

Finnish teacher trainees' thoughts and perceptions of teaching and learning  
EFL pronunciation

Bachelor's Thesis

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<p>Ääntämisen opettaminen on tehtävä, jonka useimmat englantia vieraana kielenä opettavat opettajat kohtaavat jossakin vaiheessa uraansa. Vaikka ääntäminen nähdään tärkeänä asiana kielenoppimisessa, monet opettajat voivat olla epävarmoja ääntämisen opettamisen suhteen. Englannin asema lingua francana on tuonut myös uusia haasteita englannin opettajille ääntämisen suhteen.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää englannin aineenopettajaopiskelijoiden näkemyksiä englannin ääntämisen opettamisesta ja oppimisesta ja selvittää onko kolmannen vuoden ja viidennen vuoden opettajaopiskelijoiden näkemyksillä eroavaisuuksia. Tutkimus toteutettiin haastatteleamalla englannin kolmannen ja viidennen vuoden englannin aineenopettajaopiskelijoita. Kiinnostuksen kohteina tutkimuksessa olivat erityisesti opiskelijoiden ajatukset englannin ääntämisen opettamisesta ja oppimisesta sekä heidän henkilökohtaiset kokemuksensa.</p> <p>Tutkimus osoitti, että englannin opettajaopiskelijat pitivät ääntämistä tärkeänä asiana. Kolmannen vuoden ja viidennen vuoden opiskelijat olivat varsin yksimielisiä. Ymmärrettävyyttä oli molempien ryhmien mielestä tärkeä tavoite ääntämisen opettamisessa ja motivaatio ja mallit ovat tärkeitä asioita, jotka mahdollistavat ääntämisen oppimisen. Muutamia eroja kuitenkin löytyi. Kolmannen vuoden opiskelijat olivat tyytyväisempiä omaan ääntämiseensä kuin viidennen vuoden opiskelijat. Viidennen vuoden opiskelijat kertoivat painottavansa ääntämisen opettamista omassa opetuksessaan, kun taas kolmannen vuoden opiskelijat eivät maininneet painottavansa ääntämisen opettamista ollenkaan. Vaikka molemmat ryhmät raportoivat tuntevansa epävarmuutta ääntämisen opettamisen suhteen, viidennen vuoden opiskelijat kertoivat tuntevansa kuitenkin jonkin verran itsevarmuutta.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) pronunciation is a task that most language teachers meet at some point of their teaching careers. Foreign language teachers also speak in the target language during lessons and so do the learners. In fact, most teacher trainees consider pronunciation to be important and necessary for their careers in the future (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's 2017: 173).

Even though pronunciation is viewed as something important, many teachers might be unsure of how to teach pronunciation and how to integrate it with the rest of their class activities (Macdonald 2002: 10,12). For example, even though in-service teachers acknowledge the importance of suprasegmental features, such as intonation and word-stress (Baker 2011: 283), teachers feel unsure about teaching suprasegmental features due to their lack of necessary background knowledge. Furthermore, they do not have access to professional development to further deepen their knowledge (Derwing and Munro 2015: 80). Another factor that could affect the feeling of uncertainty is the teacher training. Tergujeff (2012b: 33) argues that teacher training in Finland might have gone for worse. Youngest teachers in Tergujeff's research described their education more negatively than the older participants. This could be due to the limited teaching of phonetics in Finnish universities. Furthermore, the participants described how they did not receive teaching on how to teach pronunciation but only on their own pronunciation.

In addition to not receiving enough training, teachers face new challenges in teaching pronunciation in the globalizing world. While pronunciation in itself remains the same, the new state of English as a lingua franca creates new needs for pronunciation teaching in the terms of intelligibility and choice of objectives. Also, the change in methods of teaching creates new challenges. Furthermore, the pronunciation teaching may not evolve along with other teaching according to previous research. For example, previous research (Tergujeff 2012: 605) suggests that pronunciation is taught with traditional methods and teaching focuses on segmental features such as vowel and consonant sounds. Still, a greater importance is given to suprasegmental features over segmentals (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's 2017: 175 and Pennington and Richards 1986:211).

Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017) researched teacher trainees at a Turkish university, and similar research is limited in the Finnish context. In addition, Tergujeff (2012) has researched more experienced language teachers but especially research on teacher trainees and less experienced

teachers is not very systematic. The aim of this study is to fill the gap by discovering Finnish teacher trainees' thoughts and perceptions on pronunciation and pronunciation education.

