does it do? To answer this question in a satisfactory way we first need to consider the relationship between phonology and lexicogrammar described by Tench (forthcoming), as follows:

> There can be no lexicogrammar without phonology. Phonology specifies the distinctive 'shapes' of al the discrete lexicogrammatical units that participate in the systems of a given language. Phonology 'moulds' phonetic substance into all the distinctive forms of words, phrases/groups, clauses, sentences and texts (discourse structure and genres) of each language.
>
> Tench (forthcoming)

Thus, according to Tench (forthcoming), "the function of phonology is to provide the means for identifying and differentiating the units of lexicogrammar and to provide the forms for those units for spoken communication". In other words, the primary function of phonology is to distinguish between one language item (a morpheme/a word/a phrase/a clause/a piece of discourse) and another and, thereby, phonology provides a spoken form for transmission from one person's mind to another person's

mind. Henry Sweet, the great phonetician of the 1880s, referred to phonology as the "indispensible foundation" of language (see Henderson, 1971). However, Tench (forthcoming) argues that the particular metaphor is not the right one, as follows:

> It [phonology] is certainly indispensible, but "foundation" does not seem to be the best analogy. It is not as if lexicogrammar is 'built' upon it. It is true that in many displays of the 'levels of language', phonetics is placed at the bottom of the display, with phonology linked to it. But lexicogrammar is 'made' of different 'material', not the material of phonetic substance. Lexicogrammar is in the mind; phonology shapes all its units (in the mind) and prepares them for use in real, physical, communication.
>
> Tench (forthcoming)

Tench (forthcoming) goes on to provide alternative metaphors even though he acknowledges that "no metaphor will do adequate justice to the relationship that exists between phonology and lexicogrammar, if only on account of its sheer complexity and immensity":

> Thus phonology is rather the auditory shaping of units. Think of de Saussure's linguistic sign: the *signe* consists of two elements, the *signifie* ('content', or 'meaning') and the *signifiant* ('expression', or sound). Think also of his analogy of the game of chess: the rules are in the mind and so are the moves planned by the players, but craftsmanship shaped the distinctive pieces and designed the playing board, providing the physical expression and thus the procedural means of the actual game.
>
> Other metaphors could also be used: phonology as a 'vehicle' for conveying lexicogrammatical units in discourse; as a 'servant' for performing the task of communication; it is like the performance of a piece of music; or the 'built form' of an architectural plan, the physical expression of an architect's design – this is not the same as the "indispensable foundation" metaphor, since the assumption in that analogy is that the building was in fact the lexicogrammar.
>
> Tench (forthcoming)

Of all the aforementioned metaphors, my favourite one is phonology as a 'servant' because it emphasises that phonology serves the function for transmitting language from one mind to another. Let us elaborate on this metaphor. We all have words to reflect and represent our experiences of the world and when we speak it is through sound that we make others aware of our experiences of the world; communication takes place via the oral and aural channel and phonology is the medium that transmits words from one person's mind to another person's mind. **Thus, phonology is a 'servant' in the sense that it transmits the linguistic units of words, phrases,**

clauses and discourse from one person's mind to another person's mind. And, while phonology has this 'service' feeling about it, at the same time, it is indispensable; as Tench (forthcoming) put it: "there can be no lexicogrammar without phonology". Nevertheless, as it has been demonstrated so far, **phonology is not the 'indispensable foundation'; phonology is the 'indispensable servant'.**

The relative importance of all language areas

If one poses the question of 'which is more important in language and for language teaching and learning; pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar or discourse?', the answer is rather simple. They are all equally important. In order to achieve effective communication there needs to be a degree of quality in phonology, lexis, grammar and discourse. For example, an EFL learner needs to have knowledge of vocabulary in order to have something to say. Moreover, given the reciprocal dimension of speech, intelligibility is essential and since intelligibility depends to a great extent on pronunciation, he/she needs to have a good level of pronunciation for somebody to understand what he/she is saying. Of course, effective communication embraces other areas beyond pronunciation and vocabulary; it also embraces grammar and discourse. **Pronunciation may mainly be relevant in terms of intelligibility but as such it is the prerequisite for effective communication to take place. Consequently, pronunciation as an area of language knowledge is clearly relevant and must have an important place in any English language course book, English language course, English language teachers' training course and, of course, in any ELT book that addresses pedagogical issues on handling spoken interaction.** And, especially in the case of TEFL in Greece, for pronunciation to have a clear and important place in the speaking and listening

component of any language lesson, it should also have a clear and important place in any professionally designed test for learners of English. **For the mastery of pronunciation, lexis, grammar and discourse to become of equal concern to EFL teachers and learners, equal emphasis needs to be given to those four areas of language knowledge within all dimensions of ELT: from teacher training courses to teachers' practices and from EFL course books to EFL exams.** For example, "since course books are a powerful influence on teachers' professional awareness and practice", Marks argued that:

> …if pronunciation is to be given its due weight in English language teaching programmes, it would seem vital that it should be adequately represented in course books: given sufficiently thorough treatment, embodied in exercises which are likely to engender engagement, enjoyment and learning, and appropriately integrated into work on other areas of language and other skills.
>
> Marks, 2006: 33

I believe that with everything that has been stated so far **this thesis has succeeded not only in demonstrating why pronunciation should no longer be relegated to a secondary role compared to vocabulary but, also, in carving out a niche for pronunciation in its own right within the context of ELT.**

Let us now see which factors were found to have a positive or adverse effect on the perceived status of pronunciation as they emerged from the discussion of the questionnaire results of our study in relation to the interview data of our study as well as the results of other studies.

Pronunciation versus vocabulary

Overall, the EFL teachers and learners of our study viewed pronunciation as an important element in the development of speaking and listening skills but, nevertheless, of secondary importance to vocabulary. The greater importance attached to vocabulary was mainly attributed to the greater emphasis placed on

vocabulary development for the students to succeed at EFL examinations; it emerged that vocabulary is emphasised to a greater extent than pronunciation in the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams and since TEFL in private language schools in Greece is exams oriented, vocabulary was viewed as more important than pronunciation by the teachers and learners alike. **The preoccupation with exam preparation seems to lead to a vicious cycle that reflects the reality of most (if not all) EFL classrooms in Greece: the emphasis placed by EFL exams on vocabulary (at the expense of pronunciation) is also reflected in the type/ structure of the language lesson, the course book and material(s) used as well as the teachers' practises and the homework set for the learners. The teaching and learning experience for EFL teachers and students in the context of Greece have been shaped by the focus on the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams. And, the former seems to have had a considerable influence on teachers' and learners' perceptions as to the status of pronunciation in comparison to vocabulary.**

Any international English language test typically consists of four parts each one corresponding to a specific language skill: 'reading', 'writing', 'listening' and 'speaking'. For example, the ECPE[207] exam consists of four sections: writing, listening, grammar-cloze-vocabulary-reading (GCVR) and speaking. It goes without saying that the students' phonological knowledge is only assessed in the 'listening' and 'speaking' parts. On the other hand, the students' knowledge of vocabulary is assessed in all four parts. **Since learners need to draw on their knowledge of vocabulary in order to successfully complete all four parts of any professionally designed English language test, we have to accept that, indeed, vocabulary development is more important for success at exams than mastery of**

