Integrating pronunciation teaching and intercultural communicative competence: Enhancing intelligibility and adaptability in L2 learners

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Abstract

This classroom-based study investigates the integration of pronunciation teaching and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in second language (L2) learning, focusing on the role of suprasegmental phonology in enhancing students' intelligibility and intercultural adaptability. Pronunciation pedagogy has increasingly emphasized the *Intelligibility Principle*, which prioritizes clarity over native-like accuracy. Suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm and intonation) are essential aspects to improving intelligibility, yet integrating ICC into pronunciation instruction is pivotal for preparing students for global communication. This research was conducted in Argentina, and involved 25 university student teachers engaged in a series of pronunciation tasks aimed at improving their awareness of suprasegmental features and adaptability in intercultural contexts. Data were collected through a questionnaire comprising Likert-like items and open-ended questions. After evaluating diverse international accents, students reflected on task effectiveness. Results showed that the tasks set enhanced awareness of intelligibility and comprehensibility, though the link between pronunciation and ICC was weaker. This suggests that more interactive intercultural tasks could be beneficial. The study concluded with some pedagogical recommendations, signaling the need for further research on tasks that simultaneously foster pronunciation skills and intercultural competence in real-world communication settings.

Keywords: pronunciation teaching, intercultural communicative competence, intelligibility, suprasegmental phonology, multilingual communication

1. Introduction

In recent years, the teaching of pronunciation in second language (L2) learning has shifted away from the traditional goal of achieving native-like pronunciation towards a focus on intelligibility (Foote et al., 2011). This shift reflects a broader recognition that successful communication depends more on being understood by listeners than on producing speech that perfectly matches native speaker norms. The *Intelligibility Principle*, as outlined by Levis (2005), emphasizes the importance of being clear and comprehensible in diverse communicative settings. Within this framework, there has been an increased emphasis on suprasegmental features – such as stress, rhythm and intonation- which play a central role in promoting intelligibility. Research shows that suprasegmentals often carry more weight in determining listener comprehension than segmental accuracy (e.g., the correct articulation of individual sound), highlighting their central place in modern pronunciation pedagogy (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Field, 2005; Gilbert, 2008; Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012).

While the focus on intelligibility and suprasegmentals has notably improved the communicative effectiveness of L2 learners, there is a growing recognition of the need to integrate intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Byram, 1997) into L2 pronunciation teaching. In today's interconnected world, students must be able to manage not only linguistic differences but also cultural ones. Effective communication requires the ability to adjust pronunciation features, such as stress and intonation, according to the cultural and linguistic norms of different interlocutors (Byram, 2021). Baker (2015) and Jenkins (2000, 2007) emphasize the importance of teaching L2 learners to adapt their speech to diverse accents and cultural contexts, preparing them to function successfully in multilingual, multicultural environments. Therefore, incorporating ICC into pronunciation teaching becomes necessary for developing students who need to be not only linguistically competent but also intercultural aware, flexible and adaptable.

This article aims to investigate how integrating pronunciation tasks with ICC can enhance L2 learners' perceived intelligibility, comprehensibility, and adaptability in global communication. The study begins with a theoretical background that presents the key concepts in L2 pronunciation teaching and the importance of integrating ICC into language instruction. Following this, the research questions are introduced, guiding the study's investigation into usefulness and impact of pronunciation tasks on students' communicative competence. The methods section includes details of the course context, participants, and the instruments used for data collection, including a questionnaire and open-ended questions. The study then presents the results from both statistical analysis and qualitative feedback, offering a comprehensive look at how students perceive

the effectiveness of pronunciation tasks. The discussion then interprets these findings in light of current research, highlighting the pedagogical implications, and reflecting on the limitations of the study. Finally, potential directions for future research are proposed, along with suggestions on how these insights can inform and shape upcoming studies.

2. Background

The role of L2 pronunciation teaching has evolved notably with a growing emphasis on communicative effectiveness over the traditional goal of achieving native-like pronunciation. This shift is particularly relevant in multilingual contexts where the focus is on intelligibility and ICC. Suprasegmental phonology, comprising features such as stress, rhythm and intonation, has emerged as a decisive factor in facilitating effective communication across cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Sardegna & Dickerson, 2023; Zielinski, 2018).

