

Pronunciation in the EAP classroom: strategies for increasing integration.

Gemma Archer
University of Strathclyde



Overheard on the pre-sessional

- *‘His presentation is, on the whole, quite good, but I’m really struggling to understand him. But there’s nothing I can do about it at this late stage. I’ll just sent him to the in-sess. Pron. Class.’*
- *‘I’d love to do more pronunciation, but there just isn’t time.’*
- *‘You don’t really need to do much pron work in EAP, it’s all about the essay at the end of the day.’*
- *‘I teach writing, it’s not my job to teach pronunciation!’*
- *‘When on earth would I teach pronunciation in a writing class? The syllable stress of “bibliography”?!’*

Overview

1. **Importance of pronunciation** for EAP students.
2. **The issues:** why we're not doing more of it.
3. **The studies:**
 - 2-year qualitative data collection (Archer, 2018).
 - 5-week classroom based study and strategies which evolved from it (2018).
4. **Strategies and techniques** to integrate more pronunciation in EAP.

Goal: to highlight the issue of pron. in EAP and share ideas about how it could be integrated more into EAP lessons/ program.

Why bother?

For listening ...



- Pronunciation training is linked to an improvement in overall listening capabilities, with a growing number of studies highlighting students' ability to identify phonological features more clearly after receiving pronunciation instruction (Gilbert, 1995; Brown, 2011)
- Because it helps learners decode the features of fast natural speech they hear in their new linguistic environment, e.g. connected speech, reduced vowel sounds, glottal stops, through bottom up processing (Kissling, 2018).

Why bother?

For students' socio-psychological development ...



- Lacking in confidence to communicate can be 'socially inhibiting' and can even be 'damaging to a learner's ability to cope effectively' in their new linguistic environment (Gilbert, 2016, p5).
- To provide personalised, student-centred feedback

Why Bother?

For reading and Writing



- Developing a reliable L2 phonological repertoire can contribute to the speed and ease of word recognition and retention, thus supporting the ability to comprehend L2 written texts (Walter, 2009).

Why bother?

EAP Assessment



Source: www.japantimes.co.jp (19/6/13)

Because on EAP programmes we assess students' speaking ability, of which pronunciation is a criteria.

Why Bother?

Because students want it!



Why are we not doing it?

- Pronunciation: once the 'pinnacle of importance' (Levis, 2005)
- Introduction of communicative methodology led to decades of neglect due to the belief that students would learn 'naturally' through communicative activities.

Why are we not doing it?

Despite the current pronunciation resurgence, many teachers are still not including it due to:

1. Lack of training in phonology and teaching pronunciation (MacDonald, 2002; Fraser, 2000; Yates, 2001; Bradford and Kenworthy, 1991; Murphy, 1997; Walker, 1999; Breikrutz, Derwing & Rossiter, 2001; Henderson, 2012, Archer, 2018)



Lack of training, Archer (2018)



Did you receive explicit pronunciation training?
327 teachers (nationally/international)
surveyed:

- Yes 49%
- Yes, but not in detail 33%
- No 17%

Why are we not doing it? (cont.)



2. For many years a lack of appropriate contextualised pronunciation materials (Derwing, Diepenbroek, & Foote, 2012) and a lot of ‘drill and kill’! (Fraser, 2000).

Why are we not doing it (cont.)

Office inventory of EAP resources x8 student books (2018)

Text type	No. of pronunciation exercises
A graded mini series of 3 books on listening and speaking in EAP, approx. 60 pp each.	2; 16; 1
2 sets of graduated EAP pre-sessionial course books at int. and upper int. level, 200 -300 pp each	7; 1 1; 0
An EAP presentation textbook, 128 pp	5

Range of exercises:

- Listen and notice.
- Listen and repeat.
- Predict/ mark the stress.
- Read the transcript aloud.
- Lacking in contextualisation, relevance, personalisation and extension activities.
- Often vague instructions.
- Rarely (if at all) revisited.
- Limited teachers' notes (if any).