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[207] Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) by the University of Michigan's English Language Institute (ELI).

pronunciation and, consequently, vocabulary needs to receive greater attention than pronunciation in any 'exam preparation' lesson or classroom. However, this should not be the case with respect to the 'speaking' part of any test and when the development of learners' speaking skills (and listening skills) are concerned. Unfortunately, greater emphasis seems to be placed on learners' knowledge and appropriate use of vocabulary than pronunciation even by the examiners of the oral component of English language tests and this emphasis is also reflected in the marking charts of the 'speaking' parts of the tests created and distributed by the major EFL examination boards (please refer back to the relevant information in Appendix 5.1). **It seems that, unless, the criteria for the 'speaking' part of EFL exams change, we cannot expect teachers and learners to realise that they first need to be concerned with how the learners will gain equal competence in all areas of the target language in order to successfully perceive and produce oral discourse in English and then with how they are going to succeed at the 'speaking' part of EFL exams.** One of the teachers interviewed as part of our study, Liam, was right in trying to distinguish between 'talking about being competent in a language rather than passing exams' and in pointing out that 'if you are really competent you'd pass the blasted exams, anyway, wouldn't you?'[208]. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for EFL teachers and learners in Greece to be convinced of the equal importance of vocabulary and pronunciation in the development of speaking skills, this issue needs to be first addressed by the major EFL examination boards; in other words, **there needs to be a change in emphasis of certain language areas over others, namely vocabulary over pronunciation, in the 'speaking' component of the testing instruments implemented by the major EFL exam boards and this**

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[208] He did mention that "you need a little bit of training that's true you can't just walk in and pass the exams a certain amount of training on how to get through the exam but you can do with very little if you are really competent, you'll pass the exams anyway".

should be supplemented with the creation and/or adaptation of existing course books and other materials used in class.

Furthermore, if EFL teachers (and learners) are informed about and convinced of the important role of pronunciation in terms of the speakers' oral discourse in the target language, they may pay greater importance to pronunciation than they do now. A disappointing finding that emerged as part of our study was the relatively low priority given to pronunciation in comparison to vocabulary in terms of the comprehensibility of English language learners' oral discourse; teachers and learners viewed vocabulary as having great responsibility for communication breakdowns and pronunciation as having moderate responsibility. **Teachers (and learners) need to be informed that pronunciation is closely related to intelligibility; that pronunciation is responsible to a great extent for intelligibility. Teachers (and learners) need to be told that intelligibility is a matter of effective control not only over vocabulary but also over pronunciation and grammar.** The great importance of pronunciation for successful communication (see Seidlhofer, 2001) needs to be delineated in ELT training courses and equal emphasis needs to be given to pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary in course books and in the language tests distributed by the major EFL exam boards. Only then can we expect EFL teachers and learners to begin viewing all areas of language knowledge as equally important. Only then can we anticipate studies such as Sobkowiak's (2002) and Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak's (2005) or our study to yield different results if replicated in the future; that pronunciation will emerge as an equally important element to vocabulary for effective communication in the target language.

Perceived status of pronunciation and EFL/ESL learners in different contexts

We saw that EFL/ESL learners attached greater importance to pronunciation than their teachers in three studies: Willing (1988), Peacock (1999) and Kanellou (2001). A disparity in EFL teachers' and learners' priorities as to pronunciation was not confirmed by the study reported in this thesis and in the attempt to speculate on the reasons why this was not the case, **the following factors were identified as playing a role in the perceived status of pronunciation by EFL/ESL learners: the learners' age**, **the stage/level of competence in English, the language context, the language learning purpose/goal and the learners' L1** (how far does the phonetic system of their L1 diverges from the phonetic system of English).

For example, it was argued that the overall agreement between the teachers and learners of our study as to the status of pronunciation in the development of speaking skills – as opposed to the disagreement between the teachers and learners of Kanellou's (2001) study – can be attributed to the fact that the teachers and learners of our study were united in their goal for the learners to succeed at the EFL exams. A further finding attributed to the focus on EFL exams concerned the perceived importance and frequency of exposure to certain accents of English over others as part of the listening element of language courses (see below).

Accents of English and listening comprehension

We have seen that while ELT handbook writers state that it is important for teachers to expose learners to various accents of English including standard ones, non-standard ones and even non-native ones (Theme 2, Section 1.2.1, Chapter 2), the teachers of our study indicated that they mainly exposed their learners to standard British and American accents (Section 4.3.1, Chapter 4). **The great gap that emerged between**

ELT handbook writers' recommendations and teachers' practises was attributed to the preoccupation with exam preparation; the priority attached to certain accents over others reflected the priorities of the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams (Section 5.1.5, this Chapter). For example, the learners were 'never' or 'rarely' *exposed to conversations among non-native (but fluent) speakers of English* as part of the listening material of the courses they attended because the exposure to non-native accents was not viewed as an important element in terms of the 'listening' part of the Cambridge and Michigan EFL exams; thus, there were hardly any materials available in this respect.

Now, if we take into account that nowadays L2 speakers of English outnumber L1 speakers of English (Jenkins, 2000) and accent is a very important variable in listening comprehension (Buck, 2001), then the fact that our study and Hannam's (2005) study demonstrate that there are EFL learners who have been rarely (or not at all) exposed to non-native accents/varieties of English as part of the listening element of the courses they attend, should be a cause of major concern for textbook writers and materials creators, major EFL examination boards, EFL teachers and trainers and EFL course designers. **It would be certainly interesting to see if the failure to expose EFL learners to various native and non-native accents of English is unique to the Greek context or if it also applies to other contexts. Such learners are bound to face minor or major problems as part of their interaction with NSs of non-standard varieties of English and/or with other NNSs of English when they travel to other countries for work or leisure or when they go to study at a university in an English-speaking country, as in the case of Greek EFL learners attending postgraduate courses in Britain** (see Hannam, 2005). It is worth pointing out, that **our study arrived at a rather paradoxical finding; on the one hand, the**

teachers and learners perceived the standard British and American accents as the most important ones for the learners to be exposed to as part of the listening material of language courses and, on the other hand, they identified 'travel for work or leisure in different countries around the world' and 'studies at a university in an English-speaking country' as the most likely future contexts of use of English for the learners. It is reasonable to assume that the learners will encounter a wide range of native and non-native accents when they travel around the world and/ or if they pursue and undergraduate or postgraduate degree at a university in Britain or the U.S.A. and wonder why the teachers and/or learners did not take this into consideration. Of course, one could argue that the learners, who in the case of our study were all teenagers, are not aware of the wide variety of accents of English they will encounter in those contexts and this will come as an unpleasant surprise to them. In the case of the teachers, it has already been argued that the preoccupation with the learners' preparation for the Cambridge and/or Michigan EFL exams has led them to prioritise the accents that feature mostly in those exams, namely standard British and standard American; it is possible, that this immediate need, teaching English to 'prepare students in order to succeed at EFL exams', has pushed the latter needs, teaching English for the students to 'use for travel and/or studies', to the sidelines.