## 2 TEACHING AND LEARNING EFL PRONUNCIATION

Teaching English pronunciation to foreign language learners is a complex task. Teachers must consider their learners previous theoretical and practical knowledge on pronunciation, what the goals of the learning process are, what is said in the curriculum, how to conduct pronunciation teaching and so on. Furthermore, the education the teachers have received also reflects on their teaching. One important factor in language learning and especially in pronunciation learning is the native language of the learners. Being conscious of the possible issues in learning is one of the key elements in teaching languages. In this chapter, I explore the factors affecting teaching and learning of pronunciation in the Finnish context.

### 2.1 What is pronunciation

It is necessary to understand what pronunciation is to be able to teach it, and pronunciation is a very complex phenomenon. According to Yule (2010: 26) producing speech sounds start by pushing air by the lungs through the trachea to the larynx. In the larynx, the vocal folds create voiceless sounds by being spread apart or voiced sounds by being drawn together and creating a vibration. Finally, the air comes out through the mouth or nose. In more detail, different sounds are created in the mouth by manipulating different parts of the oral cavity. In addition, there are three parts that form pronunciation according to Yates and Zielinski (2009: 11). First, particular sounds of a language are called segments. Second, suprasegmentals refer to aspects that are beyond segments like stress, timing, rhythm, phrasing, intonation for example. Last, voice quality describes how voice is projected. For example, voice quality can be breathy, modal, or creaky (Wright, Mansfield and Panfili 2019).

### 2.2 Teacher trainees' perceptions

Advanced English learners consider pronunciation important for their future. Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu (2017) researched teacher trainees and their perceptions on pronunciation. This topic can provide necessary insight for the current research. Most of the teacher trainees in Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017: 173) research think that pronunciation is important and that it is a necessary skill for their future. Still, they are uncertain whether their pronunciation is good or if they are

satisfied with their pronunciation. Furthermore, most of the teacher trainees think that their pronunciation is not at a native level, but they do think that it is better than others.

In more detail, freshmen view their pronunciation skill more positively than seniors (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu 2017: 175). Freshman year appears to be very important to the teacher trainees because of the pronunciation instruction in that year; they were not aware of the sounds nor could they properly produce the sounds correctly before the freshman year (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu 2017: 174). Furthermore, they consider that learning segmentals is very easy and think that learning specific sounds is necessary in developing the pronunciation skill. Still, they give a greater importance to suprasegmental features and they are not sure on how difficult it is to learn suprasegmentals (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's 2017: 175).

### 2.3 What affects pronunciation learning

Motivation, strategies, and teacher's intervention are important factors for learning pronunciation. Tominaga (2009:129, 134) researched successful pronunciation learners (SPL), who were rated for intonation, stress, rhythm, sound change, and voice quality, and found three factors that were statistically significant. First, motivation is important in learning pronunciation according to Tominaga (2009: 135). Most of the SPL in junior high school like English as a compulsory school subject, and all of them find the English education they received outside of school to be enjoyable. In addition, the SPL in senior high school enjoy class activities even though they do not receive good pronunciation guidance from the school system. Also, most of the university students in Nowacka's (2012: 49) research practiced English pronunciation on their own. According to Tominaga (2009: 135), role models seem to affect the motivation in a positive manner. Second, strategies are important in learning pronunciation (Tominaga 2009: 134). The SPL in senior high school did not participate in pronunciation education outside of the school system which could indicate that the SPL have created own learning strategies (Tominaga 2009: 134). Furthermore, Tominaga argues that the ability to enjoy class activities, even though the SPL do not expect much from the school education, is due to the students' autonomous strategies. Last, teacher's intervention is a key element in learning pronunciation. Teachers' good pronunciation and guidance are beneficial according to the SPL in Tominaga's (2009: 135-136) research.

EFL pronunciation teaching would benefit from further support for teachers. Macdonald (2002: 10,12) discovered that teachers in Australia struggle with integrating pronunciation teaching with the rest of the teaching. Moreover, access to materials, ideas, and curriculum support would greatly

benefit the teachers. This could very well apply also to the Finnish context since the national core curriculum provides only guidelines. Furthermore, it could provide understanding to why traditional methods are used. If teachers do not know how to integrate pronunciation teaching or teach it communicatively, it can hardly be expected from them without education. In addition, the change in teacher training may have affected it negatively in Finland (Tergujeff 2012b: 33). In Tergujeff's research, the youngest teachers described their training more negatively than the oldest age group. Tergujeff (2012b: 33) suggests three reasons: the rise of English as lingua franca, the rise of the communicative language teaching, and the decrease of teaching of phonetics in Finnish universities. Furthermore, the participants described that they received training in their own pronunciation, but not in how to teach pronunciation.