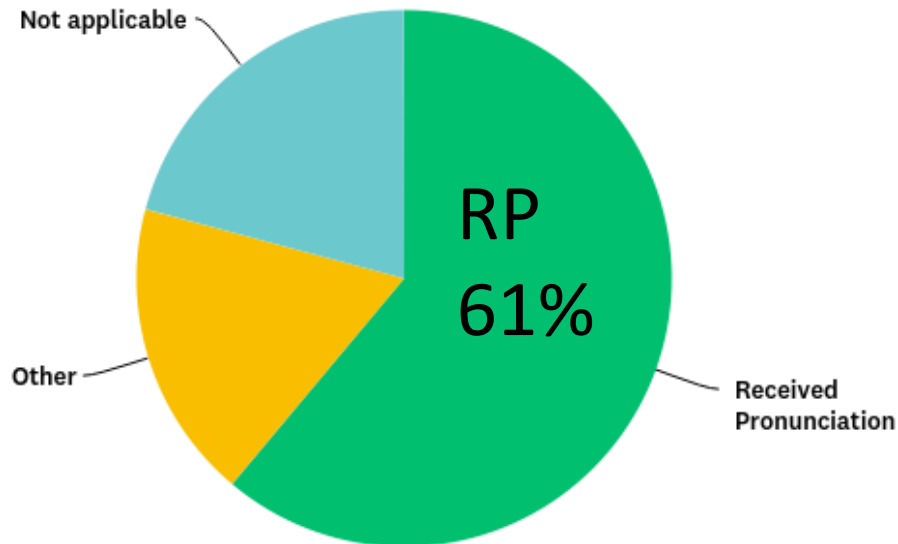
Why are we not doing it (cont.)

3. Pronunciation mismatch between existing materials and teachers' own voices (Archer, 2018).

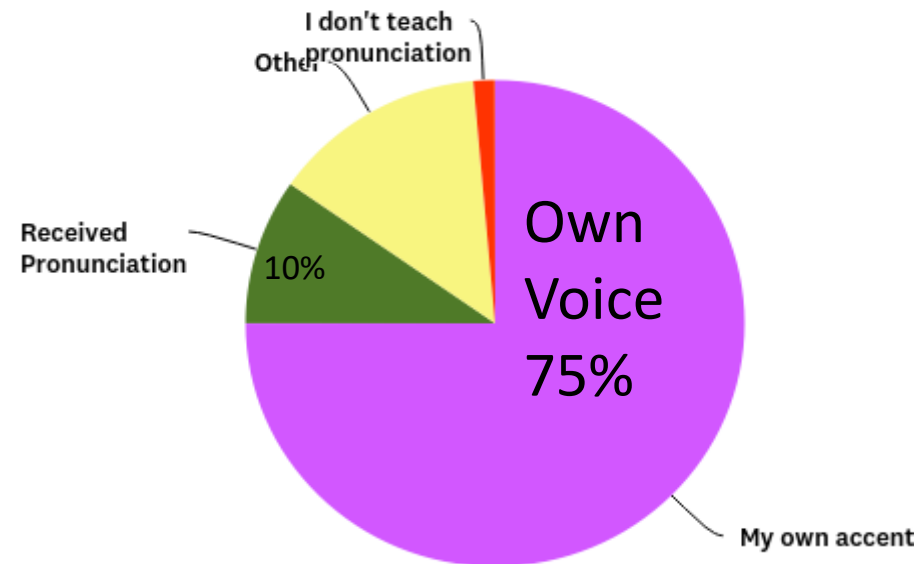
Regional L1 speaking teachers

Archer (2018)

I was trained with



I teach with





Why are we not doing it? (cont.)

