

# The Twenty-First Century Pedagogies for ESL Teachers to Teach English Pronunciation at the Tertiary Level: A Survey Study in Coimbatore

K. Nandhakumar

## Abstract

With the rapidly changing digital era trends, teaching-learning has witnessed a sea of changes in terms of its strategy, mode, and methodology. The traditional pedagogies that the ESL teachers have used for about a century have become less effective in the digital age. Hence, the proposed survey-based research is aimed at advocating the twenty-first century pedagogies and digital tools that are viable to impart intelligible English pronunciation. This study deals with the data collected from the ESL teachers who are working in the colleges of arts and science, affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, based on the Simple Random Sampling technique using a structured questionnaire. This study contains quantitative data. Findings of the study can certainly be constructive in reforming the method of teaching English language and pronunciation in the context of English as a second language.

**Key words:** Digital tools; Intelligible pronunciation; Simple random sampling; Twenty-first century pedagogies.

## 1. Introduction

The English language as a lingua franca of the world, mandates the teachers of English in the English as Second Language (ESL) contexts to acquire desirable fluency and intelligible pronunciation in English. Martin Hewings observes in Pronunciation Practice Activities, "The aim of most is to achieve an easily understandable pronunciation in most situations with most people, with both native and non-native English speakers." It is necessary for ESL teachers to acquire and impart intelligible pronunciation in English using modern pedagogies and digital tools.

The twenty-first century is known for its technological boom which has digitalised traditional form of all phenomena in general, teaching in particular. Hence, it is imperative for ESL teachers to adopt various emerging pedagogies and digital tools so as to meet the needs of the ESL students in the digital era. Moreover, ESL teachers might deem it hardly possible to impart the suprasegmental features namely, accent, rhythm, and intonation in English with great accuracy. At this juncture, the need of online resources is imperative to impart accurate pronunciation with varieties of native-speaking models in English.

## **1.2 Twenty-First Century Pedagogies for Pronunciation Teaching**

Twenty-first century pedagogies for pronunciation teaching incorporates the following:

- i. Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Teaching
- ii. Task-Based Approach
- iii. Project-Based Approach
- iv. Blended Learning
- v. Flipped Teaching and Learning

## **1.3 Digital Tools to Teach Better English Pronunciation**

Digital tools which are viable to impart better English pronunciation are as follows:

- i. British Council
- ii. PRAAT
- iii. VoiceTube
- iv. EnglishCentral
- v. VoiceThread
- vi. Automatic Speech Recognition
- vii. Better Accent Tutor 2.0
- viii. WebGraderTM
- ix. Ordinate's Phonepass
- x. Sri's EduSpeak
- xi. ELSA Speak

## **2. Objectives**

1. To understand ESL teachers' perspectives about administering digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.
2. To advocate the need to administer modern pedagogies to impart English pronunciation to the ESL tertiary level students.
3. To promote digital tools among ESL teachers to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

## **3. Hypotheses**

- i. There is a significant relationship between modern pedagogies and ESL teachers' perspectives on using of digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.
- ii. Adopting modern pedagogies and need for modern teaching are innovative steps towards teaching English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.
- iii. The teachers who are aware of innovative teaching prefer the use of digital tools in teaching English Pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

## **4. Review of Literature**

G. Prashanti (2015) carried out doctoral research entitled "An Investigation into the Theory and Practice of Developing Pronunciation Skills in Teacher Training Programmes in Telangana" which aimed to understand in-service secondary school teachers' perception on pronunciation pedagogy and to test their competence in pronunciation. Based on the objective, the researcher selected 160 in-service teachers of English working at 80 government schools in Telangana. The data for the research were collected from the subjects through questionnaire, informal interviews, and oral diagnostic test. The oral diagnostic test was carried out through Praat software. It was concluded as "The major challenge to the teachers is to develop an informed expertise directed toward facilitating learners' development of functional communicative speech/pronunciation patterns". The subjects of this study solely relied on textbooks, but unfortunately it was found to contain inadequate resources to enrich pronunciation. Grant

states "It is possible that some of the lack of progress in pronunciation to date lies not in the limitation within the learners, but in problems with the materials, conditions, and contexts of learning" (121).