## 2.4 Issues in teaching English pronunciation

Suprasegmentals are an important aspect of English pronunciation, but they offer challenges for both teachers and learners. Pennington and Richards (1986:211) argue that suprasegmental features are more crucial to intelligibility than segments because interfering with suprasegmental features have a greater impact on comprehension. Working teachers also acknowledged the importance of suprasegmental features (Baker 2011: 283). Still, teachers are usually well aware of the segmental problems that their students have, and they focus on segments when considering pronunciation teaching (Tergujeff, 2012). Teachers might focus on segmentals because they may think that it affects the accentedness of the learners (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu 2017: 178).

Furthermore, Derwing and Munro (2015: 80) suggest that teachers do not feel comfortable teaching suprasegmentals because teachers do not have the necessary background knowledge nor the access for more professional development. A participant in Baker's (2011: 281) research described that segmental features are easier to teach than suprasegmental features. On the other hand, pronunciation-oriented objectives of courses can be a source of problems for teachers since these objectives can be unclear and the students' abilities can vary greatly from student to student (Baker 2011: 280). In addition, the development of teacher education could have gone for worse (Tergujeff 2012b: 33).

## 2.5 Pronunciation teaching in Finland

The national core curriculum guides pronunciation teaching in Finland. Finnish National Agency for Education creates the core curriculum with guidelines for teaching on a national level. These

guidelines are created to fulfil the agency's main goals of developing education and training, early childhood education and lifelong learning (Finnish National Agency for Education). Therefore, it is important to take the core curriculum into account when considering teaching and learning EFL pronunciation in Finland.

In the curriculum, teaching pronunciation is mentioned explicitly in the following. First, learners of English in elementary school observe and practice pronunciation as well as word and sentence stress, rhythm, and intonation. Furthermore, learners learn to identify phonetic alphabets of the English language (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet: 244). Second, one of the objectives in lower secondary school is to guide towards good pronunciation. (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet: 399). In addition, to receive the grade eight, the pupil can apply the basic rules of pronunciation also in utterances which are not rehearsed. On the other hand, if a pupil is stronger in one of the objectives mentioned in the curriculum, it can compensate for a weaker one (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet: 407).

In upper secondary school, students learn how sounds are formed and how speech is produced in one of the English courses. Furthermore, they familiarise themselves with different variants of English and compare English with other languages (Lukion opetussuunnitelmien perusteet: 181). There is also a course for oral skills although pronunciation is not mentioned explicitly. Still, it is an optional course so all students will not acquire that knowledge. Even though pronunciation is mentioned explicitly only in these descriptions, the national core curriculum provides only guidelines so teachers can teach more pronunciation than mentioned in the curriculum. Furthermore, oral and written communication are practised during all courses (Lukion opetussuunnitelmien perusteet: 180). Each teacher can decide quite freely how they desire to approach teaching in general, since the national curriculum is providing just the core guidelines for education.

Pronunciation is often taught with traditional methods in Finland. The curriculums do not provide or decide teaching methods. Thus, teachers are able to choose quite freely the methods of teaching. Tergujeff (2012) found out in her research that teachers' methods resemble those used in the past. These would include listen and repeat tasks, having students read text or words out loud, presenting pronunciation rules for the students, and correcting and pointing out how to pronounce. There were also methods that were not used to the same extent: phonetic training, ear training, using rhymes, and tactile reinforcement (reinforcement using the sense of touch). Furthermore, rhymes were used only with younger learners. Teachers are very focused on correcting the pronunciation of the

pupils', so pronunciation teaching is very teacher-led even though modern language teaching is focusing on communicative language teaching (Tergujeff 2012: 603).

Pronunciation is also taught at university level. For example, teaching and learning pronunciation are mentioned in the curriculum of the university of Jyväskylä. In the course "Pronunciation and Oral Skills", students will learn to identify the main pronunciation issues of English for Finnish speakers, to apply the appropriate mechanical articulation, and to pronounce most target sounds correctly (EKIP1001 Pronunciation and Oral Skills). In addition, transcription, which is closely tied to learning pronunciation, is practiced in the course "Introduction to language study" (EKIP2001 Introduction to Language Study). Still, these two courses are only a small part of the degree. Pronunciation may be also mentioned implicitly in other descriptions in the curriculum. On one of the goals of basic studies of English, it is mentioned that students are able to communicate fluently orally and in writing (Kielten opettajan kandidaattiohjelma, englannin kielen opintosuunta). Furthermore, it is mentioned in the goals of master studies that students should appreciate their expertise and knowledge in addition to maintaining and improving their language skills (Kielten aineenopettajan maisteriohjelma, englannin kielen opintosuunta). Pronunciation is a part of these elements.

