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A photograph of four people (two men and two women) of diverse backgrounds sitting around a table, looking at an open book. They appear to be in a classroom or library setting. The man on the left is wearing a light blue polo shirt and glasses. The woman next to him is wearing a white button-down shirt. The man on the right is wearing a green and white striped shirt. The woman on the far right is wearing a pink and white striped shirt. They are all smiling and engaged in the activity.

LET'S SPEAK

Best practice in pronunciation teaching and learning for beginner-level EAL adult learners

A 2015 International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship.

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i. Executive Summary

Pronunciation is an integral and necessary component of language acquisition. For adult migrants in Australia, effective oral communication is a desirable goal, yet challenging to achieve.¹ It is the process by which speakers present an image of themselves.² Unfortunately, for many adult migrants, pronunciation is still a significant impediment to communication.³ In fact, adult English language learners are seriously disadvantaged without effective second language oral skills⁴, and “intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence”.⁵ Fraser (2000) argues that they are at risk educationally, occupationally, professionally and socially if unable to communicate effectively in spoken English.⁶

The focus on language as communication has seen a renewed interest in the teaching of pronunciation. As evidence indicates, both empirical and anecdotal, there is a critical level of pronunciation for nonnative speakers of English; if they fall below this point, they will have oral communication problems irrespective of their grammar and vocabulary skill level.⁷

Yet explicit pronunciation instruction has been neglected, in spite of the inherent value teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) and learners, place on intelligible output.⁸ It has been referred to as the “orphan of ESL/EFL teaching”.⁹ Pronunciation instruction proves challenging for some teachers,¹⁰ due in part to a lack of confidence in and knowledge of the phonological aspects of pronunciation instruction, a paucity of appropriate resources, the perceived lack of learner progress and relevant research that informs teaching. Put simply, “many ESL teachers lack the ‘basic confidence, skills and knowledge’ to teach pronunciation”¹¹ because many ESL instructors have had no preparation in teaching pronunciation.¹²

In her role as a teacher of low-proficiency adult migrants, Elizabeth Keenan (the Fellow) has recognised the need for pronunciation instruction. The keen interest of the learners for explicit instruction^{13 14} for the purpose of effective communication has supported this need. It has been observed that intelligibility issues at a sound, word and sentence level create difficulties for both the speaker and the listener. This has prompted an interest in the area of pronunciation instruction that goes beyond a ‘listen and repeat’ strategy. A journey of discovery has led the Fellow to examine the role of segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation

1 Fraser, H. 2000, *Coordinating improvements in pronunciation teaching for adult learners of English as a second language*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian National Training Authority Adult Literacy National Project).

2 Pennington, M., & Richards, J. 1986. Pronunciation revisited. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(2), 207-225

3 Couper, G. 2003. The value of an explicit pronunciation syllabus in ESOL teaching. *Prospect*, 18(3), 53-70.

4 Morley, J. 1991. The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), 481-520

5 *ibid*

6 Fraser, H. 2000, *Coordinating improvements in pronunciation teaching for adult learners of English as a second language*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian National Training Authority Adult Literacy National Project). 513

7 Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J. 1996. *Teaching pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 7

8 Morley, J. 1991. The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), 481-52

9 Gilbert, J. 2010. Pronunciation as orphan: What can be done? *Speak Out!*, 43, 3-7.

10 MacDonald, S. 2002, Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18.

11 MacDonald, S. 2002, Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), p. 3.

12 Grant, L. (Ed.), 2014. *Pronunciation Myths*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p. viii.

13 Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. 2002. ESL learners' perception of their pronunciation needs and strategies. *System*, 30, 155-166.

14 Couper, G. 2003. The value of an explicit pronunciation syllabus in ESOL teaching. *Prospect*, 18(3), 53-70.

instruction, within a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classroom, and the impact on intelligibility. It has raised the question of how to effectively teach the individual sounds of English, prosodic features and voice quality setting to improve intelligibility. The Fellow seeks to explore the role of explicit pronunciation instruction as a component of oral language teaching, in improving intelligibility for communication purposes.

It is worth noting that the intention of the Fellow is not to advocate pronunciation instruction with the goal of native like output or imitation of a native model, but rather to facilitate interaction in the learners' environment for communicative purposes.¹⁵ "The majority of present-day teachers have abandoned the goal of perfect native-like speech in favor of clear, fluent speech that is intelligible to the listener."¹⁶

What is pronunciation?

Pronunciation is the "production of sounds that we use to make meaning".¹⁷ It comprises several components: segmental features which are the individual sounds of a language, the vowel and consonant sounds; suprasegmental aspects which encompass stress, rhythm and intonation, the prosodic features of pronunciation; voice quality setting which refers to the position of articulation in connected speech which give a language its characteristic quality or sound¹⁸ and non-verbal gestures. Pronunciation incorporates many factors, some of which include the interlocutor, the role of the listener, production and perception, accent, instruction and identity. The Fellow's goal is to develop best practice pronunciation

instruction for the learners to achieve comfortable intelligibility. Intelligibility is defined as "the extent to which the acoustic-phonetic content of the message, is recognisable by a listener".¹⁹ This recognises the important role of the listener in communication. Intelligibility measures the listener's ability to identify the speaker's intended words.²⁰ It has a quantitative aspect in referring to the amount of the utterance able to be understood by the listener. Comprehensibility, another term used to measure pronunciation, refers to effort; how hard the listener has to work to understand the speaker.

Pronunciation, in language teaching, is usually the term given to "the process of teaching learners to produce the sounds of a language".²¹ Pronunciation teaching also encompasses the "practical process of using phonetic and phonological knowledge to identify (potential) problems for learners, and produce sound activities for the classroom and outside, for learners to acquire an acceptable, intelligible accent of the language".²²

15 Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. 2009. Putting accent in its place: Rethinking obstacles to communication. *Language Teaching*, 42(4), 476-490.

16 Grant, L. (Ed.), 2014. *Pronunciation Myths*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p. 4.

17 Yates, L. 2002. What is pronunciation? *AMEP Research Centre Facts Sheets*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Retrieved 15 November 2016, accessed from <http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/pdamep/factsheets.html> p. 1

18 Pennington, M., & Richards, J. 1986. Pronunciation revisited. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(2), 207-225.

19 Field, J. 2005. Intelligibility and the listener: The role of lexical stress. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 399-423

20 Zielinski, B. 2006. The intelligibility cocktail: An interaction between speaker and listener ingredients. *Prospect*, 21(1), 22-45.

21 Brown, A. 2014. *Pronunciation and phonetics: A practical guide for English language teachers*. New York: Routledge. p. 5.

22 *ibid*

Teacher Cognition and Pedagogy

Research findings have shown that teachers are reluctant to teach pronunciation for a number of reasons.^{23,24} Some researchers have identified a lack of teacher cognition^{25,26} attributed to a paucity of pre-service training or professional development in phonetics and phonology. Teachers may be unsure of what and how to teach pronunciation and this may lead to a lack of teacher confidence.²⁷ Breitzkreutz et al (2001), in their survey of teachers and teaching practices, found support for the goal of greater comprehensibility and not the elimination of accents.²⁸ However, the barriers to pronunciation instruction failed to realise even this goal. MacDonald (2002) argued that many ESL teachers lack the “basic confidence, skills and knowledge” to teach pronunciation.²⁹ He identified the lack of resources and an insufficient knowledge of how to assess the learners’ pronunciation as further obstacles to pronunciation instruction.

Research around the lack of visible results or immediate improvement from pronunciation instruction³⁰ may contribute to teacher reluctance, as the teacher may attribute the lack of obvious progress to a failure to implement effective

activities and teaching practices.³¹ Teachers may then rely on their intuition in determining pronunciation instruction, based on salient results, that is, what is possible to be learned or decide to abandon explicit instruction completely.³²

Morley (1991) identified five areas requiring attention in pronunciation teaching: greater teacher cognition encompassing suprasegmental; voice quality in interactive discourse and segmentals features; greater range of resources that incorporate materials for “imitative, rehearsed and extemporaneous speaking practice”;³³ effective assessment tools to measure intelligibility and communicability, and continued research in the area of pronunciation instruction.³⁴ Zielinski (2012) supports the need for pronunciation from the very beginning of English language learning journey for improved learning outcomes.³⁵

Knowledge of phonetics and phonology could, in part, address teacher reluctance. Baker (2014) advocates that Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) courses dedicated to pronunciation with a pedagogy focus, could have a two-fold effect of improving teacher cognition and confidence in teaching pronunciation. It could increase teacher proficiency in isolating specific phonemes, identifying the articulatory settings, increasing the awareness of articulatory skills and how sounds are produced, identifying prosodic features in speech combined with improved instructional skills. This would have the desired outcome of increasing intelligibility.³⁶

23 Breitzkreutz, J. A., Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. 2001. Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESOL Canada Journal*, 19(1), 51-61.

24 MacDonald, S. 2002. Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18.

25 Darcy, I., Ewert, D., & Lidster, R. 2012. Bringing pronunciation instruction back into the classroom: An ESL teachers’ pronunciation “toolbox”. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 3rd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*. Sept. 2011 (p. 93-108). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

26 Baker, A. 2014. Exploring teachers’ knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(1), 136-163.

27 ibid

28 Breitzkreutz, J. A., Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. 2001. Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESOL Canada Journal*, 19(1), 51-61. p.3.

29 MacDonald, S. 2002. Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18. p. 3.

30 Darcy, I., Ewert, D., & Lidster, R. 2012. Bringing pronunciation instruction back into the classroom: An ESL teachers’ pronunciation “toolbox”. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 3rd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*. Sept. 2011 (p. 93-108). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

31 MacDonald, S. 2002. Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18.

32 Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. 2005. Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39, 379-397.

33 Morley, J. 1991. The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), p. 511

34 Morley, J. 1991. The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), p. 512.

35 Zielinski, B. 2012. The social impact of pronunciation difficulties: Confidence and willingness to speak. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 3rd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*, Sept. 2011. (pp. 18-26). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

36 Baker, A. 2014. Exploring teachers’ knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(1), 136-163.

Key Areas Investigated

The Higher Education and Skills Group Overseas Fellowship has allowed the Fellow, Elizabeth Keenan, to undertake two study tours of the United States of America, to gain knowledge of the findings of the latest research in pronunciation teaching with regard to factors impacting intelligibility and to learn best practice techniques for teaching pronunciation to adult migrants.

The Fellowship focused on four key areas:

1. To discover the latest research findings that inform teaching practices
2. To observe and document best practice pronunciation teaching
3. To make contact with pronunciation research and teaching experts and leaders in the field
4. To collect relevant resources.

The initial part of the Fellowship involved the attendance at the Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching (PSLLT) 2015 conference in Dallas, Texas to:

- » Learn about the latest research findings in the area of pronunciation teaching and learning and how they apply to improve intelligibility and learning outcomes for students
- » Observe pronunciation teaching activities and techniques
- » Confirm the significant role for pronunciation teaching in language teaching curricula
- » Establish contacts for organizations to visit and observe pronunciation teaching
- » Establish contacts in the area of pronunciation research to inform teaching practices.

From attendance at the conference, the Fellow came to know that a greater connection between research and pedagogy is imperative to inform and achieve best practice pronunciation teaching. The Fellow became aware of many important research based findings that contributed to her pronunciation cognitions. This supports the need for pre- and post service training.