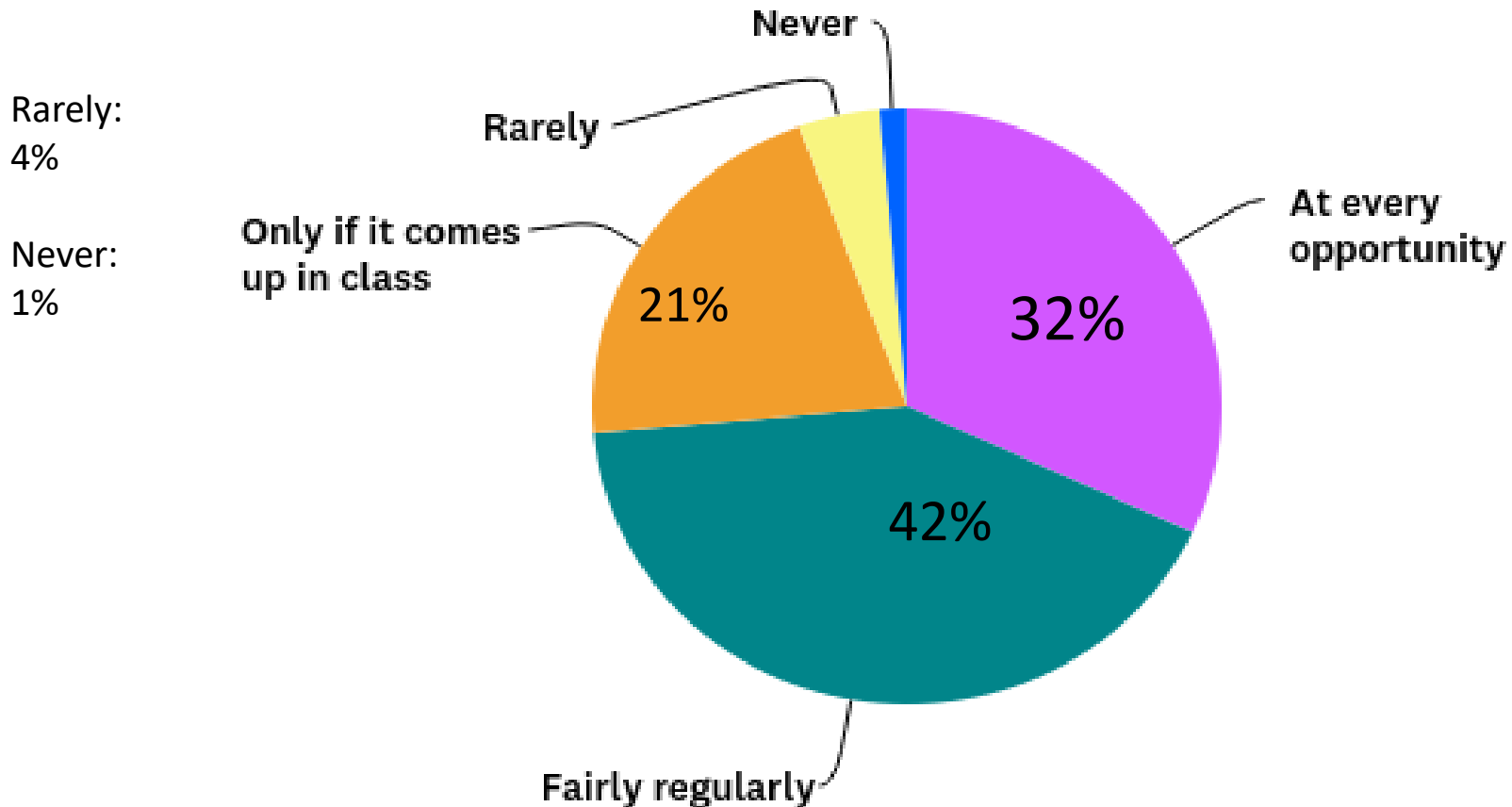


4. Teachers think they **are** doing pronunciation, but often they are simply **responding** to pronunciation issues as they arise, rather than planning and integrating explicit practice

(Baker & Murphy, 2011; Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Urzúa, 2013).

Some studies suggest as little as 6% of class time is spent on pronunciation activities (Foote, Holtby & Derwing, 2011).