Especially consonants can cause problems for Finnish learners. In order to understand better Finnish learners of English pronunciation, it is necessary to understand what possible challenges they might face. Because the correspondence between the orthography and pronunciation is lacking (Derwing and Munro (2015:14-15), Finns, who are used to closer phoneme-grapheme relationship in the Finnish language (Lintunen, 2005), might struggle with English pronunciation. Lintunen (2013: 57) found out that consonants were the biggest challenge to Finnish university students. Moreover, sibilants, affricates, and dental fricatives were among the challenging sounds. The most difficult feature was the phonemic opposition /v/ - /w/. Another problematic feature was the consonant cluster /ŋg/. In all, voiced consonants were more difficult than voiceless ones. Furthermore, the participants wrote down problematic words in the pronunciation test. After analysing the sources of the problems for the participants, they listed words with many syllables, various consonant clusters, silent letters, and words with less obvious spelling and pronunciation. In addition, words which share a similar orthography but different pronunciation between English and Finnish were listed by the participant (Lintunen (2013: 57).

According to previous research, teacher trainees view pronunciation important and necessary for their future (Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's 2017: 173). Still, younger teachers in Tergujeff's (2012: 33) research described their training more negatively than the more experienced teachers. Moreover,

Tergujeff (2012b: 33) argues that teacher training may have gone for worse. Yet, there is no systematic research, especially in the Finnish context, how teacher trainees view EFL pronunciation teaching and learning as future teachers and how they think of their own personal experiences.

## 3 PRESENT STUDY

### 3.1 Aim and research questions

The main objective of the present study is to shed light on the perceptions of Finnish teacher trainees on English as a foreign language pronunciation teaching and learning. I am interested in their personal experiences and their views of pronunciation in general. This is done by interviewing teacher trainees studying English as a major at university and comparing the perceptions of third-year students and fifth-year students. These two groups were chosen since during their third year at the University of Jyväskylä teacher trainees have the first wave of practical training, and fifth-year students have usually finished their education studies. Comparing these two groups provides an idea of how the pedagogical studies including practical training might affect their views. For example, Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017:175) found out that freshmen view their pronunciation more positively than seniors. The research questions are:

1. What are teacher trainees' perceptions on teaching and learning pronunciation as future teachers?
2. Do these perceptions differ between third-year students and fifth-year students?

### 3.2 Data and participants

The data was collected by interviewing Finnish university students from Jyväskylä university majoring in English. A structured interview was chosen as a method because it is a great way to collect qualitative data and, especially, information on the perceptions of the participants.

The participants consist of three third-year students and three fifth-year students. The interviewed students are teacher trainees. In more detail, they study to become English subject teachers. While majoring in English, they minor in education and teacher training is part of the educational studies. Five of the six interviewees were female. While the sample is limited, and thus the results are not generalizable, this research may provide further base for future research. The participants were asked to sign a consent and an information privacy forms. Thus, they were provided with the necessary information of the research and how the data will be handled.

The data was analyzed with qualitative content analysis because the main interest in this research is the perceptions and thoughts of the participants and not how they formulate their answers. The

recorded interviews were transcribed into a written format to facilitate easy access to data and having it in a form that is easily managed.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results are presented and discussed. I will begin with the participants' views on pronunciation, continue to segmental and suprasegmental features, and end with teaching and learning EFL pronunciation.

### 4.1 Views on pronunciation

All participants considered pronunciation to be somewhat important. Similarly to the findings of Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017: 173), none of the participants mentioned a clear dislike for pronunciation as a topic personally or professionally. On the contrary, the majority of the participants in both third- and fifth-year groups mentioned that pronunciation is their favorite topic or at least important to them. In addition, when the participants were asked how they view their pronunciation skill, the third-year students viewed their pronunciation more positively than the fifth-year students. This also shows support to Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017: 175) findings. Still, participants having mostly positive attitudes towards pronunciation might provide us a glimpse of how important pronunciation truly is to teacher trainees.

- (1) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija Sarah: Mulle tärkeä ja positiivinen juttu.

Third-year student Sarah: For me, it is an important and positive thing.

- (2) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Olivia: Pidän siitä itse aiheena tosi paljon. Ääntäminen oli mulle tosi vaikeaa. Lukiossa varmaan vaikein osa-alue. Olet itse tehnyt sen eteen paljon töitä. Tykkään paljon fonetiikasta jne aiheena.

Fifth-year student Olivia: As a topic, I really like it. Pronunciation was very difficult for me. The most difficult topic. I have worked really hard for it. I really like phonetics etc. as a topic.

### 4.2 Segmental and suprasegmental features

Majority of participants considered suprasegmental features to be more important than segmentals. Students from both groups argued that singular mistakes in segmentals, such as mispronouncing one phoneme incorrectly, would not hinder intelligibility. On the contrary, mistakes in suprasegmentals would more likely create misunderstandings. The participants connected suprasegmental features with controlling the bigger picture of the language and, thus, being more

necessary for communication and intelligibility. This would support Pennington and Richard's (1986:211) argument that for intelligibility, suprasegmentals are more important. The participants highlighting the importance of suprasegmentals because of intelligibility would also coincide with their primary goal of pronunciation teaching being intelligibility. On the other hand, none of the participants mentioned this connection explicitly, and this would require further research.