The second part of the Fellowship involved a return trip to the USA to visit three centres, under the umbrella organisation Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium and the Minnesota Literacy Council, in Saint Paul in Minnesota. The areas investigated during these sessions were:

- » To observe of pronunciation classes
- » To interview teachers and teacher trainers to enquire about their teaching practices and techniques
- » To interview academics and researchers to learn the latest findings in pronunciation teaching and learning
- » To gain insight into the operations of the Minnesota Literacy Council and its structure and processes
- » To collect resources and build a resource bank.

From the robust and research-based activities that the Fellow observed in Minnesota, she believes that Australia could improve the delivery of pronunciation instruction to adult English language learners.

The third part of the Fellowship involved the participation in a four-session training course in the use of Jazz Chants in the classroom with Carolyn Graham at New York University, the founder of Jazz Chants. The areas investigated during this training course were:

- » Observation of pronunciation classes with a focus on fluency
- » Interview with the creator of Jazz Chants to learn from her breadth of experience

- » The opportunity to participate in a learning situation to experience Carolyn's techniques
- » To collect resources to use with learners in the future.

The Fellow had the unique opportunity to participate in a course with this highly-esteemed instructor who developed a series of resources for teachers. The Fellow understands the importance of including opportunities to speak and focus on suprasegmental features of pronunciation and this technique provides an accessible means to do so. The techniques observed can be easily integrated into explicit and incidental pronunciation instruction.

Above all, this Fellowship has highlighted the need for explicit pronunciation instruction to adult learners and the need for pre- and post-service professional development for teachers to begin to know what to teach and how to teach it.

Recommendations

The Fellow's Recommendations are:

- » To teach pronunciation explicitly
- » To teach it from the beginning of English language learning
- » To integrate pronunciation instruction into language instruction
- » To provide contextualized and relevant pronunciation practice
- » To provide appropriate, relevant and integrated feedback.

To achieve powerful and effective pronunciation instruction, the teacher needs to know what to teach, how to teach it and to determine the correct focus for instruction. The teacher needs to know how to diagnose the interferences to intelligibility to appropriately address these interferences. To achieve this goal, the Fellow has addressed two areas of training for teachers of pronunciation.

1. Pre-service pronunciation teacher training
2. To support the establishment of phonology and phonetic courses with a pedagogy focus in post-graduate TESOL courses at university.
3. Post-service pronunciation teacher training

To establish opportunities for professional development and training in pronunciation instruction, with theory informing practice. This would entail the establishment of continuing post-service professional development to upskill teachers in current pronunciation instruction techniques, thus reducing the significant gap between what teachers know and what they teach.

1. Aims of the Fellowship Program

The primary aim of the Fellowship was to observe best practice pronunciation teaching.

By visiting a number of organisations delivering a high standard of pronunciation instruction, the Fellow would be able to observe the research-based activities in contexts similar to the teaching situation of the Fellow.

The broader aims of the Fellowships were to:

1. Establish best pedagogy practices in the area of pronunciation teaching thus improving oral language outcomes for adult migrants.

This included skill development in the areas of:

- » techniques to teach suprasegmentals; intonation, stress and rhythm in second language
- » knowledge of the most effective methods of teaching pronunciation to increase intelligibility and comprehensibility
- » methods and techniques that can be taught to other teachers, thus improving the skill level of all instructors
- » the effective use of chants to teach fluency in English.

2. Investigate the benefits of explicit pronunciation teaching and the effects on learning outcomes for adult migrants.

This involved information-gathering including:

- » interviews with teaching staff
- » interviews with curriculum coordinators
- » anecdotal reports from students
- » test results that indicate positive learner outcomes.

3. Observe and investigate the benefits of teaching chants as a method of improving intelligibility.

This included skill development in the areas of:

- » techniques to improved fluency
- » techniques to allow for the correct placement of stress in an utterance
- » methods to increase awareness of the features of connected speech and how words change in spoken English
- » learning techniques to enhance and support learning in an enjoyable way.

The Fellowship comprised two study tours in the USA, incorporating the attendance at an international pronunciation conference, the observation of a range of pronunciation classes and the attendance at a jazz chants course.

Whilst completing her Master of TESOL, the Fellow addressed pronunciation instruction as an area of need for students at Carringbush Adult Education. She began a journey of discovery which led to her attendance at the '2nd Pronunciation Symposium: New directions in pronunciation theory and practice' in Canberra in 2014. The symposium provided a practical approach to identifying useful strategies for teaching and learning effective pronunciation and sharing new directions in theory and practice, as well as an opportunity to meet leaders in this field.

The Fellow was supported by her workplace to attend a two-week intensive pronunciation course at Cambridge University in July 2015, presented by highly-esteemed teacher trainer Adrian Underhill. This gave her the opportunity to observe and participate in best practice pronunciation teaching from an expert with a wide range of experience, who has developed a method for teaching pronunciation that moves from sounds to words to connected speech. He uses gesture and mime to teach the sounds of English with reference to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) chart. These practices have been adopted by the Fellow and are foundational in all her pronunciation instruction. The study tour of the United States of America allowed the Fellow to build on these skills, to make contact with leading researchers in the area of pronunciation teaching to further inform her pedagogical principles, to observe rigorous, research-based instruction in action and to gather relevant resources.

2. About the Fellow

Elizabeth Keenan (EAL teacher and teacher mentor, Carringbush Adult Education)

Qualifications

Master of TESOL	University of Melbourne, 2014
Cert. IV in Training and Assessment	Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, 2014
Postgraduate Certificate in TESOL	University of Melbourne, 2012
Bachelor of Education	University of Melbourne, 1989
Diploma of Teaching	Australian Catholic University, 1986

Memberships

- » VicTESOL
- » Victorian Adult Literacy Basic Education Council (VALBEC)

Biography

Elizabeth Keenan is currently employed as an English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher and teacher mentor at Carringbush Adult Education in Richmond, Victoria. Carringbush Adult Education is a not-for-profit Registered Training Organisation, delivering foundation EAL programs to high-need adult learners from migrant backgrounds.

As a former primary teacher, Elizabeth has brought good principles of teaching and learning to low-proficiency adult migrant learners. Her specific interest lies in oral language teaching, in particular pronunciation teaching. Elizabeth travelled to Cambridge University, England, in 2015 to attend an intensive pronunciation course presented by Adrian Underhill. She is currently teaching an ACFE funded pronunciation-research class to beginner-level students, with a focus on learning the individual sounds of English through to connected speech. This is based on the techniques acquired during this course and the knowledge she has acquired on her study tours of the USA.

Elizabeth is involved in the mentoring of new teachers and professional development in all areas of teaching, particularly pronunciation teaching, with the staff and volunteers at Carringbush Adult Education. She completed a Master of TESOL at the University of Melbourne in 2014.

Elizabeth's goal is to see pronunciation teaching integrated into the curriculum, to ensure that all adult learners have the opportunity of explicit pronunciation teaching. Her wish is that all EAL learners have the chance to speak English with a greater level of intelligibility, thus removing barriers to employment and further education. Her aim is to share her learnings with fellow teachers and the wider community.

The opportunity to visit the USA, through the ISS Institute Fellowship, and to observe best practice pronunciation teaching has allowed Elizabeth to integrate the learnings into her teaching practice and to observe the value of explicit pronunciation teaching in not only dedicated pronunciation classes but instruction integrated into the curriculum. She will advocate for more pre-service training and post service pronunciation professional development.

3. The Australian Situation

At the time of writing, Australia's population is 24,250,470 with one new person added every minute and 29 seconds. Of that number, 28 per cent were born overseas, the highest point in over 120 years. The number of Australian residents born overseas has increased every year for the last 15 years. Almost six per cent of Australia's population was born in China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam.¹

Background Information

The Australian Government maintains that gaining English language proficiency is key to successful settlement in Australia.² The Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) is the largest settlement program in Australia and is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education and Training. The AMEP provides up to 510 hours of English language tuition to help eligible migrants learn foundation English language, to enable migrants to participate socially and economically in Australian society. These language skills are necessary to access services in the community, provide pathways to employment, undertake further study or training and access other government programs.³

Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) provides up to 800 hours of accredited language, literacy and numeracy training to eligible job seekers to help them participate more effectively in training or in the labour force. The program also caters for job seekers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. All

participant learning outcomes are reported against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF).⁴ The framework document consists of one core skill area pertaining to oral language skill development.

The Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English and the Certificates I - IV in Spoken and Written English (CSWE) provide a curriculum framework to develop the spoken and written English language, literacy and numeracy skills of beginner, post-beginner, intermediate and advanced learners. It is the mandated national curriculum framework for the AMEP and is widely used in the SEE program. The curricula framework consists of six courses. CSWE are the most widely used language and literacy curricula in Australia. They are currently being delivered at over 400 locations by over 160 RTOs across Australia and overseas. The CSWE curriculum at preliminary level offers two non-compulsory electives pertaining to oral language skill development.

Research in AMEP

Findings in a recent report on the success of the program indicated that "AMEP classes played an important role in providing not only instruction but also a venue and social network that was important to and in some cases provided the only source of speaking practice in English".⁵ A longitudinal study of the AMEP conducted by Macquarie University listed seven recommendations; five of which

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016, *Migration, Australia*, <www.abs.gov.au> accessed 23 October 2016

² Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2011, *Economic, Social and Civic Contributions-AMEP*. Canberra:

³ Adult Migrant English Program <www.education.gov.au/adult_migrant_english_program> accessed 23 October 2016

⁴ Department of Education and Training, 2016, Skills for Education and Employment. www.education.gov.au/skills-education-and-employment accessed 23 October 2016

⁵ Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010, *Language training and settlement success: Are they related?* Lynda Yates

pertained to oral language skills.⁶ The recommendations emerged from the need to address skills identified as problematic for participants entering the workforce. These included:

- » understand a range of accents of speakers of other varieties of English
- » make themselves understood through clear articulation and use of communicative strategies such as paraphrasing
- » conduct a telephone conversation
- » understand and engage in social talk including small talk and humour
- » understand and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.⁷

This is supported by research that maintains that learners acknowledge the need for pronunciation instruction for the purpose of effective communication.^{8,9}

In a National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) study into the role of English language learning and integration for adult migrants, four key messages were stated:

- » not being competent and confident in using English was seen by migrant and language centre teachers and staff as the biggest barrier to integration
- » most migrants undertook English as a second language (ESL) classes to improve their spoken English and valued the speaking opportunities provided in their classes, but they would like more opportunities to speak everyday English
- » migrants found undertaking English language classes valuable in helping them to move into mainstream study and employment

6 Macquarie University, 2015, *Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) Longitudinal Study 2011-2014 Final Report*, Lynda Yates

7 *ibid*

8 Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. 2002. ESL learners' perception of their pronunciation needs and strategies. *System*, 30, 155-166.