Hannam (2005: 7) simply recommends that teachers should expose "their students to a wide variety of EL1 (including regional) voices from different countries, as well as EL2 voices from all over the world. These should be authentic if possible, to avoid over-dependence on the Standard RP/ GA model". **While I agree that it is valuable to expose students to various native and non-native accents, I disagree that the onus is simply on the teachers to do so.** Asking EFL teachers, just like the teachers of our study, who operate under pressure for the students to obtain an EFL

certificate in combination with the facts that they are required to use certain course books (and have no access to/ time to search for and find listening material that includes a wide variety of accents of English), to follow the ELT handbook writers' recommendations will simply not happen. That is not to say that no effort should be made in this respect; that is to say that we should first direct our attention elsewhere. Inspired by Jenkins's (2006a) declaration, I argue that the major examination boards should consider revising their syllabus to cater for the inclusion of a greater variety of English accents and course book listening material should be revised to reflect this trend. **If a greater variety of native and non-native accents of English are included in the listening component of professionally designed English language tests, then they will also begin to feature as part of the English language listening materials used in class and the aim of exposing learners to a wide variety of native and non-native accents of English will be achieved. The changes made by exam boards will be followed by changes in the teachers' practises. Since learners, at least in the context of Greece, focus on obtaining an English language certificate, which they will use in the future as proof of their competence in English, the onus is on the major EFL examination boards to ensure that one aspect of that competence relates to the learners' ability to have gained a degree of familiarity with a wide variety of accents of English.**

6.2 Pronunciation Models and Targets

<u>Pronunciation Models</u>

In a nutshell, Jenkins (1996; 2000; 2002; 2006b) told us that since NNSs outnumber NSs, more and more people need to learn English for communication with NNSs rather than communication with NSs. This is why, according to Jenkins, we need to start thinking in terms of TEIL rather than TEFL. In the context of EIL, the pronunciation goal should be mutual intelligibility among NNSs rather than imitation of NSs. Therefore, it makes sense to reject pronunciation models such as RP and GA and targets that refer to an approximation of those models. As Jenkins (2006b) puts it:

> I will conclude where I started, with L2 English being used predominantly as a lingua franca among non-bilingual speakers. It is surely an anachronism to continue teaching English for this use according to the principles that guided the teaching of English as a foreign language, i.e. for communication with 'native speakers' and with a 'native-like' goal in mind (Jenkins 1996: 39-40).
>
> Jenkins, 2006b: 43

Jenkins (2000) proposed a new phonological syllabus, as an alternative to NS models and targets, the LFC which consists of phonological and phonetic features which seem to crucial as safeguards of mutual intelligibility among users of EIL.

So far, the LFC has had very little (if any) impact on ELT and the design of course book materials. Jenkins (2002: 84) statement that "the NS remains a given and the NS standard measure still reigns supreme" also applies to this day. The majority of pronunciation course books and pronunciation materials worldwide are based on a standard British or American model accent (see Wrembel, 2005; Przedlacka, 2005; Levis; 2005; Matsuda, 2002). Furthemore, the use of NS models in the teaching of English pronunciation, namely RP and/or GA, seems to be common practice among EFL teachers in expanding circle countries (see Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Holliday, 2005; Sifakis and Sougari, 2003; Sifakis and Sougari, 2005; Hannam, 2005;

Batziakas, 2008; Kanellou, 2001 and the study reported in this thesis). Moreover, the fact that EFL learners are strongly in favour of NS models of pronunciation has been also demonstrated by a number of research studies that have taken place in various expanding circle countries and in different teaching situations (see Janicka et al, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak, 1997; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimzcak, 2005; Matsuda, 2004; Cenoz and Lecumberri, 1999, Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997; Starks and Paltridge, 1996; Kanellou, 2001 and the study reported in this thesis). As part of the discussion on pronunciation models, I have stated that **as long as NS models, namely RP and GA, feature in teacher training courses, in ELT manuals and handbooks, in ELT PRON manuals, in EFL course books and the accompanying listening material and in the English language tests set by the major EFL examination boards, EFL teachers and learners will continue to view them as central in the mastery of English pronunciation; the aforementioned factors have certainly shaped the language teaching and learning experience for the participants in our study and helped explain the participants' overwhelming preference for NS models, namely RP and GA.**

According to Gimson (see Cruttenden, 2001: 297), "the decisive criteria in the choice of any teaching model must be that it has wide currency, is widely and readily understood, is adequately described in textbooks, and has ample recorded material for the learner". And, according to those criteria "the more realistic, immediate solution lies in the choice of one of the main native-speaker forms of English as the basic model, e.g. a representative form of British or American pronunciation" (Cruttenden, 2001: 297). The criteria set out by Gimson in Cruttenden (2001) make sense and help explain the teachers' overwhelming preference for RP and/or GA in a variety of teaching situations worldwide. On the other hand, Jenkins (2000, 2002) may reject NS

models on the grounds that they are not appropriate pedagogic models for EIL and recommend the LFC as an alternative to NS models but the LFC has so far failed to meet the criteria that a selection of an appropriate model should be based on. Following Jenkins's (2000) example, we could work towards producing a European model of British pronunciation, based on dialects and accents across Europe, on the grounds that for example, Greek learners of English and Polish learners of English are more likely to communicate with British NSs of English as well as other European learners of English. Then we could describe performance targets in terms of 'high acceptability' of a European Standard and 'minimum general intelligibility' to a European Standard. However, there would be problems; similar to those that the proponents of the LFC already have to deal with. For example, a European model of British pronunciation, even if adequately described today, is unlikely to become the basis of most English language course books and listening materials in the near future just like the LFC is far away from this goal. Moreover, there is no way in which we can guarantee that European learners of English will only communicate with other European learners of English or British people and not with, for example, Asian learners of English who have been taught pronunciation with a model based on GA; just like the LFC proponents cannot guarantee that NNSs of English will only need to communicate with other NNSs of English. What if some of those NNSs of English decide to move to Britain and want to socially integrate there? What if it is too late for those learners to follow a NS model let alone trying to approximate to it given the 'age' factor? **Thus, it makes sense for the usual pronunciation model (or point of reference) to be a standard accent usually associated with the educated public or middle class. The pronunciation model or point of reference must be something that most people in an English-speaking country and worldwide would be able to**

understand; for example, Glaswegian working class people as well as Japanese university students would be able to understand people who speak with an RP accent.