While segmental accuracy (or the correct production of individual sounds) is important, it is the mastery of suprasegmental features that oftentimes determines how easily a speaker is understood (Trofimovich & Isaac, 2012). Levis (2018) and Derwing and Munro (2015) show that focusing on suprasegmentals enhance learners' ability to communicate effectively, even when segmental inaccuracies exist.

Research on English as Lingua Franca (EFL) has also shifted the focus of L2 pronunciation instruction. In EFL contexts, English is used as a global means of communication between speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, where mutual intelligibility takes precedence over native-like pronunciation (Jenkins, 2000). Jenkin's (2000) work on EFL emphasizes that L2 pronunciation should prioritize suprasegmetnal features that aid in clarity and meaning negotiation, such as (nuclear) stress placement (Luchini & Paz, 2022) and rhythm. This approach aligns with Levis' (2018) argument that suprasegmental features are vital for effective communication in multilingual environments, where speakers are likely to encounter a range of English accents.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has proven to be an effective approach for integrating pronunciation practice with authentic communication tasks (Bygate, 2015; East, 2022). This approach actively engages learners in real-world scenarios, prompting them to apply pronunciation skills in spontaneous speech (Bygate et al., 2015; Ekiert et al., 2022; Qiu & Cheng, 2022). By encouraging reflection on language use, particularly pronunciation, TBLT can be used to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Saito and Plonsky (2019) and Trofimovich and Isaac (2012) show that tasks such as phonological discourse analysis, speech reconstruction, and self-reflection help learners internalize prosodic patterns,

which leads to improved fluency and overall communicative competence (Witherby et al., 2023; Zimmerman, 2000, 2013). Through task-based instruction, learners become more capable of applying phonological rules in authentic communicative contexts, an essential component of pronunciation development (Luchini, 2005).

The constructs of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness are central to L2 pronunciation research (Huensch & Nagle, 2023). Munro and Derwing (1995) define intelligibility as the degree to which a listener can understand a speaker's message, while comprehensibility refers to how difficult the listener perceives the speaker to be. Accentedness, on the other hand, relates to how much a speaker's pronunciation deviates from native norms. While accent has traditionally been viewed negatively, recent research shows that accentedness does not necessarily impede communication if intelligibility and comprehensibility are maintained (Saito, 2021; Thomson & Derwing, 2015). In fact, studies by Kang et al. (2018) and Crowder et al. (2015) show that exposure to different accent can improve L2 learners' listening comprehension and adaptability, suggesting that familiarity with range of speech patterns is essential for communication in global contexts.

A promising research area connecting pronunciation with ICC is the exploration of how different accents may influence intercultural communication. Investigating this relationship could provide valuable insights into how accent variations may affect mutual understanding, adaptability, and the negotiation of meaning across cultural boundaries. However, to date, only a limited number of studies have examined this topic in depth (Gökgöz-Kurt, 2023). Byram (2021) defines ICC as the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. This ability includes not only linguistic proficiency but also the adaptability of one's speech to suit different communicative norms. Pronunciation plays a critical role in this process, as speakers must adjust and accommodate their sound patterns to align with the expectations and cognitive-perceptual demands of interlocutors from various cultural backgrounds, enabling them to decode and understand the message effectively. Jenkins (2007) argues that in intercultural settings, flexibility in pronunciation, especially in terms of suprasegmental features, is more important than adherence to native-like pronunciation models. Speakers who can modify their prosody to suit different contexts are more likely to be understood and to facilitate smooth communication across cultural divides.

Baker (2015) emphasizes the importance of linking pronunciation instruction with global communication, particularly in EFL contexts where speakers from diverse backgrounds must negotiate meaning across linguistic differences. His research shows that learners who are exposed to a variety of accents and who practice adjusting their prosodic features for different communicate situations develop greater intercultural awareness and competence. This nexus between pronunciation and ICC is also supported by Matsuda (2017), who argues that pronunciation teaching should not only focus on linguistic accuracy but also

foster the ability to communicate effectively in diverse cultural settings. Matsuda's work highlights the role of pronunciation in enabling learners to handle intercultural conversations, in which understanding and being understood often depends on flexible use of intonation and stress patterns.