Although, one fifth-year participant speculated that mistakes with phonemes would be more important especially with minimal pairs like "tree" and "three". A third-year participant thought that age of the learner could also be a factor whether learners should focus on segmental or suprasegmental features. For example, she argues that learning "the rhythm" of the language would be more beneficial for younger learners. Afterwards, learning specific phonemes would then benefit the learners more.

- (1) "Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija Lisa: Sanosin ton perusteella prosodia: sulla voi olla vaikka minkälainen lause, mut jos se kokonaisuutena käy jotenkin järkeen, niin viesti menee perille. Vaikka yksittäinen äänne menee vaikka aina päin honkia, niin siitä lauseesta saa selvää.

Third-year student Lisa: According to that (the description for suprasegmentals and segmentals), I would say prosody. You can have any type of sentence but if it makes sense as a whole, the message gets through. Even if singular sounds would always be incorrect the complete sentence would be intelligible.

- (2) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Eva: Ehkä prosodia tärkeämpää viestin välittämiseksi. Kuulee et onko joku epäileväinen tai kysyvä.

Fifth-year student Eva: Maybe prosody is more important for relaying the message. You can hear if someone is doubtful or asking a question.

#### 4.3 The goals of pronunciation teaching

Professionally, the participants in both groups recognized intelligibility as an important goal for their learners. Most of them also mentioned this to be the goal in the national core curriculum as well. Sounding native-like is not necessary if their learners are able to communicate efficiently. More particularly, all of the fifth-year participants mentioned placing emphasis on pronunciation in teaching while none of the third-year participants mentioned it. This includes highlighting intelligibility and avoiding mistakes that would hinder that intelligibility. Also, one participant mentioned that learning pronunciation gives self-confidence to learners which is very important.

- (3) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Olivia: Me suomalaiset ymmärretään rallienglantia niin moni muu ei varmaan ymmärrä et se ymmärrettävyys on tärkeää. Et opettajana pyrin painottamaan niitä kohtia, joissa saattaa tulla väärinymmärryksiä.

Fifth-year student Olivia: We Finns understand “rally English” while so many others might not so the intelligibility is important. As a teacher I try to focus on the parts that might cause misunderstandings.

On the other hand, one of the third-year participants reported uncertainty considering how a teacher should approach pronunciation. Moreover, they wondered how to approach the act of pronunciation teaching as a professional educator. Another third-year student expressed how all topics should be viewed equally as a teacher.

- (4) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija John: Opettajan näkökulmasta ääntäminen ei ole yhtään sen tärkeämpi kuin muut osa-alueet englannin opettamisessa mun mielestä.

Third-year student John: From a teacher’s point of view, pronunciation is no more important than other areas in teaching English in my opinion.

It is not entirely clear why only fifth-year students place emphasis in pronunciation. This would require further research. Perhaps the fifth-year students have more teaching experience, and this experience has showed a need to focus on pronunciation. On the contrary, the third-year students have less teaching experience and have been in teacher training less time. This could lead to the feelings of uncertainty.

#### 4.4 How to improve learning English as a foreign language pronunciation

Having motivation and models are the most important aspects for learners in learning pronunciation according to the participants. First, five out of six of the participants mentioned motivation when asked what the most important factors in learning pronunciation are when considering the learners. One participant mentioned that motivation helps especially if the students are struggling, being motivated helps. Tominaga’s (2009:135) research also found motivation to be important for successful pronunciation learners.

- (5) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Eva: Motivaatio! Joillekin ääntäminen tulee luonnostaan. Jos on vaikeeta, niin motivaatio on tärkeää

Fifth-year student Eva: Motivation! For some pronunciation comes naturally. If you are struggling, then motivation is important.

Second, having models is also important for learning pronunciation according to the participants. Four participants, two from third-year and two from fifth-year participants, considered having models to be one of the most important things for learners. These models could come from media like music and series, having people speaking the language at home, or from a teacher according to the participants. Tominaga (2009: 135) also found that role models could have a positive effect on pronunciation learning.

- (6) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Olivia: Motivaatio tottakai, mut musta kaikkein tärkein et... ei kyl oo tieteellistä lähdettä, mut koen et ne joilla on kotona joku malli. joku, joka puhuu kotona tai kuuntelee musiikkia tai katsoo sarjoja.

Fifth-year student Olivia: Motivation of course, but the most important thing is that... I don't have a scientific source though, but I feel that those with a model at home. Someone who speaks at home or listens to music or watches series.