9 Couper, G. 2003. The value of an explicit pronunciation syllabus in ESOL teaching. *Prospect*, 18(3), 53-70.

» English language programs are a pathway to further study or low-level jobs.¹⁰

It was noted that "language centre stakeholders clearly agreed that developing better spoken English was crucial to facilitating integration, and that the ESL classroom was the best environment for migrants to achieve this", and further, that the most popular reason given by students for undertaking their English as a second language course (July 2007) was to improve their spoken English.¹¹

Carringbush Adult Education

The Fellow teaches at Carringbush Adult Education in Richmond, Victoria. Carringbush Adult Education is a not-for-profit Registered Training Organisation with five sites in the Collingwood and Richmond areas. The organisation delivers English as an Additional Language (EAL) programs including accredited programs such as Skills for Education and Employment (SEE), Adult Migrant Education program (AMEP), Skills Victoria Training System (SVTS) and pre-accredited programs Adult Community Further Education (ACFE), with a work readiness focus.

Carringbush Adult Education learners are predominantly from Vietnam with some learners from China and the Horn of Africa countries. The focus is on learners at the beginning of their learning journey. Currently, Certificate II is the highest level of accreditation offered, with the majority of learners at Pre-level One.

At Carringbush Adult Education, the manager and teaching staff became increasingly aware that the learners were not making salient improvements in their oral language skills, despite concentrated teaching efforts. Students who left Carringbush Adult Education in order to participate in employment, further training or work experience became disenchanted because no one could understand them. Hence began an organisational focus on learning outcomes for learners in the area of oral language.

10 Leith, M., 2009, How learning English facilitates integration for adult migrants: The Jarrah Language Centre experience, National Council of Vocational Educational Research (NCVER), Adelaide.

11 *ibid*

Interferences to intelligibility

The initial step involved analysing and documenting language features that interfered with learners' intelligibility. Intelligibility refers to the ability to be comfortably understood. The goal is not for native-like speaking.

Interferences to intelligibility that were noticed included:

- » the ability to produce clear vowel sounds in the stressed syllable
- » the incorrect placement of stress in words and in sentences
- » the omission of grammar markers to indicate tense and plurals
- » the inability to pronounce consonant clusters
- » the inability to use features of connected speech.

Judy B. Gilbert, an American pronunciation educator and researcher identified six areas of pronunciation that students need to know:

- » vowel clarity and lengthening (in crucial syllables)
- » consonants that signal grammar cues (spelled with final d or s)
- » word stress (helping to identify the word)
- » contrastive sentence emphasis (showing coherence-what goes with what)
- » thought groups (helping to clarify grammatical divisions)
- » linking (helping tie thought groups together).¹²

These areas of pronunciation that learners need to know corresponded with a number of areas of interference that were noticed and recorded by the teachers. The consequences of these interferences can be socially inhibiting and damaging to a learner's ability to cope effectively in an Australian environment.¹³

Professional Development

The next step involved surveying and interviewing teaching staff to ascertain their confidence level, knowledge of and skills in teaching pronunciation. The results showed that teachers were not confident to teach pronunciation despite having post-graduate qualifications in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) because:

- » they didn't know what to teach
- » they didn't know how to teach
- » they felt they had not been adequately trained
- » they felt there were insufficient resources pitched at the required level of the learner cohort.

Carringbush's findings were substantiated by the 2002 research findings of Dr Shem MacDonald at La Trobe University, which identified reasons for the reluctant pronunciation teacher. His research showed that teachers were reluctant to teach explicit pronunciation instruction because amongst other things, they did not know what to teach or how to teach it.¹⁴

¹² Gilbert, J. B. 2016. Foreword. In T. Jones (Ed.). *Pronunciation in the classroom: The overlooked essential*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press. p. viii

¹³ Yates, L.(2011). Language, interaction and social inclusion in early settlement. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14(4), 457-471

¹⁴ MacDonald, S. 2002, Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers. *Prospect*, 17(3), 3-18.

Summary

What we know about pronunciation and English language learning:

- » Pronunciation is an integral and necessary component of language acquisition
- » Pronunciation plays a central role in speech intelligibility
- » Adult English learners are seriously disadvantaged without effective second language oral skills
- » Low oral language skill level presents a barrier for possible employment and full participation in Australian society
- » Teachers and students believe in the value of pronunciation teaching
- » Pronunciation teaching has been neglected due in part to a lack of confidence in and knowledge of the phonological aspects of pronunciation instruction, a paucity of appropriate resources, the perceived lack of learner progress and relevant research that informs teaching
- » Learners want explicit pronunciation instruction.^{15,16,17}

We know that it is crucial to be able to speak and be understood. We know that nonnative speakers need explicit instruction to achieve communicative competence. We know that learners value this instruction. We also know that teachers are unsure about how to provide this instruction. From extensive research, the Fellow came to know that this phenomenon exists in other parts of the world as teacher grapple with what to teach and how to teach it.

In Minnesota, teachers and teacher educators are addressing effective pronunciation instruction for adult migrants and have implemented organisational programs to upskill teachers and improve learning outcomes for adults.

The Fellow's journey involved discovering and documenting:

1. Research that informs practice to achieve improved oral language outcomes for learners
2. Pronunciation techniques and activities to most effectively improve intelligibility and comprehensibility
3. Best practice pronunciation teaching
4. Most effective methods for upskilling practitioners in the Australian context.

¹⁵ Morley, J. 1991. The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), 481-520

¹⁶ Fraser, H. 2000. *Coordinating improvements in pronunciation teaching for adult learners of English as a second language*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian National Training Authority Adult Literacy National Project). 513

¹⁷ Zielinski, B., & Yates, L. 2014. Myth 2. Pronunciation instruction is not appropriate for beginning-level learners. In L. Grant (Ed.), *Pronunciation Myths*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 56-79.

4. Skills Enhancement and Knowledge Acquisition Areas

The focus of all ISS Institute Fellowships is to research, observe, investigate and share knowledge and practices from elsewhere in the world to enhance and improve skills, knowledge and practice in Australia. The issue at the core of the Fellow's investigation is - How can we best improve the quality of pronunciation instruction for adult migrant English language learners in Australia?

As described in the Australian Situation section of this report, Australian governments have made substantial commitments to adult education for migrants, yet research into EAL teacher cognitions has shown us that teachers are not confident to teach pronunciation, a necessary component of oral language competence, because they don't know what to teach, how to teach it and don't have the necessary resources to support their practice.

Skill Enhancement area 1: Investigate best practice pronunciation teaching

- » Observe and identify the qualities of teaching excellence in pronunciation instruction and the learning outcome for the students.

Action: Observe and document the practices used in Minnesota.

Skill Enhancement area 2: Investigate current research findings that inform pedagogy

- » Investigate and identify the most recent empirical and anecdotal research findings which informs practice.

Action: Observe and interview leading academics, researchers and educators in the area of pronunciation teaching and learning as to factors that most interfere with intelligibility and how to best address these interferences.

Skill Enhancement area 3: Collect relevant resources to support instruction

- » Collect relevant resources.

Action: Collect all relevant resources and ask for recommendations of valuable teaching materials and texts.

Overall Outcomes

- » To hone and improve the Fellow's pronunciation instruction skill level
- » To upskill teachers through professional development sessions
- » To create a bank of resources for teachers to use
- » To move towards pronunciation being taught as an integral part of all English language classes
- » To replicate the success of the teaching already evident in St. Paul, Minnesota.

5. The International Experience and Discovery

Visit 1: University of Texas (UT), Austin

(13th – 15th October 2015)

Contacts: L. Alison McGregor, Ph.D. Extension Instructor, ESL Services and her colleagues

Outcomes:

- » Professional Networking
- » Professional development
- » Resource development.

The Fellow met with Alison McGregor at the University campus in Austin, Texas. The main campus of the University of Texas (UT) is located in the heart of Austin. Approximately 10 per cent of UT's student cohort is foreign¹ and as such UT provides extensive support to nonnative English speakers through the Intensive English Programs like ESL Services. Alison's role at the university includes the teaching of International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) and assistant instructors under the umbrella of ESL Services. She is a highly regarded researcher in the area of pronunciation instruction and is particularly interested in intonation and sentence stress instruction. She has developed a way of illustrating sentence stress diagrammatically that the Fellow had not seen prior to this visit and has since adopted as a regular part of teaching sentence stress. Research has established that suprasegmental features constitute a major part of making ourselves clearly

understood^{2,3} and the Fellow was keen to observe and discover the most effective ways of teaching suprasegmental features of pronunciation from an experienced and accomplished practitioner. Alison generously shared her insights, knowledge, resources and pedagogical skill gained from a wealth of experience of teaching English as a second language.

Recommendations

Alison's recommendations when teaching pronunciation include:

- » A focus on speech perception which includes more emphasis on listening and being able to hear the sounds being produced
- » A focus on articulatory settings, which involves the teaching vowels and consonants with attention to vocal apparatus. She uses language such as lip rounds, tight lip rounding, slight lip rounding
- » A focus on using gestures, videoing, mirrors, and rubber bands to help the students have a visual image, and a kinaesthetic focus as part of a multi-modal approach to pronunciation learning
- » A focus on listening for pauses to mark thought groups. The term thought group is identified by marking pauses in speech utterances. A thought group usually has 1-7 syllables; you say it in one breath. Listening for pauses allows learners to hear the thought groups and be able to notice the prominence in the thought group

1 www.utexas.edu/about/facts-and-figures

2 Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., & Wiebe, G. E. 1998. Evidence in favor of a broad framework for pronunciation instruction. *Language Learning*, 48, 393-410.

3 Zielinski, B. 2008. The listener: No longer the silent partner in reduced intelligibility. *System*, 36, 69-84.

- » A focus on instruction that will increase intelligibility-including the introduction of appropriate metalanguage even at a beginner level for learners to have more control over their learning.
- » A focus on the fall in pitch at the end of a word represented by an arrow going down and demonstrated using a rubber band to indicate a downward movement and pitch fall, a technique that she has developed
- » A focus on how to indicate stress and syllable count e.g. banana = 2/3 i.e. three syllables and the second is stressed; using dots to represent stress and unstress
- » A focus on the range of terms that refer to one aspect of pronunciation e.g. sentence level stress is also referred to as message units, pause groups, thought groups
- » A focus on the need to memorise formulaic phrases for everyday use. She shared a bank of phrases to rehearse and make automatic which the Fellows has adopted as part of her instruction
- » A focus on how to make pronunciation automatic moving from unconscious to uncontrolled, conscious to uncontrolled, conscious to control, unconscious to control as part of acquiring new skills
- » A focus on what makes a word intelligible? Alison maintains that intelligibility is dependent on accuracy in syllable production; primary stress placement-which syllable is stressed; vowel accuracy and length in stressed syllable; is the stressed vowel accurate, long enough and high in pitch
- » A focus on tools for introducing new vocabulary:
 1. Record the pronunciation to check for accuracy
 2. Practice the word in short phrases or sentences
 3. Incorporate your practiced phrase into your spontaneous speech e.g., word-library, phrase-library card, sentence - Do you have a library card?

A focus on professional development for teachers. She alerted the Fellow to a valuable TED Talk by Christopher Aruffo, to use for professional development sessions. It pertains to articulatory settings and how changing articulators can change the accent of the speaker. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDxFrwkiHlw&sns=em>

Alison has an interest in stress and unstress at a word and sentence level. The Fellow was eager to learn her insights regarding the most effective ways of teaching stress and unstress, to broaden her cognitions to include techniques of best practice pronunciation instruction with a focus on suprasegmental features.