Crowther et al. (2015) and Kang et al. (2018) further explore the connection between accented speech and interculturality. These studies show that leaners who are exposed to a range of accents are better able to adapt to their own speech in intercultural interactions, making them more effective communicators. In particular, Crowther et al., (2015) found that learners who engage with unfamiliar accents become more skilled at adjusting their intonation and rhythm to align with their interlocutors, thus enhancing their ICC. Similarly, Kang et al. (2018) demonstrated that exposure to varied prosodic patterns helps learners develop the ability to anticipate and accommodate different communicative styles, a key component of intercultural competence.

In addition to improving communication skills, the integration of pronunciation and ICC fosters a more holistic approach to language learning, where leaners not only focus on linguistic accuracy but also develop the intercultural sensitivity necessary for effective global communication. In this regard, Byram (1997, 2021) upholds that ICC is essential for success in today's multilingual world, and, as mentioned earlier, pronunciation plays a central role in achieving such competence. By teaching learners to adjust their prosodic features in intercultural interactions, educators can better prepare them for the challenges of communicating across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Overall, the theoretical foundations of modern pronunciation teaching emphasize the pivotal role of suprasegmentals in promoting intelligibility and fostering effective communication, particularly in intercultural contexts (Hodgetts, 2020; Levis & Silpachai, 2022). However, despite this emphasis, theories often fall short in addressing how to approach the intersection between pronunciation and intercultural competence, and how to teach this integration effectively. This gap highlights a challenge in developing learners who are not only pronunciation-accurate but also capable of operating in diverse international settings with intercultural awareness and proficiency.

This study seeks to address such gap by emphasizing the need for instructional methods that integrate both pronunciation and ICC. In today's globalized contexts, learners must be able to tackle diverse accents and communicative norms, making it essential to explore approaches that combine pronunciation training with intercultural communication tasks (Byram, 2021; Levis, 2018; Saito, 2021). By doing so, this research aims to offer new insights into how L2 instruction can equip learners with the linguistic accuracy and intercultural adaptability needed to succeed in real-world, multilingual interactions.

3. Research questions

This classroom-based study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How useful, effective and impactful are pronunciation tasks in raising students' awareness of different pronunciation features and developing their pronunciation skills? In addition, how do these tasks contribute to bridging the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application?
2. What are students' perceptions of intelligibility, comprehensibility and ICC? How do these perceptions reflect the impact of these tasks on their overall communicative competence and their ability to operate effectively in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts?

4. Method

4.1. Context

This classroom-based study was conducted in the context of *Discurso Oral II* (DOII), a one-semester pronunciation course focused on suprasegmetnal phonology. This course is offered in the 2nd year of the English Teaching Education program at a state-owned university in Mar del Plata, Argentina. The course contents emphasize the importance of suprasegmental features of pronunciation, such as stress, rhythm and intonation.

DOII meets for 8 hours a week and is team-taught by 4 instructors, each contributing a specific focus. One instructor is responsible for delivering the theoretical foundation of suprasegmental phonology while integrating theory with practical pronunciation tasks. A second instructor focuses on phonological discourse analysis, helping students analyze speech in natural communicative contexts and understand the phonological structure underlying spoken discourse. A third instructor leads free speech and reflection tasks, which encourage students to engage in spontaneous oral production, followed by self-reflection on their use of suprasegmental features. The fourth instructor facilitates reconstruction tasks, thought which students listen to recorded messages and then reconstruct them using their interlanguage, paying particular attention to appropriate accentuation and intonation patterns covered during the course.

Prior to enrolling in DOII, students are required to have completed *Phonetics and Phonology I & II,* courses taken in the 1st year of the program. These prerequisite courses provide a foundation in the segmental aspects of pronunciation, such as individual sounds and phonemes, ensuring that students are prepared for the more complex suprasegmental focus of DOII.