Last, a participant from both groups highlighted the importance of a teacher. Both groups mentioned that teacher provides models for pronunciation, and this is important for the learners. A third-year student highlighted the importance of a teacher as an educator and a pedagogue. Teachers can provide clear instruction for learning pronunciation. A fifth-year student, on the other hand, mentioned that teachers affect the atmosphere in the classroom. Having an open atmosphere where learners can make mistakes without feeling afraid is important.

- (7) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija John: Opettaja on tärkeässä asemassa motivaation kohdalla. Opettaja on roolimalli

Third-year student John: A teacher is in an important position for motivation. A teacher is a role model.

The participants' answers were very uniform when asked about important factors for learning pronunciation. On the other hand, they could also consider these aspects, like motivation and the importance of a teacher, to be the most important enablers for learning other topics as well. Perhaps these answers could reflect their thoughts about learning in general. On the other hand, perhaps there might be benefits for teacher trainees considering pronunciation as topic to teach as any other. For example, it might help teachers to apply new methods or teach as a topic anyone can learn.

#### 4.5 Pronunciation teaching skills

The participants felt unsure of their skills in teaching pronunciation. While all participants mentioned some level of uncertainty with their skills, this was especially present with the third-year participants. The lack of teaching experience and education of how to teach pronunciation were mentioned for the reason why they felt unsure. On the contrary, the fifth-year participants reported some level of confidence with their pronunciation teaching skills although there is still room for improvement. One participant mentioned this to be due to the practical part of the teacher training. On the other hand, another fifth-year participant mentioned that there was little chance to practice during the teacher training, but they are able to look for knowledge and then to apply it in practice when they enter work life.

- (8) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija Sarah: Tosi pienet. Mulla ei ole muuta kokemusta kuin omasta matkasta ääntäjänä

Third-year student Sarah: Very little (skills to teach pronunciation). I don't have other experience than my own journey of pronunciation.

- (9) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Olivia: Koen et on kehitettävää mut oon saanu siitä hyvää palautetta...

Fifth-year student Olivia: I feel that there is room for improvement, but I have received positive feedback...

Five of the six participants also reported that pronunciation teaching was barely mentioned in pedagogic studies in university. Only one participant mentioned that their supervising instructor explained to them with what type of pronunciation teaching methods would work with their practice group.

(10) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Eva: Ei ihan hirveesti. Luin jotain kirjoja, mutta opeopinnoissa ei ihan hirveesti keskitytty.

Fifth-year student Eva: Not that much. I read some books, but it was not a focus in pedagogical studies.

It would seem that the practical part of teacher training and experience would provide some practice and confidence for the fifth-year participants. Furthermore, the participants expressed a lack of theoretical education for teaching pronunciation. This raises a need for further research if teaching theoretical aspects of pronunciation teaching would prove to be beneficial for teacher trainees. Perhaps it would help the trainees to feel more certain with their skills. Furthermore, participants in Tergujeff's research (2012: 33) mentioned not receiving any teaching on how to teach pronunciation. Receiving some type of education on how to teach pronunciation could provide further confidence for teacher trainees.

On the other hand, one participant mentioned that they can search for the necessary information themselves when entering work life and then be able to use it. Perhaps this could be universities' goal instead of trying to include everything in the curriculum. Understanding what the necessary information is and be able to find it would be very beneficial to teacher trainees entering work life.

#### 4.6 Ideal pronunciation teaching

Having individualized and versatile teaching is how teacher trainees would like to teach pronunciation in the future. Five of the six participants from both groups mentioned the importance of individualizing their pronunciation teaching to meet the needs of the learners. One third-year student raised an example of encouraging students who might feel that others are judging them on their pronunciation. A fifth-year participant also raised a point of having a relaxed atmosphere. Even if they made mistakes, it is fine, and pronunciation can be fun. Another point the participants raised was versatility.

(11) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija John: Yksilöidä opetusta, kuunnella ja vastata opiskelijan tarpeeseen kielen opiskelussa.

Third-year student John: Individualize teaching, listen to, and meet the student's need in studying a language.

Student participation came up explicitly or implicitly in five of the six interviews. The participants felt that in order to learn pronunciation one must actually try to pronounce the target language. In addition, providing students with diverse teaching methods and samples of pronunciation was mentioned by multiple participants from both groups. For example, a fifth-year participant mentioned that different methods supplement each other. Furthermore, some methods benefit some students more than others and having diverse methods would benefit most students. A fifth-year participant thought that the best method to learn pronunciation would be immersing oneself with the target language outside of school: travelling and listening to people around you.