Some of Alison's observations are as follows:

- » English often reduces it unstressed a, o, u to the neutral schwa
- » Our stresses have to be in place for us to compress the unstressed words. If we don't compress unstressed structure words, we sound like robots and the precise meaning gets blurred. We also sound insistent
- » English compresses unstressed auxiliary verbs
- » Each sentence has one or main points as indicated by speaker stress
- » The reason for stressing some words or word more than others is to signal their importance in the given context.

Alison teaches a 10-week dedicated pronunciation course. In a discussion with Alison about the results of the course her observations were:

- » Students may not be able to acquire full native speaker like production as a result of a single course
- » They have developed their pronunciation for better and improved intelligibility when engaging in communicative discourse
- » Students are made more conscious and aware of many aspects of phonology that they would not have been able to pick up on their own

- » Students have been introduced to a wide range of tools they can exploit themselves after the course is over.

Alison showed video examples of working with students to correct pronunciation variations using a laptop with recording features. It is possible to use a smart phone with the reverse camera feature to achieve the same result, allowing the learner and the teacher to be in the same frame. This allows the learner to look at the model being presented and to be able to see their articulators simultaneously. It is a valuable tool that has been adopted by the Fellow.

See Appendix 1: The structure of a 10-week pronunciation clinic

Concluding Remarks:

The opportunity to meet and discuss pronunciation theory and pedagogy with Alison McGregor provided rich fodder for the Fellow and a perfect springboard for the study tour.

Alison attended and presented at the PSLT 2015 Conference in Dallas and the Fellow had many opportunities to interact and ask pertinent questions. Alison guided the Fellow as to the most relevant sessions to attend and which academics, researchers and educators to meet, with the view to enabling the next step in the learning journey.

Alison has continued to provide guidance and relevant information to the Fellow via email contact and has generously answered queries that have emerged from this journey.

Visit 2: The 7th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching 2015 Conference held at Texas A&M University, Dallas

(October 16th – 17th October 2015)

Contacts: Dr Beth Zielinski, Macquarie University; Dr L. Alison McGregor, University of Texas; Colleen Meyers, University of Minnesota; Dr Amanda Baker, University of Wollongong; Dr Marnie Reed, Boston University.

Outcomes:

- » Industry Networking
- » Professional development
- » Resource development.

The Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching (PSLLT) Conference is the brainchild of Professor John Levis, from Iowa State University, and is devoted to advancing best practice pronunciation teaching that is informed by current research findings. It began in 2009 in North America and is in its eighth year. The conference brings together leading researchers and educators working on a variety of languages from a range of perspectives.

The conference showcases research that focuses on pronunciation learning and teaching and the changing nature of pronunciation pedagogy. As well as focusing on research, the researchers are interested in teacher training which aims to bridge the gap between theory, research and instruction. The commitment to bridging this gap is reflected in the focus for the 9th PSLLT conference in 2017, which is Bridging L2 Pronunciation Research and Teaching, to be held hosted by the University of Utah, USA.

The PSLLT Conference in 2015, held over two days, showcased almost 500 presentations. The presentation types include plenary speakers, oral talks, teaching tips, a roundtable session and poster presentations. PSLLT caters for a diverse range of educational providers and researchers.

Over 15 countries were represented at the conference with approximately 200 attendees. Given the small number of attendees, the conference has the advantage of providing close access to leading academics and educators and the opportunity to discuss pronunciation issues. The conference provided opportunities for the Fellow to meet highly regarded pronunciation academics and educators, some of whom she has continued contact and is able to discuss pronunciation issues.

As part of the learning journey, the Fellow made contact with Professor Lynda Yates from Macquarie University, whose research centres on adult language learning and communication in the workplace. Professor Yates was a senior researcher and acting Director of the AMEP Centre and is involved in TESOL teacher training and professional development. She has contributed greatly to the body of research and resources related to teaching beginner-level adult English language learners. She kindly sent a request to an international notice board of leading pronunciation researchers and educators, on the Fellow's behalf, for opportunities to observe best practice pronunciation teaching. As a result, the Fellow made contact with many esteemed educators from around the globe and was offered opportunities to observe quality pronunciation instruction for beginner-level adult learners.

Through Professor Yates, the Fellow was introduced to Dr Beth Zielinski, also from Macquarie University. Dr Zielinski encouraged the Fellow to attend the PSLLT conference as a springboard to discover organisations and contacts for best practice pronunciation. Dr Zielinski has proven to be an invaluable support and advocate for the Fellow and has encouraged her to write a book review for the Journal of Second Language Pronunciation (JSLP) (in print), to continue with further study and to present at the PSLLT 2017. The Fellow meets regularly with Dr Zielinski to discuss matters relating to pronunciation teaching and theory. Dr

Zielinski is able to address these issues and supplies the Fellow with relevant reading to support her responses. She has been extremely generous with her time and knowledge. She placed another enquiry on the international notice board for the purpose of this report, and both Dr Zielinski and the Fellow were overwhelmed by the detailed and thoughtful responses from around the world, by practitioners and researchers grappling with the same issues.

There were many sessions relevant to the Fellow and her current organisation's work:

Oral Presentations

- » English rhythm. This presentation addressed the teaching of English rhythm and the misconception of stressing every content word. These findings have informed the Fellow's practice in training learners to notice and produce correct sentence-level stress in natural speech.
- » Phonemic training using nonsense or real words. This presentation explored the use of real or nonsense words in phonemic training. Findings showed that instruction should include some focus on phonetic level information in promoting improvement in the pronunciation of real words. Learners need explicit practice to produce sounds they are learning to more accurately perceive them. The Fellow observed a lesson in final consonant inclusion in Minnesota that reflected these findings.

Teaching Tips

The teaching tips provided an opportunity to see a selection of teaching activities and to participate in seven-minute roundtable instructive activities with useful resources. Notable session included:

- » The Stress Stretch. This activity demonstrated how to associate a physical movement with stressed and unstressed syllable to improve pronunciation. Students stretch in accordance with sentence stress or key vowel sounds in target words.

- » Intonation activity. This activity described and demonstrated four ways to modify dialogues to practice final intonation in full and short sentences. An explanation of the importance of bridging activities as part of instruction procedure moving from controlled practice to bridging practice to communicative practice. Controlled allows full attention to the pronunciation feature being practiced. Communicative practice allows full attention to the meaning whereas bridging activities allow learners to pay attention to both form and meaning.⁴

What's Hot in 2015

This provided a synopsis of issues and topics from international pronunciation specialists worthy of discussion. A valuable and relevant query related to how to make Vietnamese speakers acquire a listener friendly pronunciation. The response was presented in three sections: preparatory elements, perceptual elements and productive elements. *See Appendix 2*

Concluding Remarks

The participation in the conference provided rich fodder to the Fellow, particularly in relation to:

- » **Networking.** PSLLT is a relatively small conference that is rapidly growing in attendance and popularity. As such, it allowed the Fellow to meet and hear the most up-to-date empirical research and anecdotal findings from many highly esteemed academics and educators, to inform the Fellow's practice. The conference allowed for networking opportunities and to secure a place for further research. It allowed the Fellow to meet many authors of research cited in the Fellow's own research. The Fellow met Colleen Meyers from Minnesota University who offered to schedule an opportunity to observe pronunciation lessons through the Minnesota Literacy Council.

⁴ Muller Levis, G., & Levis, J. (2016). Intonation bridging activities: Meaningful practice for final intonation. In J. Levis, H. Le, I. Lucic, E. Simpson, & S. Vo (Eds). Proceedings of the 7th Pronunciation Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference, ISSN 2380-9566, Dallas, TX, October 2015 (pp. 229-235). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

- » **Perception Skills.** A notable session revealed findings that concluded that learners don't have to perceive a sound to be able to produce it. This was revelatory for the Fellow and created possibilities for learners to produce target sounds that are not yet perceived. This allows the learner to focus on the position of the articulators and their role in producing sounds and then perceiving them.
- » **Teaching Tips.** Intonation activity. A valuable part of the conference was the opportunity to see a range of teaching activities presented at seven minute intervals. The Fellow observed and participated in learning activities to teach both segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation. Many of these activities are part of the Fellow's regular practice.
- » **Teacher Cognitions.** The research-oriented and practitioner-based sessions were valuable to know what has been empirically investigated and how that informs instruction. Attendance at the conference allowed the Fellow to develop pronunciation teaching cognitions by contributing to knowledge and beliefs about pronunciation instruction. To know what is guiding instruction is informed by research findings makes instruction more relevant and more likely to achieve learning outcomes.

Visit 3: Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium

(30th May 2016)

Contacts: Suzanne Gilchrist McCurdy, Instructional Support Consultant, Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium Adjunct, TEFL and Adult ESL Certificate Programs, Hamline University, Saint Paul.

Suzanne McCurdy was the main contact through Colleen Meyers. Colleen Meyers, an Education Specialist from University of Minnesota (see Visit 5) responded to Professor Yates's international enquiry for observation opportunities for best practice pronunciation teaching. Colleen recommended Suzanne, who kindly coordinated the observation sessions at the various sites and a meeting of pronunciation educators and teacher trainers (see Visit 7).

Suzanne is an Instructional Support Consultant at the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium and an adjunct in Hamline University's TESL and Adult ESL Certificate programs. Her role entails providing professional development for teachers and observing teachers delivering ESL instruction. Part of Suzanne's capstone requirements for a Master of Arts in ESL at Hamline University included research in Hmong Learners' deletion and replacement of syllable-final consonant in English.

Outcomes:

Meeting with Suzanne gave the Fellow a great opportunity to discuss how quality pronunciation instruction has been integrated across the curriculum and across a number of centres in the Saint Paul Literacy Consortium. Suzanne detailed the process of upskilling teachers, including the observation of teachers in the classroom and outlined opportunities for professional development for teachers to improve the quality of their instruction.

Suzanne maintained that many teachers do not have an adequate background in phonetics and phonology to effectively teach pronunciation, including the ability to diagnose interferences to intelligibility. She indicated that some teachers do not acknowledge the value of pronunciation instruction, as they have not seen it work. Some teachers do not have access to the necessary resources to initially diagnose linguistic phenomena that interfere with intelligibility or to address these interferences. Teachers are left to their own devices or implement solutions that are not supported by empirical research. Her role is to ensure high-quality delivery of instruction to ESL learners, to support teachers in this process and to address the teachers' cognition about pronunciation instruction.

She referred the Fellow to a site for the Minnesota Literacy Council containing resources and volunteer preparation for teachers. See www.mnliteracy.org

Concluding Remarks:

From her meeting with Suzanne McCurdy, the Fellow learnt the value of consistent support of teachers to improve the quality of pronunciation instruction through modeled lessons and opportunities for the observation of teachers delivering instruction and the value of feedback for the teachers.

Visit 4: Ronald Hubbs Centre, Saint Paul

(31st May 2016)

Contacts: Lia Conklin Olsen, ESL Instructor and team leader.

Outcomes:

- » Lesson observations
- » Practitioner interviews.

The Ronald Hubbs Centre provides classes through the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program as part of the Saint Paul Public Schools' Community Education Department. The ABE is also a partner in the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium, incorporating agencies in the Saint Paul area providing literacy services to adults. Their aim is to provide adults with the necessary literacy skill to participate in the community as productive workers, family members and citizens. It serves approximately 850 English language learners at this location and outreach sites.