4.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 25 student teachers, all native speakers of River Plate Spanish variety, enrolled in DOII. The group consisted of 21 females and 4 males, with a mean age of 28. All students had an English language proficiency level of B2+ or C1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), indicating an upper-intermediate to advanced proficiency in English.

4.3. Instruments for data collection

Data were collected using a questionnaire containing nine Likert-scale questions and two open-ended questions[1]. The Likert-scale questions were designed to measure students' perceptions of the usefulness, effectiveness, and impact of the pronunciation tasks, with a scale ranging from 1 (not useful/ineffective) to 5 (extremely useful/effective). The open-ended questions invited students to provide specific examples or suggestions related to their experience with the tasks. The participants completed the questionnaire after having engaged in a battery of pronunciation tasks, which aimed to enhance participants' awareness of suprasegmental features and their ability to adapt to accent varieties, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice in real-world communicative contexts.

These tasks required participants to listen to and assess recorded speech samples produced by international students with a range of accents, including Slovak, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and River Plate Spanish, many of which were unfamiliar to them. The speech samples involved the reading aloud of a scripted text that featured a broad range of phonological challenges, such as statements, questions, tag questions, and emphatic words, among others.

Each international student read the same text, which was about 300 words in length. Before recording, they were given a few moments for preparation to familiarize themselves with the text. The international speakers' English proficiency levels ranged from B1 to B2 (CEFR), according to a placement test administered by the school where they were studying English at the time the speech samples were recorded.

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[1] Before the study began, students signed a voluntary consent form that explained the research's purpose and confirmed that data would be used only for academic purposes. The form ensured confidentiality and highlighted research ethical standards, including anonymity, privacy and the students' right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

4.4. The pronunciation tasks

Table 1 includes both the tasks students completed prior to filling out the questionnaire. This table illustrates how each task was designed to foster the development of intelligibility, compressibility and ICC, aligning with contemporary approaches to L2 pronunciation teaching.

Table 1 Summary of tasks and their pedagogical aims

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	PEDAGOGICAL AIM
ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE	Students completed a questionnaire to explore their attitudes and behaviors toward accented speech and ICC	To encourage students to reflect on their perceptions of accents and cultural differences, fostering awareness of ICC.
SPEECH SAMPLE ASSESSMENT	Students listened to and rated 5 recorded speech samples, each featuring distinct accents, based on intelligibility, comprehensibility, and ICC.	To develop students' ability to assess accented speech and connect their findings to suprasegementals within intelligibility-focused teaching approaches.
VIDEO PRESENTATIONS	Students created a 2-3 minute video presentation analyzing one assigned speech sample, drawing on theoretical frameworks related to intelligibility, comprehensibility and ICC. They reflected on L1 to L2 transfer issues.	To foster deeper understanding of theoretical concepts through hands-on application, enabling students to connect pronunciation theory with real-world communicative situations.

5. Findings: Analysis and interpretations

5.1. Numerical assessment

This section presents the statistical analysis of student feedback from an online attitude questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to assess the usefulness, effectiveness, and impact of various pronunciation-related tasks, as well as their influence on students' awareness of pronunciation features, and their development of ICC. The analysis covers three statistical tests. One-sample t-tests to evaluate whether students' ratings are significantly different from a neutral rating, correlation analysis to explore relationships between intelligibility, comprehensibility and ICC, and reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the attitude questionnaire.

5.1.1. One-sample t-test

This test was conducted to compare the mean rating for each question against a neutral point on the Likert scale (3). This test helps determine if students' ratings