The aim of the research reported in this thesis was to discover the pronunciation models and targets followed in ELT in Thessaloniki and see whether or not they are appropriate in relation to the contexts in which the learners intend to use English and, also, if there is a gap between what the teachers do and what the learners want. We have seen that for Gimson, the NS is central in his approach to pronunciation instruction whereas for Jenkins, the NS is rather redundant; for Gimson, the NS is the receiver of intelligible pronunciation whereas for Jenkins it is the NNS. **Since the EFL learners of our study are likely to interact with NSs of English as well as with other NNSs of English[209], my position lies somewhere in the middle between the two extremes; NNSs as well NSs should be relevant in the pronunciation pedagogy for EFL/EIL and I am equally concerned with the issue of intelligibility for NNS receivers and NS receivers. Even though it is true that English is a Lingua Franca, the NS model can still be used as a model or point of reference.** Standard NS accents have been codified in pronouncing and general usage dictionaries (see Przedlacka, 2005: 18), EFL teachers have received training in the teaching of pronunciation based on NS models, the vast majority of course books and the accompanying listening material feature NS models, ELT PRON manuals use NS models and the majority of teachers and learners worldwide express a clear preference for RP and GA as pronunciation models. **It seems to me that using (and continuing to use) RP and/or GA as models/points of reference for the instruction of EFL learners in Greece is a good idea; however, at the same time we need to ensure**

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[209] See Section 4.6.1, Chapter 4 for information on the learners' future contexts of use of English.

that the learners are exposed to a wide variety of native (i.e. standard regional and non-standard regional) and non-native accents of English as part of their language course. The standard British/American centric view of language is not problematic or harmful when it concerns decisions as to which pronunciation models are to be used in the classroom; however, it does more harm than good when it concerns decisions as to what to include in the listening material used of language courses.

Let us consider the following scenario which is a very likely one since 'studies at a university in an English-speaking country' has been chosen as a future context of use of English by 64% of the teachers and 47% of the learners in our study. Moreover, we know that the UK is by far the largest overseas supplier of education to Greece; for many years there has been a high demand by Greeks to attend undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the UK (see quote below) because the Greek higher education system cannot meet the national demand for places.

> Continuing high local demand for UK education is reflected in the fact that over 30,000 education enquiries are made each year to the British Council's offices in Athens and Thessaloniki. Over 10,000 Greeks visit the Education UK exhibitions every year seeking information on UK courses. Greece probably has the highest proportion of UK alumni per head of population of any overseas country.
>
> British Council, Greece, March 2008[210]

If Greek EFL learners intend to study at a university in Britain for a number of years, then an appropriate pronunciation model as part of their English language instruction in Greece would be one based on a Standard British accent. Nevertheless, once Greek students arrive in Britain, they will need to be in the position to communicate effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds; for example, they will need to understand the bus conductor, who may have a standard regional accent, as well as the

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[210] Greece Market Introduction, Report by the British Council. March 2008.
http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-background-greece.htm accessed on 13.11.2010.

corner shop owner, who may have a non-native English accent. We know that "an unfamiliar accent can make comprehension almost impossible for the listener" (Buck, 2001: 35). Thus, while it may be a good idea to use NS models in class and, perhaps to encourage learners to approximate to NS models, it is also a good idea to expose learners to different accents of English in class; exposing learners to various native and non-native accents will help combat the 'fear of the unknown' and will function as a prerequisite for successful communication to take place among speakers of different L1s in a variety of contexts worldwide. Furthermore, it is worth noting that students should not only be exposed to different accents but, also, to different voices speaking e.g. RP rather than just one voice (for an example of this, see Wells, 2006).

Interestingly, 'Pronunciation in Use' by Marc Hancock (2003), exposes learners to various accents through listening comprehension exercises although the model variety for production purposes remains British English (Wrembel, 2005: 424). It is important for future publications to follow the example set by Hancock (2003) and offer a great variety of accents of English for the learners to familiarise themselves with; we can then hope that if our research is replicated in 10 years' time the results with respect to frequency of exposure to various accents will be different.

Having addressed the question of 'which model' for English language instruction, at least in the context of Greece, I also need to address the question of 'how up to date' just like Przedlacka (2005) did in her paper on models for EFL pronunciation teaching. Przedlacka (2005) argued that the most feasible model for language teaching purposes remains RP but pointed out that "it is the updated version that should be taught, with the inclusion of features that are salient and 'authentic' to learners" (: 32). **Indeed, it goes without saying that the NS model taught should include any up to date changes.** Some language teachers in some contexts may feel

tempted to adopt a relatively new variety of English as a model, i.e. Estuary English (EE)[211], defined by Wells (1998) as "standard English spoken with an accent that includes features localizable in the southeast of England". And, this is actually an area that is missing from the current debate on people's attitudes to different varieties of English; to this date and to my knowledge there are no research studies that explore people's attitudes to relatively new varieties of English; for example, how is EE evaluated by NSSs of English compared to RP? Nevertheless, according to Wells (1997c), "rather than trying to adopt EE, perhaps a more realistic aim for EFL teachers and learners would be to make sure that our description of Received Pronunciation keeps up to date". Keeping RP up to date entails the following:

> It must not remain fossilized in the form codified by Daniel Jones almost a century ago. We must modernize it by gradually incorporating one or two of the changes typical of EE. To star' with, we migh' le' people use a few glottal stops. Or would tha' no' mee' with everyone's approval.
>
> Wells, 1997c

Wells (1997c) offers an excellent discussion on the changes that have affected RP in the decades that have passed since Jones's formulation and divides these into changes from the early twentieth century, changes in the mid twentieth century and changes in the late twentieth century. Wells's (2008) Longman Pronunciation Dictionary (LPD) is an essential guide and tool for (prospective and practising) EFL teachers and teacher trainers as well as (upper-intermediate and advanced) EFL learners interested in an 'up to date' NS model of English pronunciation since it includes the results of hundreds of new pronunciation preference polls: "for many words of uncertain pronunciation, LPD reported the preferences expressed in five opinion polls" (Wells, 2008a: xviii). Overall, there are 261 poll graphs showing increasing tendencies in terms of the pronunciation of certain words in Wells's (2008a) dictionary which

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[211] The term 'Estuary English' was coined by Rosewarne, 1984, after the Thames estuary, and implying influence of the southeastern part of England centred on London (Wells, 1998).

guarantee that the users of the dictionary have access to an 'up to date' standard British or American model of English pronunciation. For example, as part of the British English (BrE) poll conducted on-line by Wells himself, the results of the question 'what is the vowel in the last syllable of *hurricane*?' were as follows: 2/3 of the oldest group (aged over 65) voted for / -kən/, but 4/5 of the youngest group (aged 25 or younger) voted for / - keɪn / (Wells, 2008b: 26). Another interesting example is the word 'poor'; the relevant chart in the LPD demonstrates a clear preference for /pɔː/ among younger BrE speakers and for /pʊə/ among older BrE speakers (Wells, 2008a: 627-628). Thus, if EFL teachers wish to adopt an 'up to date' version of a standard British English accent as a model for imitation for their learners, it is imperative that they encourage their learners, for example, to produce the last syllable of 'hurricane' (as well as the word 'poor') in the same way as the younger group of the respondents in the LPD BrE pronunciation preference polls.

To re-cap, EFL learners in Greece should be exposed to a wide range of different native (standard, standard regional, non-standard regional) and non-native accents for practice in comprehension. However, in terms of production, the most appropriate model seems to be an 'up to date' version of a Standard British or American accent, i.e. RP and GA. And, given the existence of the aforementioned LPD by Wells (2008), it is easy for EFL teachers and learners to have access to an 'up to date' version of a standard British and/or American accent. Interestingly, my view is the same as that of Wells (1997c):

> Agreed, we need to expose learners to a wide range of different accents for practice in comprehension. The point is, what model do we set before them for imitation?... EFL teachers working within a British English – oriented environment should continue to use RP (though not necessarily under than name) as their pronunciation model. But this model must be revised and updated from time to time.
>
> Wells, 1997c

It is interesting to note that Tench (2011) refers to RP as Southern England Standard Pronunciation (SESP) (see Tench, 2011: 4-5 for his justification of the use of the more explicit label SESP instead of RP). Nevertheless, regardless of whether or not we refer to RP as SESP or some other name, the fact remains that the model set for EFL learners should be an up to date and revised version of that accent (or the equivalent American one).