The Fellow observed high-quality teaching instruction to low-proficiency level adult students. The instruction demonstrated the integration of pronunciation teaching in language skill areas including reading, writing and spelling as well as speaking and listening.

Concluding Remarks:

Conklin Olsen is recognised for her teaching excellence and high standard of delivery to beginner-level adult learners. She provided a superior model of teaching excellence in the integration of pronunciation teaching in the curriculum. Pronunciation cannot be taught in a vacuum apart from other parts of the

curriculum.⁵ With beginner-level students, she incorporated metalanguage related to pronunciation teaching including voiced and unvoiced segmentals, which supported the research that indicated the value of teaching the language specific to pronunciation instruction. The structure of the lesson was clearly outlined for the learners. Conklin Olsen generously shared her knowledge and experience of pronunciation teaching.

The use of small whiteboards in the classroom for the learners has been adopted throughout Carringbush Adult Education as a valuable tool for pronunciation instruction and other language skill areas. Conklin Olsen used the whiteboards for a perception activity.

Conklin Olsen has published a phonics-based reading series called What's Next through New Readers Press.

⁵ Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J. 2010. *Teaching pronunciation: A coursebook and reference guide* (2nd ed.) New York: Cambridge University Press.

Visit 5: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

(31st May 2016)

Contacts: Colleen Meyers, Education Specialist, Centre for Education Innovation.

Outcomes:

- Researcher/educator interview.

Colleen Meyers is an Education Program Specialist who works in the International Teaching Assistant Program and facilitates workshops for international faculty on aspects of English communication skills. She has worked at the University of Minnesota for more than thirty years and is the co-author of several English communication and pronunciation textbooks and digital materials. She was awarded a Senior Fulbright Scholarship in 2007 to work in Turkey as a teacher trainer. Colleen has been a conference presenter on pronunciation teaching at the PSLLT and TESOL conferences in North America.

The Fellow met Colleen Meyers at the PSLLT Conference in 2015 and was offered an opportunity to observe pronunciation teaching and meet educators and researchers in the Minnesota area.

Colleen is the author of the 'Mirroring Project': a contextualized and integrated approach to pronunciation teaching. It is a program that has a top-down approach in which the learner mirrors or imitates every aspect of the speaker's delivery including facial expressions and hand movements. Colleen uses videos as the models of native and nonnative speakers.

The learners analyse the video by determining the main objective of the text, then determines the position of pauses, the language register used, the pitch variations, the pronunciation features and the body language. The learners then transcribe 7-10 consecutive sentences and mark major pronunciation features

such as thought groups and focus words. Finally, non-verbal features such as facial expressions, gestures, eyebrow movements and breath groups are added. The learners are then recorded and the presentations are viewed and critiqued by peers. This approach allows the learners to focus on the pronunciation of native and nonnative speakers. It also develops learners' auditory memories and the ability to retain and imitate oral texts. Additionally, it allows the learners to develop the ability to monitor their own pronunciation and make relevant changes to increase intelligibility.

Concluding Remarks:

Colleen provided information about LESLLA conferences, which targets low-level learners and is held annually in the USA and a European country alternatively. The Fellow was interested to know the value of the LESLLA conferences.

The area of voice quality settings was discussed, and the role of drawing attention to the position of the articulators in pronunciation instruction; an area of great interest for Colleen. Colleen indicated that this may be an area of pronunciation instruction worthy of further attention. She was aware that an observation lesson demonstrating voice quality settings was scheduled for the Fellow to observe and was keen to hear the Fellow's reaction to the lesson.

Colleen provided information about Associate Professor Debra Hardison from Indiana University and her work with visual cues in spoken language processing including the use of co-speech gestures, which is an area of interest for the Fellow and one in which she would be keen to explore further.

Colleen has continued to provide support and guidance to the Fellow via email contact.

Visit 6: Open Door Learning Center, Arlington Hills, Saint Paul

(1st June 2016)

Contacts: Suzanne Gilchrist McCurdy, Instructional Support Consultant

The Open Door Learning Center offers basic literacy classes to adults in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul districts under the umbrella of the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC). More than 2,600 learners participate in more than 186,000 classroom hours. A large function of the MLC is to provide English instruction for disadvantaged adults and migrants. In Suzanne's role as Instructional Support Consultant (see Visit 3) she observes teachers and presents model lessons for teachers in the classroom. Suzanne delivered a lesson to beginner-level adult learners on syllable-final consonant inclusion for the Fellow.

Many of the learners at Carringbush Adult Education fail to produce syllable-final consonants, which can lead to misunderstandings and presents a barrier for intelligibility. This is a common pronunciation challenge for Vietnamese and Chinese EAL learners. The syllable structure of Vietnamese does not allow a word final consonant following a diphthong⁶ and the syllable structure of Mandarin does not allow for word final consonant clusters. Adding a vowel is a common way Mandarin speakers modify them to create an open syllable structure at the end of a word.⁷ Therefore, explicit instruction in the inclusion of syllable-final consonants can greatly benefit learners. This sequence of lesson steps has been adopted as regular practice in the Fellow's teaching repertoire.

The Lesson Sequence:

Stage 1: Description and Analysis

Repeating of a vowel and consonant sequence, which includes the target consonant sounds.

Building muscle memory and awareness of the importance of syllable-final consonants

Stage 2: Backward Buildup

Allowing learners to isolate the challenge and build up to more complicated utterances. The learners build up the phonemes from the final consonant sound to the initial sound - also called back chaining.

Stage 3: Listening Discrimination

Using minimal pairs, learners identify which word they hear. This allows for practice discriminating between words with and without the syllable-final consonants - also increases the awareness of intelligibility implications.

Stage 4: Controlled Practice

Learners take on speaking decisions-maker and evaluator roles. Teacher releases control gradually.

Stage 5: Guided Practice

Learners move into pairs and autonomy is increased. The teacher fades to a monitoring role.

For video link see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v-ZfrUo2zvpWw>

6 Hansen, J. G. 2004. Developmental sequences in the acquisition of English L2 syllable codas. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 26, 85-124

7 Hansen, J. G. 2001. Linguistic constraints on the acquisition of English syllable codas by native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(3), 338-365.

Concluding Remarks:

Suzanne's lesson followed the systematic approach reflecting Yates and Zielinski's stages of development, moving from listening and awareness to control to practice then finally extension where the target language feature is produced in spontaneous speech.⁸ Her use of nonsense words to practice the pronunciation of target consonant sounds was supported by findings at the PSLLT Conference.

The Fellow is using this sequence of tasks for explicit pronunciation instruction to address final consonant sounds to develop not only productive skills but also perceptual skills. This activity sequence has been trialed and tested and is included in the CAIF 7 project at Carringbush Adult Education.

⁸ Yates, L., & Zielinski, B. 2009. *Give it a go: Teaching pronunciation to adults*. Sydney: AMEP Research Centre. Retrieved from www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/157664/interactive_sm

Visit 7: Meeting with academics and teachers

Contacts: Professor Betsy Parrish, Hamline University, Saint Paul; Suzanne Gilchrist McCurdy, Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium; Andrea Echelberger, Training Coordinator, Minnesota Literacy Council; Jennifer Zoss, ESL Instructor

Outcomes:

- » Networking
- » Researcher/educator interviews.

Suzanne McCurdy organised a meeting of leading pronunciation educators, teacher trainers and practitioners in the Minnesota and Saint Paul area. It provided a valuable opportunity for a meeting of minds to discuss all things pronunciation.

Professor Betsy Parrish is a Professor and Coordinator of the TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and Adult ESL Certificate programs in the School of Education at Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She is the author of *Teaching Adult ESL* (McGraw Hill 2004), which is a widely-used text for post-graduate ESL training courses. The Hamline University TESOL graduates are trained using a highly interactive and experiential approach to teaching and learning. She is senior consultant for ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS), which provides professional development for Adult Basic Education (ABE) in the Minnesota area. Suzanne Gilchrist McCurdy (see Visit 3) and Andrea Echelberger (see Visit 10) are teacher trainers and educators. Jennifer Zoss is an ESL Instructor who specializes in beginner-level ESL teaching.

Professor Parrish is involved in New American Horizons Foundation, which aims to enhance the development of teachers through the creation of a series of training videos titled *Teaching ESL to Adults: Classrooms in Action*. These videos serve to address the issue of a paucity of well-trained teachers to provide ESL classes for adult immigrants. Andrea Echelberger and Suzanne Gilchrist McCurdy feature as lead teachers in these training videos.

These educators, researchers and teacher trainers met with the Fellow to discuss pronunciation teaching and how research informs practice. The Fellow had the opportunity to ask these practitioners the features of pronunciation that most affect intelligibility. The responses were wide ranging and reflected the needs of the learners.

Concluding Remarks:

This meeting provided a unique opportunity to share and compare pronunciation teaching and learning techniques and strategies and to present questions regarding challenging aspects of pronunciation instruction. The Fellow has maintained correspondence with some of these professionals with the purpose of continued information gathering and opportunities to ask questions.

Visit 8: Hmong American Partnership (HAP), Saint Paul

(2nd June 2016)

Contacts: Kristin Perry, ESL teacher and certified teacher of the Orton-Gillingham multi sensory approach.

Outcomes:

- » Lesson observation
- » Teacher/practitioner interviews.

The Hmong American Partnership (HAP) is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1990 to serve the growing Hmong community in Minnesota. HAP's approach is to blend social enterprise and economic development with education and family support. The organisation offers ESL training through the Adult Basic Education program to help refugees and new immigrants learn English and basic skills for success. The English language classes focus on low-to-intermediate levels of Adult English learning with a focus on English for employment.

Kristin is an adult ESL teacher and a certified teacher of the Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory approach, who uses a multi-sensory framework in her low-beginning ESL classes at the HAP centre in Saint Paul.

The Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory approach was developed for dyslexic learners. The multisensory component involves the use of visual, auditory and kinesthetic-tactile pathways to enhance memory and learning. Explicit instruction makes links between the visual language we see, the auditory language we hear and the kinesthetic-tactile language we feel. Kristin has taken aspects of this instruction method and adapted it for ESL learners.

Kristin delivered a lesson on thought groups and sentence stress. She presented some short sentences orally and learners were required to mark the thought groups by determining pauses. She used small and large dots to visually indicate the sentence stress. The learners practiced the short utterances with attention to the sentence stress, using gestures and visual representations of the marked stress.

Kristin used many opportunities for choral practice of questions and answers. She showed how to determine the number of syllables in words by locating the vowels. She represented the stressed and unstressed syllables at a word level with contrasting large and small dots.

Kristin used a tactile technique that involves the clapping of hands to count the number of syllables. She rotated her hands between claps to clearly delineate the syllables. This is a technique that the Fellow has adopted into her routine practice.

Kristin shared some resources - see Appendix 4

Concluding Remarks:

The Fellow recognises the value of a multi-sensory approach to teaching English and was fascinated to observe Kristin's approach which integrated visual, auditory and kinesthetic-tactile modes of delivery, many of which have been included in the Fellow's regular practice.

Visit 9: Hmong American Partnership (HAP), Saint Paul

(3rd June 2016)

Contacts: Andrea Echelberger, Training Coordinator.