differ significantly from neutrality, indicating whether they found the tasks useful and effective. Figure 1 shows that all p-values were well below 0.05, indicating that the mean ratings for all questions were significantly different from 3 (neutral point). This suggests that students consistently rated the tasks as above the neutral in terms of usefulness and effectiveness. The t-statistics were all positive, showing that the average ratings for all questions were above 3. The question related to intelligibility ("to what extent did assessing the speech samples from international students help deepen your understanding of the concept of intelligibility?" had a t-statistic of 11.44 and a p-value of 9.82, indicating a strong positive perception of the task's usefulness. The smallest t-statistic was 2.82 (still significant) for the question on ICC, which suggests students viewed this aspect positively, but with slightly less consensus. The students rated the tasks as significantly useful and effective across all measured areas. These results strongly support the idea that the pronunciation and ICC tasks had a positive impact on students' awareness and skills, with particularly strong ratings for intelligibility and comprehensibility.
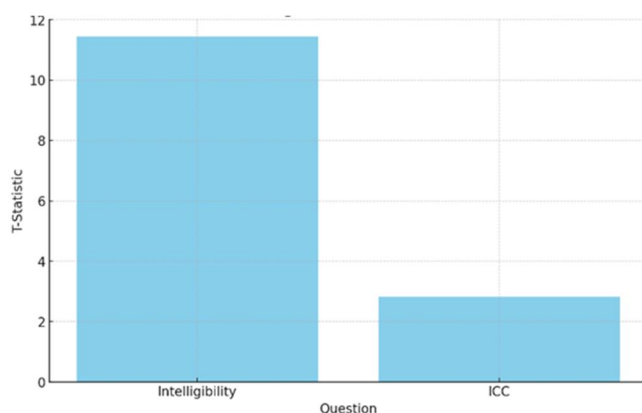

Figure 1 t-statistics for student ratings

5.1.2. Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between three important aspects of the questionnaire: intelligibility, comprehensibility and ICC. Correlation coefficients (r-values) range from -1 to 1, where values closer t 1 indicate a strong positive relationship, values near 0 indicate no relationship, and values closer t -1 indicate a negative relationship. Figure 2 indicates that the correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility was moderate and positive (r=0.58r = 0.58r=0.58), indicating that students who found the tasks useful for improving intelligibility also tended to find them useful for comprehensibility. There was a weak positive correlation (r=0.27r = 0.27r=0.27) between intelligibility

and ICC, suggesting a small but meaningful connection between these two areas. Students who improved their understanding of intelligibility also saw some benefit in their ICC, but the relationship is not strong. The correlation between comprehensibility and ICC was even weaker ($r=0.17r = 0.17r=0.17$), showing that comprehensibility and ICC were largely perceived as separate areas by students. The correlation analysis reveals that intelligibility and comprehensibility are moderately linked, suggesting that improving one's understanding of speech clarity tends to improve the ease of comprehension as well. However, the weaker correlations with ICC suggest that while pronunciation is important for ICC, students may view this aspect as involving broader skills beyond pronunciation, such as cultural awareness and communication strategies.
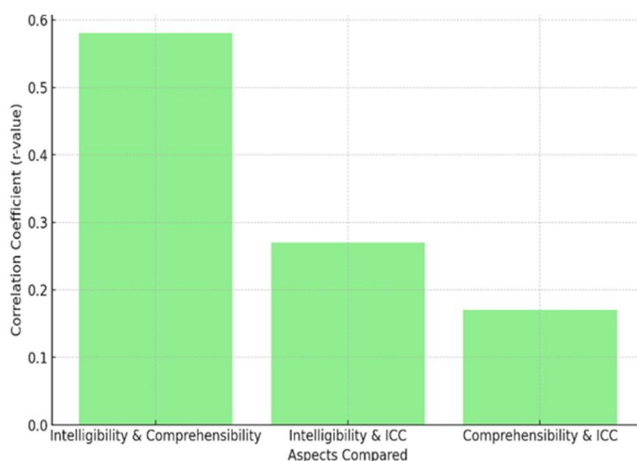

Figure 2 Correlation analysis

5.1.3. Measurement of Consistancy

A Cronbach's Alpha analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability. Figure 3 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value for the questionnaire was 0.81, which indicates good internal consistency. This means that the questions in the survey are reliably measuring the same underlying constructs, and the students' responses are consistent across different aspects of the tasks. The high Cronbach's Alpha value suggest that the questionnaire is reliable and that the feedback provided by students across the 9 questions can be trusted to reflect their true perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of the tasks.
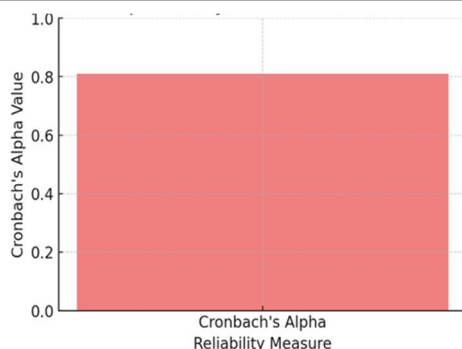
Figure 3 Internal consistency of the questionnaire