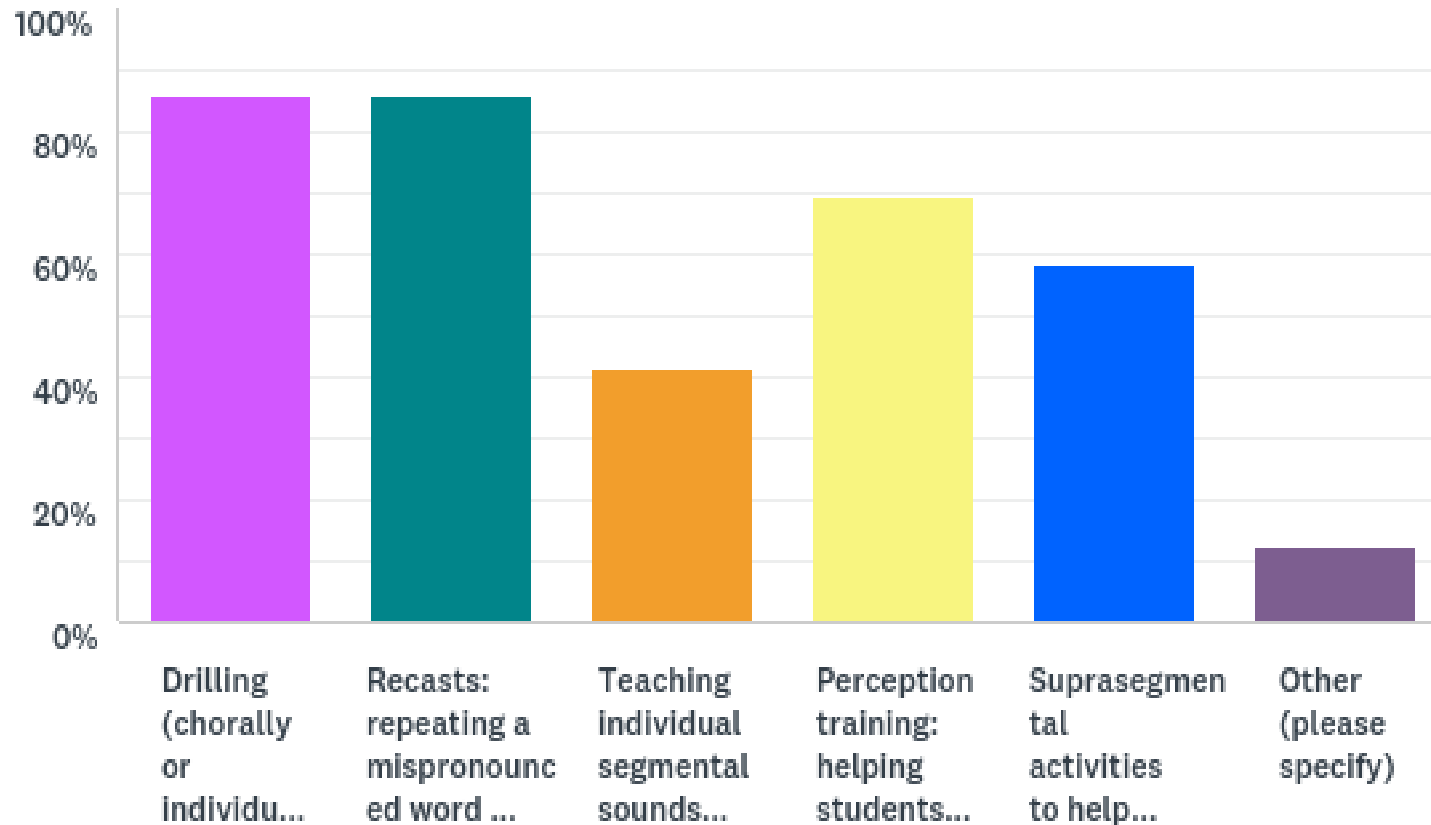
How often do you include pronunciation activities in your lessons?



Archer(2018)

But ...!

What are the most frequent activities that appear in your lessons?



Archer(2018)

Summary so far



Issues affecting teachers' likelihood to teach pronunciation:

1. **Lack of awareness** of the importance and transferability of pronunciation for other skills.
2. **Lack of practical and theoretical training** resulting in lack of knowledge/ confidence.
3. **Lack of appropriate materials.**
4. **Mismatch between model accent** in materials and teachers' own.
5. **Teachers mistakenly believing they are doing more** pronunciation than they really are.

The 5-week study

**Pronunciation models in regional environments: a
comparison and assessment of RP and SSE.
(Archer, 2018)**

<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/30983/>

Strategies

1. What to cover:

- a. Diagnostics/ needs analysis*
- b. Priorities*

2. How to cover it:

- a. The Prosody Pyramid*
- b. Prosodic annotations*
- c. Spontaneous and pre-planned integration using the 5-step Communicative Framework for Pronunciation.*

What to cover: diagnostics

No time?

Consider and include features that are necessary for upcoming tasks, assignments, assessments/ academic/ social skills
e.g. for a presentation: chunking, pausing, stress.

Little time?

Get students to send you a recording taken on their mobile phone from a subject specific text. E.g. abstract from a journal in their own subject, or paragraph from an upcoming reading in the coursebook.

A (rare!) window of time exists (15 min):

Run a diagnostic test which includes

- A read aloud task
- A spontaneous task (see following slides).

Week 1 Diagnostic

Student Name: _____

Record the dictation below onto your mobile phone.

Recently a range of brand new rules were introduced in Livingstone Tower. On bank holidays, the lifts and the lights will be on standby so as to use less electricity. Also the computer lab will be locked. Only Postgraduate Business students and professors will be allowed in. If you break the rules and enter the lab, you will be punished!

Now turn over and continue your recording.

**Continue recording. Read the paragraph summary below
and insert the correct word from memory.**

A range of new r_____ were introduced in Livingstone t_____.
On bank h_____ the lifts and l_____ will be on standby to use less
e_____. Also, the computer l_____ will be l_____.
Only business s_____ and p_____ will be allowed in.
If you b_____ the rules, and enter, you will be p_____!