(12) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Olivia: Oppilas pääsee mukaan, saa kokeilla juttuja. Ideaali olis et kuuluu paljon ääntämistä ja kaikki pääsee kokeilemaan.

Fifth-year student Olivia: Student gets to participate, to try things. The ideal would be that it includes a lot of pronunciation, and everybody gets to participate.

Participants did not mention where these ideas originated from. Furthermore, they did not mention if the ideas have theoretical background. Current teaching trends highlight the importance of student participation and, thus, connect these ideas to teaching English as foreign language pronunciation.

#### 4.7 Current pronunciation teaching methods

Drilling was the most mentioned method of teaching pronunciation in the modern day according to participants. Even though the participants reported a variety of methods that are or may be used in contemporary teaching, but drilling was mentioned by all participants. While both third- and fifth-year students mentioned listening to model pronunciation, from teacher or from a recording, one third-year student mentioned that the recordings should be from all over the world to provide versatile models for the learners.

(13) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija Sarah: Varmaan edelleen käytetään tota drillaamista jonkun verran uskoisin.

Third-year student Sarah: I am pretty sure that drilling is still used to some degree.

In addition, other methods that were mentioned by participants from third- and fifth-year students also mentioned utilizing minimal pairs and tongue twisters for practicing sounds and Kazoos for

practicing suprasegmental features. One fifth-year student mentioned teaching the phonetic alphabet for teaching pronunciation. Another fifth-year student talked about using stomping to teaching word stress. Participants from both groups also wondered the pedagogical aspects like encouragement and the importance of not discouraging.

(14) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Emma: Mitä oon observoinu, onhan se aika ”toista open perässä”, tongue twistereitä

Fifth-year student Emma: What I have observed, it is pretty much repeat after the teacher and tongue twisters.

There were little differences between the third- and fifth-year participants' answers as groups. Moreover, they had more individual ideas of modern pronunciation teaching methods. The participants referred to their own experiences in teacher training, observing other teachers' lessons, and the core curriculum for the source of their knowledge although the core curriculum did not provide them with any knowledge. This could suggest that there are no general guidelines provided for teaching pronunciation in teacher training. It would require further research to explore if the teacher trainees would benefit from more explicit guidance regarding pronunciation.

#### 4.8 How participants were taught pronunciation

“Listen and repeat” was the most used method for the participants themselves when asked how pronunciation was taught to the participants. This was especially present among the third-year students' answers. One third-year student mentioned that they were also taught pronunciation by using media and songs. On the other hand, two fifth-year participants reported not remembering pronunciation teaching or how it was very limited when they were in school. The third participant described how they focused on segments and practiced word stress by walking and stomping on the stress. Most participants also mentioned their own interest in pronunciation when they were younger and how they practiced by using media, music and video games for learning and practicing pronunciation. Participants did also mention motivation to be extremely important to facilitate pronunciation learning and most participants mentioning their own interest could support the importance of motivation. In addition, university was mentioned by multiple participants in both groups as important in learning pronunciation.

How the participants were taught pronunciation shares many similarities with their thoughts on contemporary teaching methods. Even though they mentioned that their answers were linked heavily to their teacher training, how the participants were taught pronunciation could also affect their answers. On the other hand, this could also suggest that drilling has been extremely used from the participants' youth to the moment they were doing their teaching training. This would also support Tergujeff's (2012b) research on how traditional teaching methods like drilling are used in pronunciation teaching in Finland.

Two fifth-year participants mentioned remembering limited or no EFL pronunciation teaching at all. Perhaps pronunciation teaching does not stand out as well as vocabulary tests or grammar teaching. Pronunciation teaching might happen along other teaching like teaching how to pronounce words during vocabulary training for example. Thus, it is not as distinguishable. Furthermore, none of the participants mentioned explicitly learning pronunciation receptively besides music and media. Pronunciation is also learned by listening as well. So, especially some aspects of pronunciation teaching and learning might be easily forgotten.

(15) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija Lisa: Esimerkkien kautta. Kuunneltu nauhalta, toista perässä. Opetettu myös biisien kautta ja mediasta.

Third-year student Lisa: By examples. Listen to the tape and repeat. Also was taught from songs and media.

(16) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Emma: Minulle ei ole opetettu ääntämistä. Ei paljon mitenkään. Lukekaa teksti pareittain ääneen, en muista yhtään et olisin kuullut aspiraatiosta, mitä esim. itse olen opettanut.

Fifth-year student Emma: I was not taught pronunciation. Not much at all. Read the text out loud with your pair. I do not remember that I would have heard about aspiration what I have taught myself for example.