Recapitulating, one-sample t-tests confirmed that students rated the tasks as significantly above neutral, particularly in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility, indicating that they found the tasks highly useful and effective. Correlation analysis revealed a moderate relationship between intelligibility and comprehensibility, with weaker connections to ICC, suggesting that students see pronunciation as somewhat separate from broader cultural communication skills. Reliability analysis confirmed that the questionnaire had good internal consistency, meaning that the results are dependable. These findings collectively support the conclusion that the tasks implemented in this study had a positive impact on students' pronunciation skills and awareness, while also contributing to their ICC to a lesser extent.

5.2. Thematic insights cross-checked with statistical findings

In this section, the qualitative insight gained from the open-ended questions will be presented first to provide a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of the pronunciation tasks. These qualitative responses will then be cross-checked with the corresponding statistical findings to critically examine the overall outcomes.

5.2.1. Open-ended responses and One-sample t-test results

Several students provided feedback that helps illustrate their perceptions of the effectiveness of the tasks. For instance, student 2 mentioned, "The term "intercultural speaker" and all the knowledge related to this concept were highly insightful," indicating a focus on ICC. Similarly, student 5 stated, "By analyzing the speech samples, I have come to understand the importance of pronunciation in relation to intelligibility." This testimony highlights the perceived usefulness of

the tasks for developing intelligibility. Additionally, student 7 noted, "I now understand more about the Chinese language and how pronunciation affects communication," which shows an increased awareness of the intercultural and linguistic aspects of the task.

These testimonies suggest that students found the tasks effective, especially in raising awareness about pronunciation and ICC. However, student 2 also expressed, "It would be interesting if we were able to interact with more international students, "pointing to a desire for more practical exposure to further strengthen ICC development.

Cross-checking these qualitative findings with the t-test results, we find alignment: students generally rated the tasks as effective, particularly in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility. The statistical results support the notion that students benefited from the tasks, though the slightly weaker correlation between ICC and pronunciation suggests that while ICC awareness was present, it would be further enhanced with more international interaction, as suggested in the open-ended responses.

5.2.2. Open-ended responses and correlations

The open-ended responses provided additional insights into the practical challenges students faced, which can be related to their perceptions of intelligibility and comprehensibility. Student 19 stated, "The time given to record the video (2-3 minutes) is too short for a detailed explanation, "highlighting the time constraint as a limiting factor for fully demonstrating comprehensibility. Likewise, student 3 emphasized, "The time limit of the video should be extended to allow more thorough explanations." Student 17 also suggested, "The only think I would modify is the time limit for the video presentations."

These testimonies illustrate that several students found the time limits affected their ability to fully convey their ideas, which may influence their perceptions of comprehensibility. This feedback provides a qualitative understanding of the moderate relationship found between comprehensibility and overall task effectiveness in the statistical results.

Cross-checking with the correlation analysis, which showed a moderate relationship between intelligibility and comprehensibility but weaker correlations with ICC, these open-ended responses support the idea that students were focused on the practical constraints (e.g., time limits) that impacted comprehensibility. The qualitative data suggest that extending the time for presentations could improve clarity and communication, thus reinforcing the relationship between comprehensibly and overall task satisfaction.

5.2.3. Open-ended responses and reliability analysis

Students also provided consistent feedback related to areas for improvement, which demonstrates the internal reliability of the questionnaire. For example, student 3 remarked, "The time limit of the video should be extended to allow more thorough explanations." Similarly, student 19 commented, "The time given to record the video (2-3 minutes) is too short for a detailed explanation." These concerns about time constrains were echoed by student 20, who noted, "Time limit is a concern mostly because of what needs to be explained in the presentation."