Outcomes:

- » Observation of Voice Quality Setting lesson
- » Teacher/practitioner interviews.

The HAP centre in Saint Paul was originally established to cater for the growing Hmong community. Currently a significant number of students who currently attend the centre are of African descent, reflecting the present immigration trend. The centre has a strong sense of community with teachers engaging with learners sensitively, providing education relevant to the needs of the learners and understanding the challenges they encounter in learning English. For many of the learners, this is their first experience of formal education. There is a robust model for professional development evident in the model lesson presented for the Fellow, as one of a series of lesson presented for teachers by teacher trainers in the classroom.

Andrea has been as ESL educator for twelve years. In 2013, Andrea worked with the US English Language Fellowship program in Phnom Penh Cambodia. She is a teacher trainer and coordinates and leads training for adult literacy volunteers. She is passionate about helping the people she works with to develop their voices in English. Andrea's capstone research for her master's degree looked at ways to teach pronunciation to low-literacy learners. Andrea maintains that English language learners should begin to develop their pronunciation skills starting at the lowest level and continuing throughout their English language learning journey. She holds that intelligible pronunciation is essential for developing and maintaining professional and personal connections in both the workplace and educational settings.

Andrea modeled a voice quality setting lesson for the Fellow. Voice quality setting or articulatory setting refers to the fact that each language has certain "stereotypical features such as pitch level, vowel space, neutral tongue position and degrees of muscular activity that contribute to the overall sound quality or 'accent' associated with the language".⁹ Articulatory setting is the characteristic long-term quality of the voice over continued stretches of speech.¹⁰ Articulators are speech organs, which produce the sound of a language; how a sound is made in the mouth. They include lips, teeth, tongue, mouth, alveolar ridge, hard palate, vocal cords, velum, facial muscles, uvula and glottis. The variations and combinations of the positioning of speech articulators such as tongue, jaws and lips differ for each language.

Languages have distinct qualities arising from the long-term positions of articulators. Particular long-term settings influence the quality of an accent. English is spoken using an open jaw and spread lip posture.¹¹ English sounds, mainly alveolar, are made predominantly with rapid anterior movements, using the hard surface at the front of the mouth.¹² Issues of intelligibility for communication arise when the voice quality setting of the learner is different than for the target language.¹³ The articulatory setting can affect the pronunciation of lower-level features like individual sounds and has been recommended as an effective starting point for pronunciation instruction.¹⁴ However, the voice quality settings research and teaching materials have received little attention.¹⁵

9 Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J. 1996. *Teaching Pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. p. 10

10 Grant, L. (Ed.), 2014. *Pronunciation Myths*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p. viii.

11 Esling, J. H., & Wong, R. 1983. Voice quality settings and the teaching of pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 89-95.

12 Kerr, J. (2000). Articulatory setting and voice production: Issues in accent modification. *Prospect*, 15(2), 4-6.

13 ibid

14 Esling, J. H., & Wong, R. 1983. Voice quality settings and the teaching of pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 89-95.

15 Grant, L. (Ed.), 2014. *Pronunciation Myths*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p. viii.

Andrea's lesson followed the systematic approach reflecting Yates and Zielinski's¹⁶ lesson sequence moving from controlled practice to free speech.

Stages of development:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Listening and awareness | 3. Practice |
| 2. Control | 4. Extension. |

She introduced her lesson using picture prompts to elicit vocabulary and to check for meaning. With each word that was introduced, attention was drawn to the position of the articulators and learners were encouraged to observe the model given and produce the target word using a mirror as reference. When the six words were introduced, Andrea mimed the words and the learners guessed the target word from the movement of the articulators, to further reinforce the articulatory setting. The learners then practiced miming the words in dyads and rotated through the group. Andrea checked oral production of the target vocabulary by continually circulating around the classroom. The final part of the lesson included an opportunity to produce the target words in a short dialogue, consisting of a simple questions and answers.

No model of the written word was provided during the lesson. Andrea indicated that relying on the written form was noted as a deterrent as English orthography can confuse rather than promote proper pronunciation.

Concluding Remarks:

If instruction focuses on the long-term setting of English, it may help with learning individual sounds, as well as overall voice quality.¹⁷ However, it is difficult to master

the sounds and pronunciation of a language with a different articulatory setting. Therefore, it is important provide instruction that encourages learners to be aware of where a sound is being formed in the mouth, and how to produce that sound.¹⁸

Oral language is more than simply imitating the pronunciation of native speakers. It is a mental and a physical skill requiring practice. A teacher's awareness of differences in voice quality settings and an ability to present those differences may be beneficial to the learners' performance in spoken English. This is particularly relevant to the long-term interference and intelligibility of individual vowel and consonant sounds. Learners may be aware that their pronunciation differs from the target pronunciation presented but may be unable to identify the reason for the variation and without explicit instruction be unable to approximate target production. A teacher's knowledge of the function of voice quality setting and the position of the articulators in the production of target sounds could move the learners towards a more fluent articulation of the phonology of English.

Comments:

The Fellow has adopted and adapted this worthwhile lesson as modeled by Andrea, as part of her regular practice. The lesson observed used functional and contextualised language. The Fellow has noted the learners' awareness of the position of the articulators in producing target sounds and utterances with the goal of improved intelligibility. When introducing new vocabulary, mirrors are used and attention is drawn to the position of the articulators when producing target vocabulary. Mime is used to reinforce the position of the articulators. This lesson has been shared and has generated much interest at workshops presented by the Fellow.

¹⁶ Yates, L., & Zielinski, B. 2009. *Give it a go: Teaching pronunciation to adults*. Sydney: AMEP Research Centre. Retrieved from www.ameprc.mq.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/157664/interactive_sm

¹⁷ Yates, L. 2002. What is pronunciation? *AMEP Research Centre Facts Sheets*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Retrieved 15 November 2016, accessed from <http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/pdamep/factsheets.html>

¹⁸ *ibid*

Visit 10: Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC)

Contacts: Andrea Echelberger, Training Coordinator.

Outcomes:

- » Collecting Resources
- » Networking.

The Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) aims to share the power of learning through education, community building and advocacy. The MLC began in 1972 and recognised the value of literacy skills as being critical to growth and self-sufficiency. It offers training for adult literacy volunteers and professional development for Adult Basic Education teachers and staff. It offers online training courses to teachers and volunteers. The MLC is the umbrella organisation for five open door centres in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul area.

Andrea's role at the MLC includes providing model lessons for teachers. She is also responsible for observing current teachers at least once each teaching year to ensure quality control of delivery. Teachers were initially reluctant to be observed during lessons but it is now accepted as a necessary and compulsory component of the role of teachers employed by the MLC. Andrea refers to these models lesson as professional development in the classroom. Teachers may request support in a particular language learning area and Andrea will meet with the teacher and decide to deliver a model lesson in the classroom or for the teaching staff. She will follow-up with the teacher going forward to support the implementation of a new program or new teaching technique. She may work with a teacher to develop an action plan for the future to implement tasks or activities and changes to teaching practices for the future. As Andrea is training all the teaching staff at the MLC, there is a consistency of delivery, which allows learners to further develop their skills when undertaking particular types of activities.

Andrea gave the Fellow a tour of the MLC and shared many useful resources. She introduced the Fellow to the concept of study circles, a valuable professional development tool. A study circle is a small learning group of practitioners, usually 8-12 people, who meet to discuss issues of relevance to their classroom practice. Prior to each session, participants read a selection of relevant research on the study circle topic and they may be assigned written or classroom based reflection tasks to complete as well. During meetings, study circle participants discuss the readings and explore how research can inform their practice. The participants usually meet for 3-5 sessions and are guided by a facilitator who has experience with the topic of study.

Concluding Remarks:

The pedagogical approach at MLC is one of striving for consistently high-quality delivery of teaching and learning thus providing a more powerful language learning experience for the learners. Andrea has provided ongoing support and information via email contact with regard to further professional development at the MLC. She is currently heading a new project to produce training videos for teachers, featuring lead teachers delivering a series of lessons on particular language features. A PDF file describing the lesson and providing attached worksheets necessary for the activity accompany the video, as does a shorter version of the video for training purposes. This is a model that the Fellow would like to see implemented at her workplace in the future.

When asked about the observation of teachers in the classroom and the possible reluctance of teachers wanted to be observed, Andrea explained that Saint Paul Literacy Consortium has set up observations as an expectation for all teachers. Each teacher is observed by his or her supervisor, and by Suzanne McCurdy, once a year. Teachers contact Andrea generally because they are really interested in learning more or getting new ideas about how to effectively teach a specific topic, therefore teachers have been very open to her going into their classes and working with their learners. She noted that having someone come in and teach their class while they observe is viewed as being quite non-threatening.

Resources:

Teaching ESL to Adults: Classroom Approaches in Action: Volumes 1, 2, 3 & 4.
Training videos developed through New American Horizons Foundations.

Study Circle Guide for teachers of low-literacy adult ESL students. Patsy Vinogradov. Atlas: Hamline University.

Visit 1 1: Carolyn Graham, New York

(5th June 2016)

Contacts: Carolyn Graham, faculty New York University (NYU).

Outcomes

» Interview.

Carolyn Graham is an ESL educator and teacher trainer who taught in the American Language Institute of New York University (NYU) for 25 years. She has taught at Harvard University and has conducted workshops in the NYU School of Education, Columbia Teachers College in New York and Tokyo. Carolyn has written numerous texts on the topic of Jazz Chants for learning English.

Carolyn is a jazz pianist and developed the technique of jazz chanting which uses a fragment of authentic language and presents it with special attention to its natural rhythm. The purpose of a jazz chant is to present a replication of rhythm, stress and intonation patterns of English as heard in natural speech through authentic language.

The aim of presenting oral language in jazz chant form is to improve learners' speaking competence in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Concluding Remarks:

Using Jazz Chants to Improve Learners' Pronunciation

A discussion about the efficacy of using chants to improve pronunciation with Carolyn Graham was of great interest to the Fellow. It is evident that chants can allow the learners to get a feel for English, as they memorise the oral texts and focus on the prosodic elements of spoken language. Carolyn maintained that chants provide a vehicle to teach stress, rhythm and linking as well as developing auditory memory skills. She recommended the use of chants with beginner-level learners to teach functional phrases for everyday use. The aim is for learners to practise the phrases in chant form, then as the phrases become part of their motor memory, they are used in spontaneous speech.

Research based on the transfer of language used in chant form to spontaneous speech is worthy of further investigation.

Visit 12: New York University (NYU), New York

(6th – 9th June 2016)

Contacts: Carolyn Graham.

Outcomes:

- » Observation and participation jazz chants course
- » Collecting resources
- » Observing techniques to teach jazz chants.

The Fellow participated in a four-day training course with Carolyn Graham, using Jazz Chants in the classroom with English language learners. The course was part of the summer program at NYU and was attended by fifteen trainee teachers predominantly from China.

Carolyn introduced the chants using high-frequency words and phrases with a four-beat rhythm that mimics traditional American jazz.

All languages have their own rhythmic, stress and intonation patterns. In English, stress is not given equally or to every word. The rhythm of English is a combination of stressed and unstressed words. The unstressed words fit in between the stressed words and that contributes to the distinctive musicality of English. An important feature of teaching Jazz Chants is that rhythm is a powerful tool for memory. When vocabulary and phrases are taught using a beat, learners are more like to remember the words and sentences.