Pronunciation Targets

 NS models are authentic, natural and practical and have also stood the test of time. The LFC is an artificially created syllabus that so far has not been described in ELT materials and is, thus, probably doomed to failure. Jenkins's (2000) recommendation that "native-speakers of English have to expend some effort on learning EIL" (: 227) is far too ambitious and makes me wonder as to how realistic such a recommendation might be; this comment alone increases the likelihood of the LFC failing to establish itself as the model for the pronunciation of EIL. And, just because English has transformed itself from a foreign language to an international one, it does not mean that NSs of English must be banished to irrelevance and NS models and targets must be rejected. **We can keep those NS models while bearing in mind that intelligibility is the most important goal. Whether or not intelligibility is going to be achieved through L1 accented English speech or near-native like English speech, should not be the cause of arguments for the one and against the other.**

Nevertheless, when it comes to pronunciation performance targets things can get very complicated. Leather (1983: 198) wrote that "it has been said that only spies need truly native-like accents and only teachers of L2 need to be near native" whereas "for the majority of school and non-specialist adult learners, a reasonable goal is to be

'comfortably intelligible' (Abercrombie, 1963) and to sound socially acceptable" (ibid: 198). Leather (1983: 198) points out that what makes a non-native sound as 'socially acceptable' to a native "has yet to be understood" (: 198). Abercrombie (1963) defined 'comfortably intelligible pronunciation', as follows:

> Most…language learners need no more than a comfortably intelligible pronunciation (and by "comfortably" intelligible, I mean a pronunciation which can be understood with little or no conscious effort on the part of the listener). I believe that pronunciation teaching should have, not a goal which must of necessity be normally an unrealized ideal, but a *limited* [his italics] purpose which will be completely fulfilled: the attainment of intelligibility.
>
> Abercrombie, 1963: 37

If we consider the expectations of NSs of English as the receivers of NNSs' oral discourse in English, it is very likely that NSs will not expect NNSs to have a native-like accent; however, it will suit them to have a sufficiently good accent that causes no communication problems. **Nevertheless, we can only assume that NSs of English would not expect NNSs to speak with a native-like accent but would appreciate clarity and intelligibility; we do not really know.** If this is the case, it needs to be proved by research. Indeed, this would be an interesting direction for future research; there are three groups of people whose perceptions need to be addressed; teachers (group 1), learners (group 2) and 'ordinary people' (group 3). Teachers' and learners' views as to a variety of native and non-native accents have been explored as part of research studies (see Section 2.3). However, ordinary people's views need to be addressed too. How will the 'ordinary people' the learners will be conversing with perceive the learners' pronunciation? Learners need to know how they sound to other speakers; how 'ordinary people' evaluate and judge them; for example, do they react negatively to L1 accented speech? Are they impressed by learners' NLP? And, of course, do they understand them? To this date and to my knowledge, only one study has been conducted to this end: Van den Doel's (2006) study "in which twenty "traditional" L2 pronunciation errors with close equivalents in

non-deviant but regionally distinctive native speech were presented to well over 500 NS participants from different Inner Circle Countries" (cited in Van den Doel, 2010: 359). Van den Doel (2010: 358) wrote that "those learners who have the ambition or need to interact with non-local interlocutors, whether these are traditional NSs from the Inner Circle, or NNSs used to particular Inner, Outer, or Expanding Circle norms, the issue of stigmatised accent features will be of some concern". Based on the findings of the (2006) study, Van den Doel (2010) pointed out that, for example, "not all learners from Expanding Circle countries will benefit from the suggestion made by Jenkins that substitutions for dental fricatives can be viewed as non-problematic in the context of EIL" (: 358). For Van den Doel (2010), the adoption of a pronunciation model should not only be predicated on issues of intelligibility but should also take in issues of acceptability from the point of view not only of NS but also NNS interlocutors. In a nutshell, Van den Doel (2010) argued that those learners who prefer to continue to refer to NS models, need to be aware of their interlocutors' attitudes to stigmatised accent features as his (2006) research indicated that attitudes to these stigmatised accent features are difficult to predict; therefore, it would be undesirable to recommend their general use in any pronunciation models.

I-Chun Kuo (2006) has argued that a NS model can serve "as a complete and convenient starting point and it is up to the TESOL professionals and the learners in each context to decide to what extent they want to approximate to that model" (: 213). This position in terms of pronunciation models is similar to my position. Now as far as 'the extent to which to approximate to that model' is concerned, we have seen that the teachers and learners of our study *would like* the learners' accent to come 'very close' to a native-like model but *expect* that it will only come 'quite close'. This gap between the 'desired' and the 'practical' pronunciation performance target is not

surprising as the mastery of native-like pronunciation (NLP) is a very complex issue that involves a number of factors such as 'amount of exposure to the language' (which is rather limited in an expanding circle country), 'motivation' (learners' desire to master NLP), 'language aptitude' and other learner characteristics. Interestingly, when the teachers and learners were given a direct choice between 'accented international intelligibility' (AII) and NLP, virtually all teachers chose AII as the most important pronunciation goal along with 2/3 of the learners. Nevertheless, 1/3 of the learners opted for NLP. **The findings of our study in this respect confirmed the findings of other studies; a greater tendency was observed among the learners of our study to consider NLP as the more appropriate goal than among the teachers; indeed, more EFL learners than teachers wish for the learners to acquire NLP (see also Timmis, 2002; Kanellou, 2001).** Reasons provided by the learners of our study and Timmis's (2002) study included 'greater acceptance by native speakers; fitting in/ feeling more comfortable', 'ensuring effective communication' and 'sense of achievement/ indication of high level of competence in English'. Timmis (2002) also found that the rather traditional idea of mastering a language survived amongst a minority and this was also the case for 1/4 of the learners in our study that opted for NLP. **A learner's wish to master NLP in order to feel more accepted by NSs and/or to demonstrate an excellent command of the English language are both perfectly acceptable and understandable; "good pronunciation is… to a large extent responsible for one's first impression of a learner's L2 competence" (Dalton-Puffer et al, 1997: 115).** Of course, the proponents of EIL and the LFC would claim that by 'good pronunciation', what should be meant is 'intelligible pronunciation'; nevertheless, in the context of an English-speaking country, 'good pronunciation' might mean NLP; the point I am trying to make is that *we do not really*

know; with the exception of Van den Doel's (2006) study, there is no empirical research evidence to tell us what NSs of English think; for example, do they view NNSs' intelligible, albeit accented speech, negatively? Are they impressed by NNSs' NLP? **And, until research is carried out in order to explore ordinary people's attitudes towards such varieties of English and produce findings along the lines of that intelligible speech, albeit accented speech, is perfectly acceptable, we cannot tell those learners who express such wishes that they are wrong[212]; instead their needs and wishes need to be catered for as part of English language lessons**. On the other hand, we need to inform those learners who wish to master NLP just because they think that this is the 'appropriate/right thing to do' (or that it is a necessary part of 'mastering a language') that it is perfectly acceptable to develop an intelligible pronunciation even if it is not native-like. And, we need to convince them that in order to be understood by others, if that is their only goal, they can achieve this just by ensuring that their pronunciation is intelligible.** It is important to do so as many learners only need for their pronunciation to be intelligible; also, many learners will not succeed in mastering NLP even if they try. As Derwing and Munro (2005) put it:

> Though all learners should be encouraged to reach their full potential, which may well exceed the minimum required for basic intelligibility, it may do more harm than good for teachers to lead learners to believe that they will eventually achieve native pronunciation or to encourage them to expend time and energy working toward a goal that they are unlikely to achieve.
>
> Derwing and Munro, 2005: 384

AII is certainly an appropriate target and one that makes sense because unless learners' speech is intelligible to others, communication will not be successful. We need to bear in mind that effective communication is the most important goal; of course there are other goals too that will only be accomplished by means of NLP.