Continue recording and answer questions 1 – 4.

Don't write your answers down!

1. Why do you think some students like to work in the computer lab? Do you? When?
2. Which classes do you attend in Livingstone tower?
3. How many lifts do you use on a daily basis?
4. Do you think students who break the rules should be punished?

Features assessed:

/r/ /l/ /b/ /p/ & consonant clusters

Recently a range of brand new rules were introduced in Livingstone Tower. On bank holidays, the lifts and the lights will be on standby so as to use less electricity. Also the computer lab will be locked. Only Postgraduate Business students and Professors will be allowed in. If you break the rules and enter the lab, you will be punished!

Week 1 Diagnostic

Student Name: _____



Record the dictation below onto your mobile phone.

Tim is a part-time student. He mainly studies Russian literature, but has many diverse interests. In his spare time, he listens to podcasts about Yiddish and Spanish history, and reads books about art and learning languages. But Tim is poor, so he funds his studies by working as a peach picker at the weekends. While this is a difficult way to make a living, Tim loves it, especially in the autumn when the leaves on the rows of peach trees change colour and it's not too hot. When his employment ends in winter, he works shifts in a pub.

Now turn over and continue your recording.

Continue recording.

Now answer the questions based on what you can remember from the paragraph on page 1.

Q1. Is Tim rich?

Q2. What work does Tim do?

Q3. At what time of year does Tim love his job the most?

Q4. Does Tim do the same job in winter?

Continue recording.

Answer questions 1 – 4. Don't write your answers down!

- What are your interests and hobbies?
- Do you have a part-time job (now or in the past)?
- Would you like to be a peach picker? Why/ why not?
- What is your favourite season/ time of year?

Tim is a part-time student. He mainly studies Russian literature, but has many diverse interests. In his spare time, he listens to podcasts about Yiddish and Spanish history, and reads books about art and learning languages. But Tim is poor, so he funds his studies by working as a pecker at the weekends. While this is a difficult way to make a living, Tim loves it, especially in the autumn when the leaves on the rows of peach trees change colour and it's not too hot. When his employment ends in winter, he works shifts in a pub.

Features assessed:

- Vowel sounds
- /ʃ/ and /tʃ/
- 's' endings
- Consonant clusters

What to cover: **priorities**

If you're still unsure what to work on, consider the *Lingua Franca Core* (Jenkins, 2000) and *Functional Load Theory* (Catford, 1987), choosing the features considered most important for intelligibility.

Lingua Franca Core

- **All** consonant sounds (except /θ/ and /ð/)
- Consonant clusters, especially final
- Rhotic /r/
- More clear /l/ than dark [ɫ]
- Nuclear/ tonic stress

Functional Load Theory

Consonants:

p/b: 98%

l/r: 83%

t/s: 81%

t/d: 73%

Vowels:

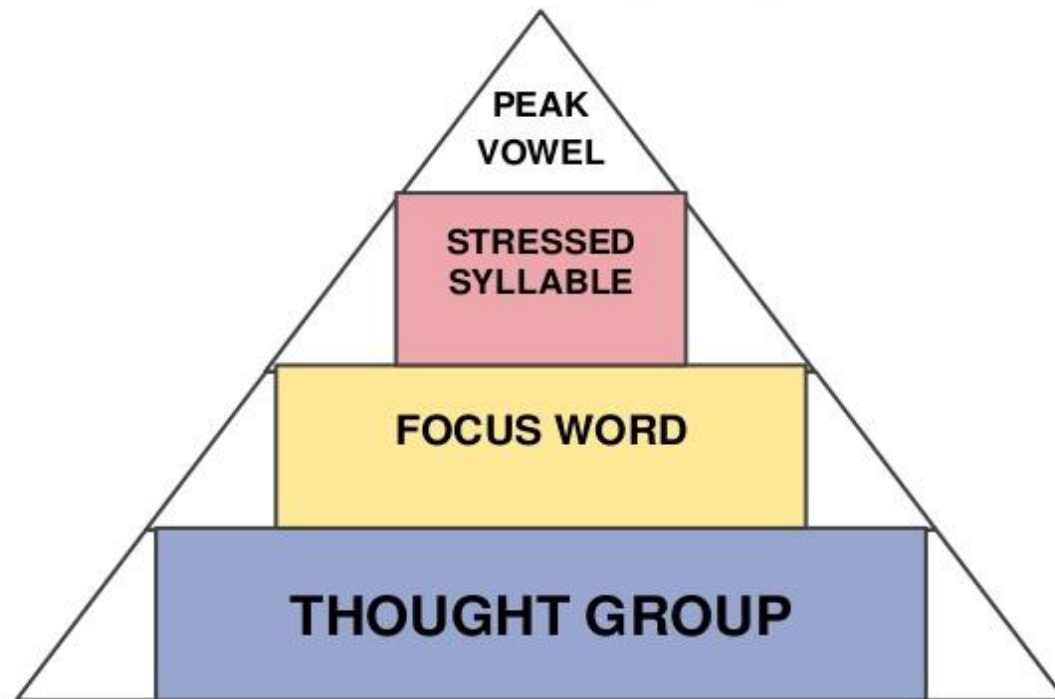
ɪ/æ: 100%

ɪ/ i: 95%

æ/ɑ: 76%

Introduce suprasegmentals with the Prosody Pyramid

The Prosody Pyramid



(Gilbert, 2008)
Clear Speech 4th edition

<https://pronsig.iatefl.org/Info/Gilbert-Teaching-Pronunciation.pdf>

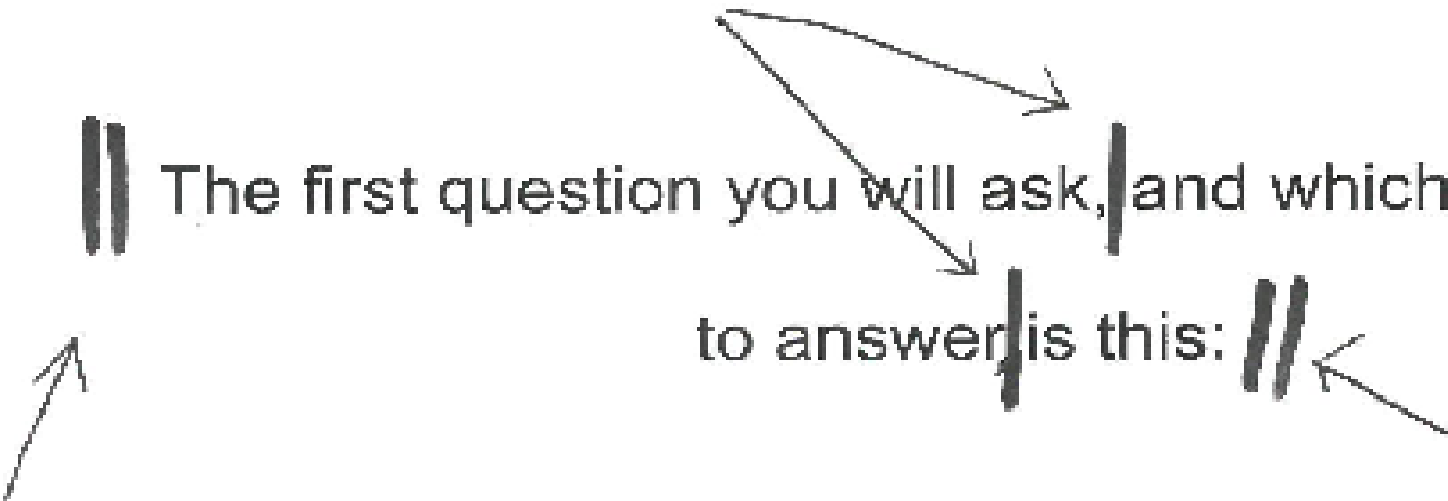
Reinforce and review stress, pausing and chunking with *Prosodic Annotations*

- End of tone unit (TU) | or pause ||
- **Primary stressed syllable (*beat*): blue larger text**
- **Reduced syllable (vowel only or syllabic /l/ or /n/): orange smaller text**
- Nuclear (sentence) stress (whole word) : underlined
- Intonation (low fall, rise-fall, low rise) indicated by contour lines
- Phonotactic phenomena (linking, deletion, assimilation, etc.): highlighted in yellow

- The first **ques**tion which you will **ask**, | and **which** I must try to **an**swer, | is **this**: ||

Step 1. Highlight pauses

|| The first question you will ask, and which I must try
to answer is this: ||



Step 2. Awareness of nuclear stress


The **first** question you will ask, and which I must **try**
to answer, is **this**:

Stress = louder, higher, longer

Step 3: add contour/pitch lines



The first question you will ask, and which I must try



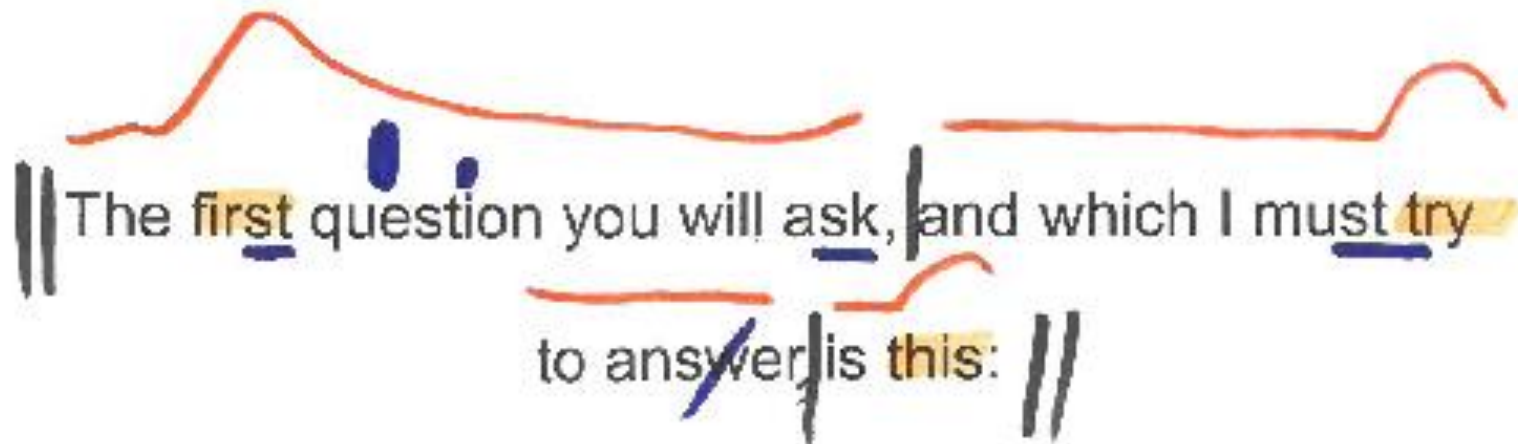
to answer, is this:

Step 4: Personalise based on known areas of difficulty

The first question you will ask, and which I must try
to ~~answer~~, is this:

Typical areas of difficulty: consonant endings and clusters, 's' endings, tonic stress, word stress, etc.

Prosodic annotation: end results



|| The first question you will ask, and which I must try
to answer is this: ||

The image displays a sentence with handwritten prosodic annotations. A red line represents the pitch contour, starting at a low level, rising to a peak over the word 'first', then falling and remaining low until the end of the sentence where it rises again. Blue vertical lines indicate stress or emphasis, placed over the words 'first', 'try', and 'this'. The words 'first', 'try', and 'this' are highlighted in yellow. The sentence is enclosed in double vertical bars (||) at both the beginning and the end.

Pre-planned: Lesson structure

Celce-Murcia et al communicative framework for pronunciation (2010):

Step 1	<u>Description and Analysis</u> : oral and physical demonstration of how the feature is produced and when it occurs within spoken discourse.
Step 2	<u>Listening discrimination</u> : focused listening practice (ear training) with feedback on learners' ability to correctly discriminate feature.
Step 3	<u>Controlled practice</u> : oral readings of minimal pair sentences, short dialogues, etc. with special attention paid to the highlighted feature in order to raise learner consciousness.
Step 4	<u>Guided practice</u> : structured communication exercises, such as information-gap activities or cued dialogues that enable the learner to monitor for the specified feature.
Step 5	<u>Communicative practice</u> : less structured, fluency building activities (e.g. role play, problem solving) that require the learner to attend to both form and content of utterances

Step 1

Step 1

Description and Analysis: oral and physical demonstration of how the feature is produced and when it occurs within spoken discourse.

Spontaneous integration

- Elicit articulation of challenging phonological features encountered during class.
 - where's the tongue/ teeth/ lips/ jaw?
 - is it voiced/ unvoiced?
- Ask ss to use a mirror or phone to check they are copying the articulation exactly.

Step 2

Step 2

**Listening discrimination (ear training):
focused listening practice with feedback on
learners' ability to correctly discriminate
phonological feature.**

Spontaneous integration

- Write up and number contrasting segmentals that ss are struggling with, say one, ask ss to point or give the number of the word they hear. Repeat several times.