#### 4.9 Amount of pronunciation teaching

The participants thought that there is not enough pronunciation teaching. Majority of participants from both groups reported that they received insufficient amount of pronunciation teaching in their opinion. A third-year student thought that a great amount of time was spent on mechanical writing tasks and some of that time would have been well used for practicing pronunciation. The lack of individualization was another problem she mentioned. She felt that the teaching did not offer her enough to learn and this was due to the lack of individualization by the teacher.

(17) Kolmannen vuoden opiskelija Sarah: Tuntu et siitä opetuksesta ei saanu mitään irti, koska sitä ei osattu eriyttää yhtään.

(18) Third-year student Sara: It felt like you could not get anything out of the teaching because they did not know how to individualize it at all.

Furthermore, a fifth-year student mentioned that for many learners, even the talented ones, pronunciation might be the most difficult topic. Pronunciation and speaking English also causes a lot of stress and she speculates that this is due to lack of practice. On the contrary, one third-year participants mentioned that they did receive enough pronunciation teaching. She was not sure if the amount was enough for everyone, but for her it was. The fifth-year student mentioned that there could have been more pronunciation teaching in basic education, but she was satisfied with the amount in upper secondary school.

(19) Viidennen vuoden opiskelija Emma: En todellakaan. Mun ikäluokka jotka tuli yliopistoon ja kans ysärillä syntyneitä niin tota musta tuntu et on jossakin vaiheessa jopa vaikeuksia ääntämisen kanssa kun sitä ei oo käyty ikinä tai korostettu ikinä.

Fifth-year student Emma: I absolutely did not (receive enough teaching). My age group that came to university and also born in the nineties... so... I feel that at some point there have been even difficulties with pronunciation because it was never explored or emphasized.

There was no clear difference between the answers of the third-year and fifth-year participants. The answers could suggest that the amount of pronunciation teaching varies greatly from teacher to teacher. Furthermore, the amount of teaching required to satisfy the needs of participants seem to vary. Still, the majority felt that they had not received enough pronunciation teaching. Perhaps the participants have forgotten some of the education they have received during their childhood and youth. This, in turn, could have affected how the participants felt.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to discover teacher trainees' thoughts considering pronunciation teaching and their ability to teach pronunciation. Pronunciation was considered to be somewhat important by all participants. Moreover, most of the participants thought that pronunciation was their favorite topic. This supports Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017) research on advanced English learners. This could suggest that teacher trainees consider pronunciation to be an important skill also for their future.

Intelligibility seems to be an important aspect of pronunciation to the participants. All participants considered intelligibility to be one of the most important goals of pronunciation teaching.

Intelligibility was also highlighted when the participants were asked whether suprasegmental or segmental features are more important. Suprasegmentals were chosen due to the participants considering them to be more important especially for intelligibility. While there was no direct link between the participants answers on pronunciation goals and whether suprasegmentals or segmentals are more important, there might be connection between the two. This is due to the importance of intelligibility that was highlighted in all answers.

Drilling was the most mentioned pronunciation teaching methods in the participants answers. They thought that in modern teaching drilling is the most used method. Participants also mentioned other methods like minimal pairs and tongue twisters, but drilling was mentioned by all participants. Drilling was also mentioned as the most common method when the participants were asked how they were taught pronunciation. Tergujeff's (2012) findings also showed how pronunciation is taught with traditional methods, like drilling for example, in Finland. In addition, four out of six participants reported that they were not satisfied with the amount of pronunciation teaching they received. This finding could also support the participants reporting receiving limited or no pronunciation teaching.

The second research question was to find out if there the perceptions of the third-year and fifth-year participants differ. There were little differences between the answers of the two participant groups. First, when the participants were asked about how they view their pronunciation skills, the third-year participants viewed their pronunciation more positively than the fifth-year students. This also reflects Gürsoy and Hüseyinoğlu's (2017:175) finding that freshmen consider their pronunciation in a more positive light than seniors. Second, fifth-year students mentioned placing more emphasis on pronunciation teaching in their own teaching while it was not mentioned once by the third-year

participants. Last, while all participants mentioned some level of uncertainty relating to their pronunciation teaching skills, fifth-year participants mentioned having some confidence while they also felt uncertainty.

This study has some limitations when interpreting the results. For example, the sample of participants is not random. Therefore, the results should be approached with some reservation. Furthermore, while many answers by the participants are in line with previous research, the topic of the present study could have lead teacher trainees who are interested in pronunciation and pronunciation teaching to participate. Combining this with the small sample size does not provide generalizable findings. In addition, further research is necessary in order to discover why participants thought a certain way. For example, only fifth-year participants mentioned placing emphasis on pronunciation but there was no clear reason why. Furthermore, that participants expressed a lack of theoretical education for teaching EFL pronunciation, but it would require further research to discover whether having more education would prove beneficial to teacher trainees. Thus, the present study provides new insight for further research.

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