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[212] Interestingly, the only study carried out in relation to this to this date is the one by Van den Doel (2006) study which provided evidence to the contrary.

McKay (2002: 41) states that "teaching English as an international language requires that researchers and educators thoroughly examine individual learners' specific uses of English within their particular speech community as a basis for determining learning goals" and Pennington (1996: 17) maintains that "as in all teaching, it is important in planning instruction to consider the students' expressed needs and desires". Pennington (1996) urges us to consider the specific functions that the learner needs to perform in English, the specific audiences with whom he or she will be interacting, the learner's expectations, orientation to level of proficiency in English and so on. Hebert (2002: 101) writes that "it is prudent to diagnose… the communicative contexts in which they [the learners] will use English outside the classroom". Also, for Van den Doel (2010), a serious examination of learner needs should take in the learners' ambitions in using English to communicate with different groups of interlocutors, whether from Inner, Outer or Expanding Circle countries and "if both intelligibility and acceptability to either NSs, NNSs, or both, are a major concern, then that should obviously be reflected in the pedagogical models provided to the students" (: 354). We have seen that according to ELT manuals' writers, it is the teacher who needs to consider and ultimately decide which pronunciation models to teach and which targets to set for his/her learners and such decisions should depend on an analysis of learners' needs and a consideration of variables such as learning purpose (Theme 9, Section 1.2.1).

In terms of the learners' future contexts for their use of the English as part of our study, 83% of learners opted for 'travel' (= 'travelling for leisure or work in different countries around the world'), 70% for 'work' (= 'for a better chance of employment and financial reward in the job market in Greece and, generally, at work') and 47% for 'studies' (= 'for studies at a university in an English-speaking

country'). 87% of teachers chose the 'work' context, 64% the 'studies' context and 62% the 'travel' context. **Given those future contexts of use of English, as identified by the teachers and learners of our study, 'accented international intelligibility' will serve them well in most cases. However, if some learners wish to attain native-like pronunciation in English, then they should be encouraged and assisted in their attempt to do so.** It is understandable that teachers have to think of the whole class and, thus, 'accented international intelligibility' is a sensible target; nevertheless, each learner only needs to think of himself/herself. And, of course different learners want different things and, also, have different abilities. The EFL learner who intends to work as a taxi driver in Greece or will use English only when he/she travels for leisure outside Greece needs to achieve an intelligible pronunciation that can embody many features of their L1. On the other hand, the EFL learner who wishes to succeed at an academic environment in an English-speaking country, or would like to become an EFL teacher may need to aim for near native-like competence in pronunciation. Many Greeks have spent quite a few years of their lives in the UK studying and/or working there and it is likely that this trend will continue. To recall Liam's example, the Greek guy who walks into a pub in England and starts talking about 'Rooney in Wembley' (/ruːneɪ/ in /wembleɪ/ instead of /ruːni/ in /wembli/), his speech may be perfectly intelligible but at the same time he may sound funny, if not ridiculous. Saville-Troike (2006) wrote that "proficiency in phonological perception is required for listening if learners are studying other subjects through the medium of L2, and at least intelligible pronunciation is needed for speaking in most educational settings" (: 90). To this we must add that those students will not only operate in an educational setting; they will spend many hours on campus but they will also operate in other contexts of the same city; they will use public transport, they will

go to the local pub and so on. Such learners may want to aim higher than just 'intelligible' pronunciation; they may even try to attain NLP. All the aforementioned examples, lead us to one important conclusion as to the desirability and feasibility of near-nativeness in pronunciation as an ultimate goal for EFL learners: **some learners may neither want nor need to attain a NLP and some others simply cannot reach this level of performance. On the other hand, there are learners who aspire to NLP and some of those will succeed in reaching this target.** Wells (2005a) addressed the very same issue as part of his paper entitled 'Goals in Teaching English Pronunciation', as follows:

> *What are the students' personal aims and aspirations in language learning?* Different students in the same class of school or university may well have rather different aims. Some just want English to communicate at a basic level, or indeed just enough to pass some examination. Others aim to achieve the best they possibly can. We must cater for both types and for those who fall somewhere between.
>
> <div align="right">Wells, 2005a: 102</div>

Asking learners to approximate to a NS standard seems *anachronistic* to Jenkins (2006b), the only exception being those learners who need or want to acquire an accent close to that of a NS (Jenkins, 2000, 2002). However, telling learners, (especially those that are children and have not yet had a chance to decide for themselves whether or not they would like to aspire to NLP), that they should not or do not need to try to approximate to a NS standard, seems *unethical* to me. These children will grow up to become adults and, as adults some of them may wish to sound native-like; given the 'age' factor[213] constraints in terms of the mastery of NLP, it may be too late for them to do so. As a final note I would like to underscore that my suggestion is for teachers to help learners approximate to a native-like standard as far as the learners' productive competence is concerned; however, if some learners do not want to or do not succeed in producing a native-like accent, as long as

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[213] Please refer back to Section 5.2.2, this Chapter for more information on the 'age' factor.

their accent is intelligible, they should not be penalised in any way. As Van den Doel (2010: 352) put it: "if the adoption of a NS model does not automatically imply the attainment of a NS target, the argument of the unattainable and therefore disadvantageous exonormative model[214] loses much of its force". Now, as far as the learners' receptive competence in the area of pronunciation is concerned, my suggestion is to expose learners to a great variety of English accents including native accents (standard and non-standard ones) as well as non-native accents of English.

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[214] Kirkpatrick's (2007: 188) statement that for NNS learners, it is discouraging to be taught a model that is "unattainable" to them (cited in Van den Doel, 2010: 351), led Van den Doel (2010) to write that "it is vital to distinguish between a native-speaker *model,* which merely serves as a reference point and does not make any claims about target levels, and a native-speaker *target* which is indeed unattainable to many adult learners and teachers" (: 352).