E.g. 1. prints 2. prince

E.g. 1. process 2. protest

Ss can then create their own randomised list of the words (or others containing the target sound) and repeat them to partner, partner has to listen and identify the sound they heard.

Step 3

Step 3

Controlled productive practice: oral readings of minimal pair sentences, short dialogues, etc. with special attention paid to the highlighted phonological feature to raise learner consciousness.

Spontaneous integration

Create or ask the students to produce simple tongue twisters using target language/sounds.

E.g. to practice /s/ clusters

- The Scottish students requested that the updates be posted on Myplace.
- The screens on the latest iphones are the worst I've seen!
- I've sent twenty-six texts and six tweets about the protests in the last sixty minutes.

Step 4

Step 4

Guided practice: structured communication exercises, such as information-gap activities or cued dialogues that enable the learner to monitor for the specified feature.

Example task:

Dictation using /s/ clusters

Read the sentences below to your partner - they should listen and write exactly what you say. When you are finished, check the dictation together looking for any problem sounds which have been written incorrectly, and practice saying them together.

Seventeen students from Senegal arrived last week. Six need help finding suitable flats; they are seeking single units. Some have stated an interest in staying on campus in the student halls of residence. However, the office staff have said they are unsure there is space.

Step 5

Step 5

Communicative practice: less structured, fluency building activities (e.g. role play, problem solving) that require the learner to attend to both the form and content of utterances

Discourse types in the academic setting

(Thaine, 2018).

Communicative Scenario	Discourse Type	To?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentations• Seminars• Tutorials• Meetings• Interaction with support staff• Interaction with peers (academic or social)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explaining ideas and concepts• Taking turns• Agree/disagreeing• Making requests• Asking permission• Seeking clarification• Ask for/ offering help• Sharing ideas• Make/ responding to invitations• Small talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic staff• Supervisors• Administrators• Librarians• Support staff• Peers

Discourse in practice: step 5

Blend practical productive tasks with target sounds to make relevant, communicative academic activities. **Language is contextualised, recyclable and students can get creative and use their own experiences.**

E.g.

- Give some advice (to new students)
- Prepare an excuse (about why you missed the class/deadline)
- Give directions (to the library)
- Ask for help (with a problem)
- Make a prioritised list (of work/ deadlines)
- Prepare a dialogue (which includes ...)
- Make a clarification (on a misunderstanding)
- Respond to an invitation (to give a presentation)

Example:

Semi-structured dialogues using /s/ consonant clusters

Your teacher has asked you to present a recent project you completed to your classmates. Prepare your response including the following points:

- accept the offer to present
- tell them what you will need in order to present (e.g. equipment)
- when you will be free to present

Use **at least ten** of the words from the vocabulary bank below plus any others you wish to include.

Vocabulary bank

states	scientists	students	skipped	prints
worst	risks/ed	pessimist	findings	best
texts	assist	results	rights	charts
optimistic	skills	statistics	starts	screens
sixth	first	twenty-sixth	August	Wednesday

Example:

Semi-structured dialogues using 10 vowel sounds.



A classmate comes to you for help. They are feeling anxious, unhappy and overwhelmed due the high number of deadlines for their studies. They are finding it hard to sleep and are feeling home sick too.

Give them some advice to help them feel better, addressing **each** of their problems. You must use at least 1 word from each category of the vocabulary bank.

i:	ɪ	eɪ	aɪ	u:	e	æ	ʌ	ɒ	ɔ
sleep	fit	play	kind	music	friend	cat	luck	a lot/s	saw
cheer	sit	stay	find	look	send	lack	under	talk	call
treat	trip	say	unwind	book	lend	can/t	sun	brought	raw
here	knit	crazy	mind	fruit	pretend	plan	fun	caught	ball
keep	trick	late	try	misunderstood	mend	track	run	thoughts	autumn
trees	sick	away	cry	mood	trend	plants	come	hot	small

Conclusion

- We wouldn't hesitate to provide additional support activities for grammar/ spelling/ vocabulary students are struggling with, why not pronunciation too?
- Increasing evidence proves that explicit pronunciation instruction can have a positive effect on all skills.
- Pronunciation **does** have a place in the EAP classroom and it should be of even greater priority given that we assess speaking.
- There are many pre-planned and spontaneous methods in which you can increase the pronunciation in your EAP classes.

Thank you!



gemma.archer@strath.ac.uk



speakout@IATEFL.org



GL_archer



Gemma Archer

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