Maram Alsofyani and Ghazi Algethami (2017) conducted a study on "Exploring EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding Pronunciation Teaching in a Saudi Setting". This study aimed at assessing EFL teachers' beliefs about pronunciation teaching, their methods of teaching pronunciation, and to identify whether they underwent any special training on pronunciation in Saudi EFL context. Fifty-five teachers of English at the English Language Centre at Taif University in Saudi Arabia were requested to complete online questionnaire survey in terms of pronunciation teaching. The collected data were assessed through quantitative analysis. The results of the study declared that teachers valued pronunciation to a great extent, unfortunately they lacked specific materials and technical tools to teach pronunciation efficiently. Above all, it was learnt that the teachers were not given any special training on pronunciation which restricted them from mastering and teaching intelligible English pronunciation.

Nadia Ghounane (2018) conducted research to identify the difficulties encountered by the English as foreign language students in learning English pronunciation. The subjects of the research were the first-year English literature students in Dr. Moulay Tahar University, Saida, Algeria. The data for the research were collected both qualitatively and quantitatively from 150 students of the said university through questionnaire. The findings of the research revealed that the students were not given proper motivation by the English language teachers to learn and practise pronunciation seriously. On the other hand, the teachers appeared for an interview conducted by the researcher in terms of teaching phonetics. They expressed that there were no language laboratories and teaching strategies to train and practise good pronunciation.

In a survey conducted by Breitzkreutz, Derwing, and Rossiter (2001) sixty-seven Canadian ESL programmes were analysed and identified that only 30 per cent of the teachers had undergone pedagogical training in pronunciation. It was understood from the study that there was no training given to the teachers in their professional programmes like B.Ed./M. Phil./Ph.D. As a result, teachers found it hard to teach pronunciation as a part of communicative process.

Mompean, A. Jose et al. (2011) in their article titled "Phonetics teaching and learning: An overview of recent trends and directions", they disseminated the recent trends which made influential impact on pronunciation teaching and learning. On par with the evolving technology, it is advisable to switch over to emerging trends in teaching-learning process. The researchers recommended to incorporate the following online tools for effective teaching-learning in terms of pronunciation: social media namely, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube; SlideShare, Moodle, creating blogs, corpora in phonetic teaching i.e., PhonoBank, UCLA Phonetics Lab Archive for child language analysis, Web 2.0 tools.

Hardison (2004) in "Generalization of Computer-Assisted Prosody Training: Quantitative and Qualitative Findings" recorded that CAPT (Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Teaching) is more effective than traditional classroom instruction in terms of teaching English pronunciation in the ESL contexts because of the following advantages: Firstly, unlike teachers CAPT is tireless at the level of training and giving feedback. Secondly, CAPT is consistent at training, but teachers cannot be so. Thirdly, CAPT can give variety of training in terms of voices, models, feedbacks, and opportunities. Moreover, CAPT assures learners' autonomy, however, teacher's presence and motivation are required to make learning productive.

Navaneethari A (2022) researched on "Effectiveness of the Flipped Classroom Approach to Enhance Students' Intelligible Pronunciation in English: An Experimental Study". The researcher selected B.A. English Literature students as her subjects from Providence College for Women, in The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India. Through quantitative experimental method the researcher chose her subjects. The researcher adopted the Purposive Sampling technique to conduct the experiment. The experimental group underwent twenty hours of training through flipped classroom approach, whereas the control group received only regular training on pronunciation in English. The pronunciation of the subjects was recorded and assessed through the Praat software. The data analysis part was done based on the standard statistical assessments, namely, ANOVA, Chi-square test, and paired t-test. At the end of the research, the investigator found a notable progress in the pronunciation of the subjects who underwent training through flipped classroom approach. It was recorded that there was a significant difference between experimental and control group in their achievement scores in learning prosodic features of pronunciation.