This consistent focus on time limitations suggests that students were uniformly identifying an area that could be improved across various aspects of the task, reflecting the internal consistency of their responses. The qualitative feedback highlights a common theme of timing as a concern, showing that students' responses were reliable and focused on practical issues affecting task performance.

Cross-checking with the reliability analyses, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.81 indicates high internal consistency, which aligns with the consistent feedback in the open-ended responses. The qualitative data regarding time constrains complemented the statistical findings of reliable and focused feedback across different aspects of the task. This alignment suggests that students' perceptions were not only reliable but also actionable, as addressing these concerns could lead to improved task design in future projects of this kind.

6. Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of pronunciation-focused tasks in raising students' awareness of pronunciation features, improving their pronunciation skills, and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Additionally, the study sought to explore students' perceptions of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and ICC, and how these perceptions reflect the impact of the tasks on their overall communicative competence in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. The findings from both the statistical analysis and open-ended responses provided a comprehensive understanding of these issues.

In response to the first research question, which asked about the usefulness, effectiveness, and impact of pronunciation tasks on raising students' awareness of pronunciation features and developing their pronunciation skills, the results of the one-sample t-tests clearly show that students found the tasks both useful and effective. The ratings for all tasks were significantly above neutral, indicating that students benefited from the structured opportunities for practice and reflection that the tasks offered. This finding aligns with Derwing

and Murno (2015), who emphasize the importance of task-based approaches in enhancing pronunciation awareness. Moreover, open-ended feedback, such as student 2's mention of the term "intercultural speaker," suggests that these tasks successfully bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, a key aim in modern pronunciation teaching (Foote et al., 2011).

Regarding the second part of the first research question, which explored how these tasks contributed to connecting theory and practice, previous research has consistently shown that integrating theory with real-world applications improves learners' pronunciation skills. Levis (2018) argues that tasks linked to authentic communicative contexts (e.g., evaluating speech samples) enhance awareness and retention of pronunciation rules. This connection was reflected in the students' responses, where they not only reported improved awareness of pronunciation but also a deeper understanding of its role within broader communicative competence. Therefore, the tasks were effective in promoting the practical application of theoretical knowledge.

However, some limitations were noted in the open-ended feedback. For instance, many students (3, 17, 19, and 20) suggested adjusting the time limits for video presentations, pointing to potential logistical constraints that may have hindered full engagement with the tasks. This highlights an area for improvement. As Skehan (1998) suggests, extending tasks parameters (including task time constraints) may enhance the effectiveness of language tasks, potentially improving students' pronunciation features and overall task performance.

In response to the second research question, which focused on students' perceptions of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and ICC, as well as how these perceptions reflect the impact of the tasks on their communicative competence, the findings revealed a moderate positive correlation between intelligibility and comprehensibility. This supports the view that these two dimensions of pronunciation are closely related in students' minds. According to Levis and Moyer (2014), intelligibility and comprehensibility are often seen as complementary aspects of pronunciation learning, where improvements in one domain tend to support gains in the other. Students' open-ended responses reinforce this, with many noting how the tasks helped them deepen their understanding of accented speech, consistent with the statistical findings.

However, the weaker correlation between intelligibility, comprehensibility, and ICC suggests an ongoing challenge in linking pronunciation instruction to broader communicative goals. While some students (2, 5, and 7) indicated that the tasks heightened their awareness of intercultural aspects, such insights were not consistent across all the participants. This finding supports our perspective that modern pronunciation teaching, while prioritizing intelligibility as a realistic goal, must also incorporate and integrate intercultural dimensions to develop speakers who are not only linguistically competent, but also interculturally proficient.

Furthermore, the open-ended suggestions from student 2, for instance, to include more opportunities for interactions with international students highlights the need for authentic communicative practice to enhance ICC. Byram's (1997, 2021) model of ICC emphasizes the importance of real intercultural encounters for developing communicative competence across diverse linguistic and cultural environments. While the tasks in this study were effective in contributing to raising students' awareness of pronunciation features, there is still room to further enhance their impact on ICC by incorporating more interactive, cross-cultural exchanges, such as telecollaboration projects.