6.3 Pronunciation Teaching Methods

The teachers that participated in the study claimed to employ a wide variety of techniques for the teaching of pronunciation. At this point, it is worth noting a limitation that pertains to the methodology of the study reported in this thesis as it relates to the particular research question; the study explored the teachers' beliefs and views as to pronunciation teaching techniques and also presented the teachers' *reported* teaching practices. There was no analysis of *actual* classroom practices. This limitation has also been identified in other studies in the field by Baker and Murphy (2011) who state:

> The few studies that have addressed pronunciation teaching have done so only in relation to teachers' reported cognitions and instructional practices (Baker, in press; Jenkins, 2007; MacDonald, 2002; Sifakis and Sougari, 2005). These studies, however, have not included any analysis of teachers' actual classroom practices (i.e. classroom-based data).
>
> Baker and Murphy, 2011: 30

Baker and Murphy (2011) go on to write that research evidence in the area of grammar instruction demonstrated that teachers' stated beliefs and their actual teaching practices often differ (Collie Graden et al, 2005 cited in Baker and Murphy, 2011: 42) and wonder "would similar inconsistencies be found between the beliefs and the instructional behaviors in relation to teaching pronunciation?" (Baker and Murphy, 2011: 42). Of course, it goes without saying that having incorporated classroom-based data by means of non-participant observation would have made the case of this study in this respect stronger. Nevertheless, **the interview data of our study did not only help explain the questionnaire results but also provided further confirmation as to the accuracy of the questionnaire results.** For example, as part of the questionnaire data, it emerged that the teachers claimed to rarely use the IPA symbols in class; this was also confirmed by the interview data. Thus, complementing the questionnaire data with the interview data has made the case of

our study stronger; as Peacock (1999: 262) put it; studies "should also collect qualitative data to back up questionnaire results, as too much reliance is often put on data from just one self-report questionnaire".

Returning to the questionnaire data of our study, some of the pronunciation techniques were found to be more popular than others in terms of the teachers' reported frequency of use. For example, teachers claimed to often use 'production/ articulation exercises (i.e. 'reading aloud' activities, drilling & imitation exercises' (M = 1.87, S.D = 0.957) whereas they claimed to use 'ear-training (discrimination) exercises between similar sounding phonemes' sometimes or rarely (M = 3.51, S.D = 1.140). The reasons behind the relative popularity of certain techniques over others were revealed in the teachers' interviews. Also, as part of the 'Discussion' section of this chapter, I explored whether or not the views of ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers in terms of recommended pronunciation teaching techniques were reflected in the participants' teaching practices. **In some cases, it was revealed that the views expressed in ELT handbooks and ELT PRON handbooks have had little impact on teachers' practices and, in some other cases, it was revealed that teachers' practices were in line with current thinking in terms of pronunciation pedagogy.**

For example, as part of the questionnaire data it emerged that despite the great advantages associated with the use of computer technology for the practice of pronunciation as outlined by a number of ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers as well as a great number of researchers, teachers used pronunciation software programs rarely or never (M = 4.30, S.D = 1.072). In the interviews, it was revealed that there were several problems associated with the use of computer technology for the practice of pronunciation; first, there were constraints as to the use of computers during language lessons imposed by the limited number of computers owned by each

language school; second, students had to come in and practise by themselves outside class hours and many students failed to co-operate. Moreover, there were those teachers who claimed not to be 'computer-friendly' and those teachers who questioned the usefulness and effectiveness of pronunciation instruction via software. Fortunately, the situation regarding the use of computer technology for the practice of pronunciation in the context of ELT in Greece is likely to change in the future; in the course of the interviews it was revealed that 1/3 of the teachers interviewed often used pronunciation software in class. At first, this finding appeared contradictory but it seems that the 2 ½ year gap between the completion of the questionnaires and the conduction of interviews had played a part; more schools have computers nowadays than they did two years ago.

Another interesting example as part of the questionnaire data of our study, concerns the use of the IPA symbols in class. The teachers claimed to rarely teach the IPA symbols to their students (M = 3.72, S.D = 1.425) despite the advantages of using the phonemic alphabet as a tool for pronunciation instruction as pointed out by the ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers. The majority of the teachers interviewed considered the IPA symbols to have no practical value as students no longer use dictionaries to find out the pronunciation of word; they use CD ROMS to *listen* to the pronunciation of a word. Moreover, 1/3 of the teachers interviewed thought that the IPA symbols were difficult for them to teach and difficult for the students to learn.

At this point, I would like to reveal my position as to the use of IPA symbols. Of course, as part of teacher training, IPA is an alternative way of recording pronunciation. **Nevertheless, having considered the pros and cons associated with the use of the IPA in class, I do not envisage the EFL teacher, at least in the context of Greece, using the IPA extensively in class.** It goes without saying that an

EFL teacher should know what the IPA system is. **IPA symbols may not need to appear extensively in class but certainly belong to the level of teacher training and serious study of the language. Thus, even though ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers recommend familiarising teachers and learners with the IPA, I feel that this should mainly apply to the teachers; as for the learners, it is not necessary to master all phonetic symbols (unless, of course they decide to embark on a serious study of the English language).** My statement seems far removed from Palmer's principles as realised in the 'Oral Approach' for language teaching which held that teachers and learners should be phonetically trained and the use of phonetic transcription should be extensive, especially in the early stages of language learning. It is also far removed from Sweet's (1899) graded curriculum according to which all learners should become familiar with phonetic transcription. My view concerning the use of IPA symbols in class is similar to that of Tench (1992) who wrote that:

> …teachers must decide for themselves whether to use phonetic symbols in the classroom, or not; it is a matter of assessing its desirability against such factors as time, the aim of the course, the level and age of the learners and access to dictionaries.
>
> Tench, 1992: 101

Wells (2005b: 103) referred to the "notoriously inconsistent and irregular" orthography of the English language as follows: "you cannot safely predict the pronunciation from the spelling. Nor, given the pronunciation, you can reliably infer the spelling" and proposed two possible remedies for this problem (or 'characteristic') of English:

> Either we must reform English spelling (and I might mention that I have just become President of the Simplified Spelling Society) – or teachers of English to speakers of other languages must *teach the pronunciation* of each word as its spelling. This implies teaching the *use of phonetic symbols*, at least passively for reference.
>
> Wells, 2005b: 105

In relation to Wells's statement as to the use of IPA symbols, I need to add that **times have changed; for example, many EFL students nowadays use CDs and internet**

search engines in order to *listen* to the pronunciation of words. Interestingly, any EFL learner who uses Wells's (2008) *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* can be successfully informed about the pronunciation of the words included in the dictionary by simply listening to the CD-ROM that accompanies the dictionary and which includes spoken versions of every headword in British English and American English.

A positive finding that emerged from the interview data was that the teachers took into consideration their learners' needs (e.g. to prepare for and succeed at EFL exams) as well as the learners' age and level of competence in English and adapted pronunciation instruction accordingly. We have seen that the general consensus among ELT and ELT PRON handbook writers was that teachers should base their decisions as to what kind of pronunciation teaching techniques to employ should depend on an analysis of learners' needs.