Carolyn demonstrated simple call and response activities with a weather focus. For example:

Is it sunny today?

No, it isn't.

Is it rainy today?

Yes, it is.

Carolyn demonstrated how to use a jazz chant when teaching vocabulary. From a brainstormed list of vocabulary elicited from the learners, words were categorized according to the number of syllables. Using a 2-3-1 formula, words were chosen according to the number of syllables (e.g. pencil, eraser, book). Using a 4-beat format, a chant was created as follows:

pencil, eraser, book (clap)

pencil, eraser, book (clap)

pencil, eraser, pencil eraser

pencil, eraser, book (clap).

Learners practice in a whole group situation, then with a partner and then individually. The learners can then create their own chant using the target vocabulary and present their chant to the class. Months of the year vocabulary work very well with this formula.

Concluding Remarks:

The Fellow has adopted many of the activities learnt from the course into her practice. When introducing vocabulary, the Fellow will organise the words into a 2-3-1 syllable format to practice the production of the words. The learners have many opportunities to produce the target vocabulary in a choral reciting of the chant and then with a partner and individually.

It seems that there is a dearth of research that supports the use of jazz chants in the classroom. Jazz Chants have featured regularly in EAL teaching yet the research findings to support this inclusion is scarce. However, the Fellow has observed that learners eagerly engage in the production of chants and the chants provide a vehicle to produce authentic speech using high-frequency vocabulary and phrases.

6. Considerations and Recommendations

The Fellow's Recommendations are:

- » To teach pronunciation explicitly
- » To teach it from the beginning of English language learning
- » To integrate pronunciation instruction into language instruction
- » To provide contextualised and relevant pronunciation practice
- » To provide appropriate, relevant and integrated feedback.

A number of common issues emerged as the Fellow investigated best practice pronunciation teaching. With the opportunity to reflect on these issues, two additional recommendations have emerged for the future of pronunciation instruction of EAL learners in Australia. Both pertain to the training of the instructor: one at the time of pre-service training and the other targeting post-service teachers.

1. To support the establishment of phonology and phonetic courses with a pedagogy focus in post-graduate TESOL courses at university

In Baker's (2011) research into the relationship between teacher cognition and pedagogical practice, the core findings showed that training programs containing at least one course dedicated to the teaching of pronunciation is the single factor most likely to have an impact on teachers' knowledge of and confidence in teaching pronunciation.¹ This supports the imperative to establish pre-service phonology and phonetic courses with a pedagogy focus in post-graduate TESOL

courses. To provide adult migrants with the skills necessary for communicative competence, teachers need to have solid pronunciation cognitions, and knowledge of pedagogical practices and techniques.

With the support, guidance and contacts of Dr Beth Zielinski from Macquarie University, the Fellow was able to access an electronic network of pronunciation academics, educators and researchers to address the question of the absence of pronunciation instruction in ESL teacher training courses. This sparked an international response and struck a chord with many of the respondents who acknowledged this as a serious and real deficit, that has measured consequences. Responses were received from the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Britain and Australia reflecting a common conundrum.

The reasons given by the experts in this area for the paucity of pronunciation in TESOL teacher training include:

- » The lack of the TESOL educators' own knowledge, skills and training
- » A shortage of lecturers who can teach phonetics and phonology with a pedagogy focus
- » Pronunciation not being considered a core area of language learning. If a course in phonetics and phonology is offered, it may be an option rather than a required course, which suggests that it is not viewed as essential
- » The terminology and the level of abstraction appropriate to phonology, phonetics and pronunciation instruction is different and somewhat challenging for both lecturers and trainee teachers

¹ Baker, A. A. 2011. Pronunciation Pedagogy; Second language teacher cognition and practice. Atlanta: ScholarWorks@Georgia State University.

- » Trainee teachers may be offered a course in phonology but fail to make the connection to teaching pronunciation, thus are not confident that they know how to teach pronunciation
- » Not every learner requires pronunciation instruction
- » The market pushes for shorter courses thus prioritising and excluding some subjects.

Noted implications for the trainee teachers include:

- » Many trainee teachers feel unconfident about analysing or modeling phonological features
- » When trainee teachers undertake a theoretical phonology course, a level of anxiety may emerge. This may be exacerbated with the expectation of pedagogical applications in the classroom.

Additional comments in the experts' responses include:

- » An erroneous belief that if you are a native speaker that is sufficient to be an effective teacher
- » Insufficient to say, "No, just listen to me," as a form of corrective feedback and have a learner modify their pronunciation
- » Curriculum managers who are unconfident to teach pronunciation may allocate less time to pronunciation in the course.
- » It is important that teachers receive pronunciation courses that include phonetics and phonology but that also include practical pedagogical advice preferably with an opportunity to apply such knowledge during the course
- » Many Masters of Applied Linguistics and TESOL courses which offer subjects in phonology fail to make the connection to teaching pronunciation

- » As noted by one academic, new faculty interviewed for teaching course overwhelmingly prefer not to teach pronunciation, as they would not feel comfortable doing so
- » Faculty may not be willing to forsake a favoured course to teach pronunciation
- » Methods of teaching pronunciation tend to be coming from a deficit and decontextualised model which goes against much of the way TESOL approached to learning have been conceptualised. This is particularly relevant for learners with limited or interrupted learning experiences.

A Canadian study of pronunciation in teacher training courses by Foote, Holtby & Derwing (2011)² investigated the number of Canadian universities offered pronunciation-specific courses and revealed only six universities nation-wide. The Fellow is aware of one such course offered to English language teachers in Australia.

2. To establish opportunities for professional development and training in pronunciation instruction, reflecting theory informing practice

To reduce the significant gap between what teachers know and what is required for the learners, it is imperative to establish and provide opportunities for continuing post-service professional development, to upskill teachers in current pronunciation instruction techniques. Intelligibility and comprehensibility should drive teaching, and instruction is much more effective if teachers focus on aspects that affect intelligibility and comprehensibility. The challenge therefore is to provide appropriate training to develop teacher cognitions with a pedagogical focus. This would obviate the "reluctant pronunciation teacher" phenomenon, by addressing the what, how and why of pronunciation instruction.

² Foote, J.A., Holtby, A.K., Derwing, T.M. (2011). Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 1-22.

Explicit pronunciation instruction “is necessary to develop accuracy, which is a key factor in communicative competence”.³ For learners to be able to speak and be understood, targeted, relevant, contextualized and appropriate instruction is necessary. For teachers to be able to deliver this instruction, appropriate training is required. For effective and powerful pronunciation instruction that will result in improved intelligibility, it is incumbent on the teacher to have a comprehensive understanding of what to teach and how to teach it, based on research findings.

Burns (2006) conducted a study of AMEP instructors’ teaching experiences and confidence levels and found that many desired more professional development in teaching pronunciation.⁴ This is reflected in the great interest in and attendance at pronunciation focused training opportunities for teachers, including dissemination workshops led by the Fellow.

Areas for further investigation

1. To investigate the possibility of the inclusion of a teaching pronunciation course as a core subject in TESOL training courses.
2. To develop and provide professional development in the area of teaching pronunciation for all in service EAL teachers.

3 Gordon, J., Darcy, I., & Ewert, D. (2013). Pronunciation teaching and learning: Effects of explicit phonetic instruction in the L2 classroom. In J. Levis & K. LeVelle (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 4th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*. Aug. 2012. (pp. 194-206). Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

4 Burns, A. (2006). Integrating research and professional development on pronunciation teaching in a national adult ESL program. *TESL Reporter*, 39, 34-41.

7. Knowledge Transfer, Application and Dissemination

The Fellow observed effective and powerful pronunciation instruction. She has taken many opportunities to disseminate the outcomes of this Fellowship and is committed to continuing the dissemination throughout the year.

Conferences/Presentations/Workshops

The Fellow has disseminated her learnings to the wider community in the following ways:

The Fellow has presented at one conference in Victoria.

- » The Fellow presented at the 'VALBEC Conference: Joining the dots', in Melbourne in May 2016. The conference, for Language, Literacy and Numeracy practitioners, focused on new ways of connecting learners and learning. The Fellow presented a workshop titled Let's Speak! Teaching Pronunciation Effectively, with Margaret Corrigan, the manager at Carringbush Adult Education in Richmond. The focus of the presentation was highlighting successful pronunciation teaching in EAL classrooms. The presentation began with a short introduction to innovative ways Carringbush Adult Education is addressing an area of need that had emerged of how to teach pronunciation to improve oral language outcomes for our learners. It was evident from the large number of people who attended the session that this is an area of interest for other practitioners. The Fellow demonstrated a number of pronunciation teaching activities encompassing the teaching of individual sounds of English through to pronunciation instruction at a word and sentence level, incorporating features of connected speech. The use of gestures and mime as part of a multimodal approach to teaching pronunciation was of interest to the practitioners.
- » The first in a series of presentations to a group of Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) teachers was delivered for the EAL Curriculum Advisory Group (CAG) at RMIT University in Melbourne in July 2016. The EAL CAG focuses on issues affecting the delivery of EAL including assessment, validation and opportunities for industry liaison. The Fellow co-presented with Margaret Corrigan and showcased a range of activities focusing on pronunciation instruction incorporating the teaching of sounds, words and connected speech and how to integrate the techniques into all English language learning areas. The teachers were very interested in moving from the teaching of sounds to incorporating stress and intonation teaching.
- » The second presentation was delivered in August, to a group of SEE teachers at Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) Australia, in Melbourne. AMES provides assistance to newly arrived refugees and migrants to assist with settlement in Victoria. AMES delivers English language programs, including AMEP and SEE, educational training pathways and employment pathway programs. The focus of the presentation was on highlighting successful teaching methods and practices in oral language teaching with an emphasis on quality pronunciation instruction. Once again, the workshop was co-presented with Margaret Corrigan who gave an introduction about the journey of upskilling teaching at Carringbush Adult Education to effectively teach pronunciation to EAL learners.
- » The third presentation was delivered to EAL teachers, in August, at Holmesglen Institute of TAFE in Chadstone (Melbourne). The four-hour workshop was co-presented with Laura Chapman, an EAL teacher and volunteer coordinator at Carringbush Adult Education. The focus of the workshop was on integrating

pronunciation teaching and showcasing pronunciation activities that could be integrated into the curriculum. The workshop moved from the teaching of individual sounds using mime and gesture without an oral model through to showcasing a range of ways to teach prosodic features such as stress at a word and sentence level, rhythm and intonation. The teachers actively engaged in activities to trial the techniques themselves. There was opportunity for question and answer. Many practitioners expressed their lack of confidence in teaching pronunciation and shared that they were not adequately taught how to teach pronunciation to EAL learners. This was a common response that we encountered in our presentations. It led the Fellow to further explore the question of the amount, quality and type of pre-serve training of TESOL graduates in Australia and the world.