7. Pedagogical implications

This classroom-based study reveals several key pedagogical implications for teaching L2 pronunciation, rotted in recent research. A major takeaway is the importance of suprasegmental features for the achievement of phonological indelibility. These features are often more crucial for listener comprehension than the precise articulation of individual sounds. Sardegna and Dickerson (2023) emphasize this, noting that focusing on suprasegementals improves pronunciation more effectively than focusing on segmental accuracy. Activities like speech reconstruction and phonological discourse analysis can be valuable tools for internalizing these patterns and boosting communicative competence.

Another important implication is the need to integrate ICC into pronunciation instruction. L2 learners today must adapt their pronunciation to diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. Exposure to various accents, combined with reflection on these differences, may raise students' ICC. Jenkins (2007) and Baker (2015) argue that adaptability to different communicative situations may contribute to enhancing students' abilities to tackle intercultural interactions. Teachers may use recordings of international speakers to facilitate discussions about how pronunciation should adjust based on cultural contexts, as Saito (2021) highlights.

TBLT can also be highly effective for bridging theory and practice. Bygate (2015) and Bygate et al. (2015) show that TBLT offers real-world applications for the development of pronunciation skills, allowing students to practice in authentic communicative situations. Assessing speech from diverse speakers may also help students develop both intelligibility and ICC, making the learning process more practical and contextually relevant. Reflective practice is another important tool. Encouraging students to reflect on their own or others' speech during and after tasks may help deepen their understanding of pronunciation features, as suggested by Zimmerman (2000, 2013). Through self-assessment and self-regulation, students may

more effectively identify and address areas for improvement, ultimately enhancing their communicative competence (Sardegna & McGregor, 2013).

Integrating telecollaboration into language teaching can enhance both pronunciation and ICC. Exposing students to diverse linguistic norms through voice-based exchanges may help them become more flexible and adaptable communicators. Dugartsyrenova and Sardegna (2019) emphasize that voice-based telecollaboration fosters intercultural awareness and pronunciation skills, while Berardo et al. (2023) highlight its success in secondary classrooms for improving both. These exchanges provide valuable platforms for practicing pronunciation and exploring cultural differences, contributing to increased intelligibility and enhanced communication skills.

Finally, the study underlined the need to allow sufficient time for students to engage with pronunciation tasks. Extending the duration of tasks, like video presentations, would offer them more opportunities for practice, reflect, and refine their pronunciation. This additional time would not only allow students to enhance their linguistic abilities but also foster a deeper understanding of intercultural communication.

8. Study limitations

This study has a few limitations that could affect the generalizability of the findings. The small sample size and the lack of longitudinal data limit the robustness and understanding of long-term effects on pronunciation outcomes. Additionally, the absence of interactive elements hindered broader ICC growth, while reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias. Time constraints also restricted students' engagements. To improve future research, larger samples, objective measures, increased interaction, and more flexible task designs are recommended to better assess the impact of pronunciation tasks on both communication and ICC.

9. Conclusion

This classroom-based study has shown how pronunciation tasks can be used to improve students' awareness of intelligibility and comprehensibility, while also revealing a need for stronger integration of ICC. Future research would benefit from incorporating interactive tasks to simulate real-world intercultural exchanges. These tasks would help students adapt their pronunciation to various linguistic contexts, providing insights into the impact of intercultural exposure on intelligibility and ICC.

Incorporating a broader range of accents would foster greater flexibility in students' pronunciation. By comparing how learners respond to different accents, researches could better understand how varied speech patterns affect both pronunciation and ICC. Longitudinal studies would further track the sustained impact of these tasks, revealing whether improvements in intelligibility and ICC endure over time.

For educators and researchers, expanding the varieties of accents, allocating additional time for reflection, and creating assessment tools that measure both linguistic proficiency and intercultural adaptability would strengthen this approach. Adopting these modifications would foster a more holistic learning environment, equipping learners with essential skills for global interactions.

When systematically evaluated, this integrative approach could serve as a model for combing pronunciation and ICC instruction in diverse educational contexts, offering more effective preparation for international communication challenges.

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