Another finding which seems to suggest that the views of ELT handbook writers have had a positive effect on teachers' practices was the one concerning perception and production in L2 phonology. According to ELT and ELT PRON handbooks, receptive awareness precedes productive competence and, thus, teachers should first concentrate on recognition activities and then on production activities to help students improve their pronunciation. All twelve teachers interviewed agreed with the particular view and said that they first got their students to listen to the sounds of English and then asked them to produce them. We know that the mind has got a phonological system for the processing of data and the production of data. For the NS the system for processing and the system for production is the same system. What about the L2 learner though? Is it the same? There is data to suggest that students are consistently better in perception than production. Thus, generally speaking it seems that perception precedes production ability. Nevertheless, some

researchers have proposed that perception and production go hand in hand and some others have even suggested that production precedes perception (see Baker and Trofimovich, 2006 for more information); of course, in terms of the latter the learners may be doing so incidentally rather than competently. Nevertheless, currently the most widely accepted hypothesis by researchers is that perception precedes production in the mastery of L2 pronunciation (Baker and Trofimovich, 2006), in other words, you cannot expect a student to produce what they cannot perceive.

A rather disturbing finding that emerged as part of our study was that nearly half of the teachers (49%) had never attended a course/module in English phonetics and more than two thirds of the teachers (72%) had never received any specific training in the teaching of English pronunciation. It seems that this finding is not unique to the Greek ELT context as it has also been demonstrated by other researchers: Breitkreutz et al (2001) for ESL teachers in Canada; Fraser (2000) and MacDonald (2002) for ESL teachers in Australia and Burgess and Spencer (2000) for teachers in Britain. Also, Yeou (2006: 2) refers to Brown (1992) who showed that the majority of the teachers surveyed thought TESOL training did not cover pronunciation teaching well and, thus, they felt powerless as to meeting the objectives of pronunciation instruction. Brown (1992) also reported lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers about the phonetics of foreign languages. Nevertheless, Baker and Murphy (2011) point out that "scarcely any research has been conducted that explores pronunciation teachers' knowledge of phonology" (: 41). Thus, our study can be seen as a great contribution in this respect and will, hopefully, stimulate future researchers to carry out similar studies in this neglected area of pronunciation research. If similar findings emerge, these need to be taken very seriously for example, by authorities in charge of granting English language teaching

permits; after all, the value for language teachers' possessing a knowledge of English phonetics and phonology and having received practical training in terms of the teaching of English pronunciation has been argued for extensively by researchers and scholars (see for example, Derwing and Munro, 2005 or Gilner, 2008) as well as ELT handbook writers (Theme 9, Section 1.2.1, Theme 1, Section 1.2.2) and, thus, it is a matter that deserves attention by everybody involved in the field of English language teaching and learning. For example, Gilner (2008: 104) wrote that "we must… recognise that effective instruction (in pronunciation as well as any other area) is directly related to a teacher's understanding of the subject matter and the student population".

I feel it is important to conclude this thesis by providing concrete suggestions in terms of the contents of 'English phonetics' and 'pronunciation training' courses. As far as phonetics courses are concerned, first, teachers should acquire knowledge of the way sounds are produced and, thus, such a course should include information on articulation theory and description of sounds in terms of the most popular standard accents, i.e. RP and GA. The *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (2008) by Wells can be used as a comprehensive guide to alternative accents of words (it includes the standard British and American accent of each word) as well as to 'up to date' models of pronunciation (it shows the trends regarding 'newer' pronunciation of certain lexical items). Second, teachers should become familiar with the IPA symbols and display competence in phonetic transcription; *Transcribing the Sound of English* (2011) by Tench provides an excellent introduction to the transcription of words and discourse and is also a comprehensive course in the transcription of English for students of linguistics and phonetics as well as (prospective) English language teachers. Third, teachers should master the features of

'word phonology', namely, consonants, vowels, word stress, phonotactics and simplifications (elision, assimilation and epenthesis) as well as the features of 'discourse phonology', namely rhythm and intonation. Fourth, teachers need to acquire relevant information through a description of the learners' L1 (in the case of our study, Greek) word and discourse phonology and English word and discourse phonology. A contrastive analysis of the Greek and English sound systems helps predict errors for Greek learners of English and provides useful information for teachers to deal effectively with common problem areas for Greek learners of English. The 'phonology' sections of Swan and Smith's (2001) *Learner English*, provide useful information in this respect; not only for teachers of Greek learners of English but also for teachers of learners from a wide variety of L1 backgrounds.

Moving on to pronunciation training courses, teachers should be introduced to traditional pronunciation exercises (e.g. drilling and imitation) in order to help their learners establish good perception and articulatory ability and should also be informed about the value of 'individual' as well as 'choral' responses. Teachers should also be introduced to more modern pronunciation exercises (e.g. pronunciation games) as well as any communicative type of exercises so that they can show their learners that pronunciation practice can be fun. It goes without saying that teachers should become aware of published material in this area and should be supplied with a list of references of works that have attempted to devise pronunciation exercises in a CLT setting; see for example, *Better English Pronunciation* (1980) by O'Connor and *Sounds English* (1989) by O'Connor and Fletcher. And, overall, teachers should master 'educational psychology' in order to know when, how and for how long they should practise pronunciation in class. In any pronunciation training course, it should be stressed that teachers need to ensure that their learners will not base their

pronunciation on spelling; any reference to the written form should be secondary to the spoken form. To this end, introducing learners to a few basic IPA symbols should help. Teachers should also become convinced as to the value of using authentic English in class; any oral texts are potentially a source for pronunciation teaching and the more 'authentic English oral texts' feature as part of the English language lesson, the more learners will be listening to a variety of accents and voices in English. Finally, I would advocate stressing to all teachers receiving training in the teaching of pronunciation to try and help their learners acquire intelligible pronunciation right from the beginning of any language course.

Having reached the end of the thesis, I ought to point out that proposing that EFL teachers need to acquire knowledge of English phonetics and phonology and receive training in the teaching of pronunciation as well as making suggestions as to the contents of 'phonetics' and 'pronunciation training' courses is not enough. We have seen that 40% of the teachers of the research sample of our study held 'non-teaching-related' English language qualifications; for example, there were teachers who only held a CPE. Tziava (2003) also addressed Greek EFL teacher qualifications and wrote that "there are teachers who only hold the CPE (Certificate of Proficiency by either the Cambridge or Michigan University) since they are allowed to get their teaching licence form the Greek Ministry of Education" (: 7). It goes without saying that the prerequisite for teachers to attend a phonetics course is that they should at least possess 'teaching-related' English language qualifications; that they should receive some sort of formal education. The disappointing situation regarding EFL teachers' (lack of) qualifications is not unique to the Greek context:

> TESOL is not a highly regulated field. … The reality is that for many of us there is no minimum standard to be met for background education. There are often no requirements for continuing education. All is optional.
>
> Perkins, 2002: 201 cited in Gabrielatos, 2002: 11

Gabrielatos (2002) identifies two reasons for ELT generally being a professional community with extremely relaxed entry requirements especially as far as the private sector is concerned:

> This is mainly due to the popular myth that a native/ good command of a language and an ill-defined 'love' or 'knack' for teaching can magically turn someone into a language teacher. Another reason is the belief that a short training course is adequate preparation for a career in language teaching.
>
> Gabrielatos, 2002: 11

It seems to me that we need to stress the importance for EFL teachers possessing appropriate qualifications as well as to make proposals in terms of what the required education and training should comprise; for example, courses in English phonetics and pronunciation training.

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