- » The Fellow delivered a presentation called Let's Speak: Teaching Pronunciation Differently to 70 SEE teachers at AMES Australia Flagstaff, for the Central West Regional PD Day at 255 William Street, Melbourne, on the 21st October 2016. She co-presented with Margaret Corrigan. The presentation involved a brief description of the Fellowship process and the study tours followed by a demonstration of a range of activities observed in the USA with reference to theory and research findings that informs instruction.
- » The fifth presentation was delivered to SEE teachers at AMES Australia, 1 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, on 10th November 2016. It was co-presented with Margaret Corrigan.

Carringbush Adult Education

The Fellow has applied the outcomes her learnings at her workplace in the following ways:

- » The Fellow presented to the staff of Carringbush Adult Education, in June 2016, a summary of learnings from centres visited in the USA. A demonstration of model lessons observed in Minnesota was delivered. The teachers were very interested in the lessons and learnings and keen to adopt some techniques as part of their own practices.

- » A demonstration of a model lesson to managers of Carringbush Adult Education to showcase techniques learned in Minnesota was delivered in June 2016. The learners were very engaged in the activity, which focused on voice settings. The learners produced contextualized vocabulary following a model then used mirrors to become aware of the placement of their own articulators in the production of the words. Learners then mimed the words to a partner and the partner guessed the word from the mime. This allowed the Fellow to provide feedback to learners about the position of articulators and make any adjustments necessary. The Fellow has integrated this activity into the introduction of all new vocabulary in her practice.
- » In her role as tutor-teacher and teacher mentor, the Fellow has the opportunity to guide, share teaching methods, techniques and demonstrate activities to EAL teachers at Carringbush Adult Education. Mentoring new teachers - demonstration to teaching staff - 17th October 2016. This is an on-going activity.
- » Apply findings and learning to the CAIF pronunciation project at Carringbush Adult Education as a member of the steering committee: 2015-2017. Carringbush Adult Education has been granted a CAIF 7. The ACFE Board's Capacity and Innovation Fund (CAIF) provided opportunities for Learn Local organisations to develop and implement projects designed to meet learner needs and to increase participation and attainment in pre-accredited and accredited training programs. The Fund has four project streams and Carringbush Adult Education has been successful in being awarded a grant to upskill teachers in the area of pronunciation instruction through the Engaging Learners on the Pathway for Achievement stream. The project began in 2015 and will continue through to 2017.

This is an ongoing activity.

» Teaching an ACFE funded research/pronunciation class to Learn Local providers. Funding was provided in 2015 for a pre-accredited class to focus on pronunciation instruction. A four-hour-a week class provides an opportunity to test individual students and ascertain the interferences to intelligibility and to address the individual learning needs of the learner and to meet their specific learning requirements in the area of oral language development. This class has also provided the testing ground to trial innovative pronunciation activities and techniques, which are valuable for teacher mentoring and to contribute to the CAIF 7 project.

This is an ongoing activity.

Print and Digital Media

The Fellow has disseminated her learnings through other forms of media:

» Learn Local Innovation Showcase: Comprised eight innovative projects which are being showcased for an audience of Learn Local provider. CAIF Project video of innovative teaching, through Wyndham Community and Education Centre. Demonstration of pronunciation teaching and interview of the Fellow regarding innovative teaching practices. The aim of the project was to identify and promote innovation in teaching practice across the Learn Local sector. This culminated in the delivery in the delivery of a teacher showcase in each of the ACFE Regions, as well as the development of a YouTube series of innovative teacher practices that can be used as a future resource for Learn Local providers.

A model lesson was filmed of the Fellow teaching at a Carringbush Adult Education site at Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House in Richmond. The lesson was delivered to low-proficiency adult learners and featured the use of mime and gestures to teach segmentals and used the IPA chart to discover words and graphemes for spelling. The Fellow and manager, Margaret Corrigan, were interviewed about innovative practices and how oral language learning needs are addressed. The project is available on Youtube. <https://goo.gl/B2H9LF>

» Fine Print article titled 'An integrated approach to improving pronunciation', written by Margaret Corrigan and Elizabeth Keenan was published in Volume 39 #2 of Fine Print (the VALBEC Journal of LLN Educators). The Fellow contributed an article to the Fine Print Journal detailing the journey of developing pronunciation instruction at Carringbush Adult Education.

» Fine Print article to be completed in 2017. This article will outline the Fellowship process of information gathering and dissemination and the key findings from the experience.

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10. Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions

ACFE	Adult, Community and Further Education	NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services	PD	Professional Development
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program	PSLLT	Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching
CAG	Curriculum Advisory Group	RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University
CAIF	Capacity and Innovation Fund	RTO	Registered Training Organisation – VET providers
CSWE	Certificate in Spoken and Written English	SEE	Skills for Education and Employment
EAL	English as an Additional Language	SVTS	Skills Victoria Training System
ELT	English Language Teaching	TAFE	Technical and Further Education
ESL	English as a Second Language	TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet	VALBEC	Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council
ISS	International Specialised Skills Institute	VET	Vocational Education & Training
LLO	Learn Local Organisation	VicTESOL	Victorian Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
LLN	Language, Literacy and Numeracy		

Accentedness

How different someone's speech seems (often from the listener's variety)

Articulatory Settings

A basic or default position for the lips, throat, jaw and the tongue

Cognitions

Perceptions, beliefs, knowledge and understandings

Comfortable Intelligibility

Speech which is not only intelligible, but has no intrusive features likely to distract the listener

Community of practice

A group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly

Comprehensibility

The listener's experience of how difficult the speech is to understand

Connected Speech

The affect on individual sounds by the context surrounding the sounds

Intelligibility

The extent to which utterances are understandable to a speaker's audience

Interlocutor

A person who takes part in a dialogue or conversation

Intonation

The rise and fall of the voice when speaking

L1

First language

L2

Second Language

NS

Native Speakers

NNS

Non-native Speakers

Phonetics

The study of speech sounds and sound production

Phonology

The study of how speech sounds are produced, used and distinguished in a specific language

Pronunciation

The production of sounds that we use to make meaning¹

Rhythm

The regular repetition of stress in time

Segmentals

Individual vowel and consonant sound unit²

1 Yates, L. 2002. What is pronunciation? *AMEP Research Centre Facts Sheets*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. Retrieved 15 November 2016, accessed from <http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/pdamep/factsheets.html>

2 Brown, A. 2014. *Pronunciation and phonetics: A practical guide for English language teachers*. New York: Routledge.

Stress

The greater emphasis of some syllables or words over others during speech

Suprasegmentals

Features that operate over stretches of speech larger than segments³

Teacher Cognition

The perceptions, beliefs and understandings of the teacher

Voice Quality

The overall long-term setting of vocal organs, including the tongue and vocal cords ⁴

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Pronunciation Clinic - Structure for 10 weeks

1. Introduction to the phonemic chart. Initial diagnostics: in class listening, written and oral (recorded) test
2. Long and short vowels, voiced and unvoiced sounds, sounds and spelling relationships, word stress
3. Rhythm, basic sentence stress, tone
4. Consonant clusters, word ending (-ed, s, es)
5. Reductions, contractions
6. Linking, elisions, assimilations
7. Intonation
8. Ending tones, contrasts and corrections
9. Tonic stress and meaning
10. Final diagnostics, in class listening, written and oral test, learner outcomes and evaluations

Courtesy of L. Alison McGregor

Appendix 2: Teaching Vietnamese learners - Preparatory Elements

1. Focus on breathing and breath control, and on explosion rather than implosion. Time spent on the airstream mechanism is particularly valuable, as the implosive nature of Vietnamese is in direct contrast to the explosive nature of English.
2. Recognize and address the glottal stop, a common phonemic feature of Vietnamese, which is embedded in two of its six tones. The glottal stop interferes with English pronunciation, particularly in the enunciation of syllable-final consonants as well as with the connected speech features of English. This tendency for glottal stop insertion in English distracts listeners from the message. Understanding and gaining awareness of the occurrence of glottal stops is fundamental to helping learners avoid them.

Perceptual Elements

3. Focus on auditory perception before oral production. Discussion ensued about how to get students to hear the correct pronunciation, no matter whether segmental sounds or pitch patterns. Strategies include telling listeners what to listen for, modeling the target pronunciation feature, getting learners' own speaking output to converge on the target, and forming a closed-circuit auditory feedback loop.

4. Lead students to hear the “correct” pronunciation by producing the target pronunciation through a variety of means, such as singing, sagittal images of the articulators, verbal description, modeling.
5. Encourage students to hear English without looking at the written text to focus their attention on the actual sounds of the language. Sound-symbol correspondence is extremely strong in Vietnamese and therefore helpful, but considerably weaker in English and often misleading. Considering English an ear language as opposed to Vietnamese as an eye language may aid learners in framing their listening.
6. Have students sing as a means of aiding auditory perception.

Productive Elements

7. Tackle consonants, particularly finals (e.g., /l/-/w/ feel–few, /l/-/n/ fall–fawn, /t/-/s/ pat–pass) along with the deletion of consonants and insertion of glottal stops, as in /kən ən əfəŋ/ for “cause and effect”. The omission or inaccurate articulation of consonant clusters—which do not exist in spoken Vietnamese—is particularly problematic in English and worthy of attention.
8. Focus on English word stress, phrase stress, and pitch patterns.
9. Avoid techniques that may backfire with learners. For example, telling a student to simply “Repeat after me” or “Say it the way I say it” may result in the student replying, “But I am saying it that way,” illustrating an inability on the part of the student to perceive the intended target.
10. Refrain from pointing out the specific shortcomings of a learner’s speech, as this may lead to hyper-correction; instead focus on the learners’ hearing the “correct” pronunciation.

Appendix 3: Resource List

- » Pronunciation Games - Mark Hancock
- » Sounds Foundation - Adrian Underhill
- » Learner English: A teacher’s guide to interface and other problems - Michael Swan and Bernard Smith
- » The Language Teacher’s Voice - Alan Maley
- » Speaking Clearly: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension on Learners of English - Pamela Rogerson and Judy B. Gilbert

Appendix 4: Websites

www.mnliteracy.org

atlasabe.org

ACES Resources-Developing future pathways. Accessed through atlasabe.org

hapu123.weekly.com

Learning Chocolate-a vocabulary learning platform

Ted Talk-Christopher Aruffo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDxFrwkiHlw&sns=em>

Appendix 5: Foote, Holtby and Derwing's (2011) recommendations for pre-service and in-service training that prioritises intelligibility in pronunciation instruction

- » assess students' pronunciation
- » explore ways to integrate pronunciation teaching within general ESL classes
- » provide explicit feedback on segmental and suprasegmental elements of pronunciation
- » give more attention to elements that have the greatest impact on intelligibility (e.g., sentence-level stress)
- » transition away from activities focused on individual sounds (since this is an inefficient teaching strategy that siphons away precious classroom time)
- » use modern technologies to design innovative ways of teaching.¹

¹ Murphy, J. 2014 Myth 7: Teacher training programs provide adequate preparation in how to teach pronunciation. In L Grant (Ed.), *Pronunciation Myths*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Appendix 6: Fact Sheets

Professor Lynda Yates from Macquarie University, in conjunction with the AMEP, compiled a series of fact sheets for teachers who teaching adult migrants to address these issues. Three of the fact sheets are concerned with pronunciation and how to teach pronunciation it. It moves from the theory to practice in very easy to read language with valuable and relevant activities to address all elements of pronunciation.

<http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/pdamep/factsheets.html>



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