## 5. Research Methodology

A sample of 300 English as Second Language teachers working in the colleges of arts and science under the affiliation of Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, India, were selected as the respondents of the structured research questionnaire administered for this research. A Simple Random Sampling technique was adopted to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured based on the five-point Likert scale, i.e., Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. The data collected through the survey were quantitative in nature. The statistical tools used for data analysis are: Z-Test and MS Excel. The period of the research was from 2020 to 2023.

## 6. Results and Analysis

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between modern pedagogies and ESL teachers' perspectives on using digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between modern pedagogies and ESL teachers' perspectives on using digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

### Modern Pedagogies and ESL Teachers' Perspectives

#### on Using Digital Tools to Teach English Pronunciation to the Tertiary Level Students

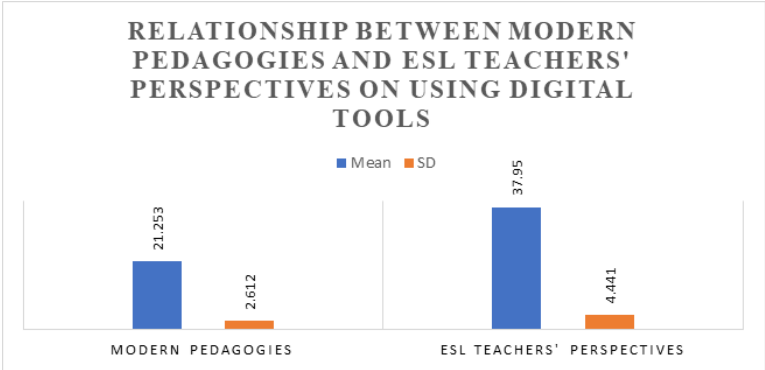
Table 1

				Coefficient	T	
	N	Mean	SD	®	statistic	p value
Modern Pedagogies	300	21.253	2.612	0.401739	7.573098	0.00228
ESL Teachers'						
Perspectives	300	37.95	4.441			

Table 1 deals with the Pearson correlation coefficient which is known as r. This correlation test aims to identify if there is any relationship between two variables. If there is a positive correlation the line would be drawn

upwards with slanting style from left bottom to top towards right. In case of negative correlation, the line would fall down from the top. This correlation is conducted to find out if there is relationship between infrastructural facilities and administration of digital tools to teach English pronunciation to ESL learners at tertiary level. It is inferred from the Table that the correlation coefficient  $r$  is 0.40 which is learnt to be a great positive correlation between the aforementioned variables.

The number of respondents involved in the survey is 300. The t-statistic level is seen as 7.57. The p-value is recorded as 0.00 from the Table. The total mean of Modern Pedagogies is recorded as 21.25, and ESL Teachers' Perspectives is 37.95. The standard deviation in the Modern Pedagogies is recorded as 2.61, and in ESL Teachers' Perspectives with 4.44. Ultimately, the Pearson correlation coefficient is determined by the  $r$  value if it is greater than 0. Therefore, the  $r$  value with 0.40 is deemed to imply greater association between the Modern Pedagogies and ESL Teachers' Perspectives on using digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students. Thus, relationship between the said variables is validated with the statistically significant  $r$  value, which is greater than alpha value 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis, "There is no significant relationship between modern pedagogies and ESL teachers' perspectives on using digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students" is rejected. Consequently, the Alternative Hypothesis "There is a significant relationship between modern pedagogies and ESL teachers' perspectives on using digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the tertiary level students" is accepted.



**Figure 2:** Relationship between Modern Pedagogies and ESL Teachers' Perspectives on Using Digital Tools

**Hypothesis 2:** Adopting modern pedagogies and need for modern teaching are innovative steps towards teaching English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

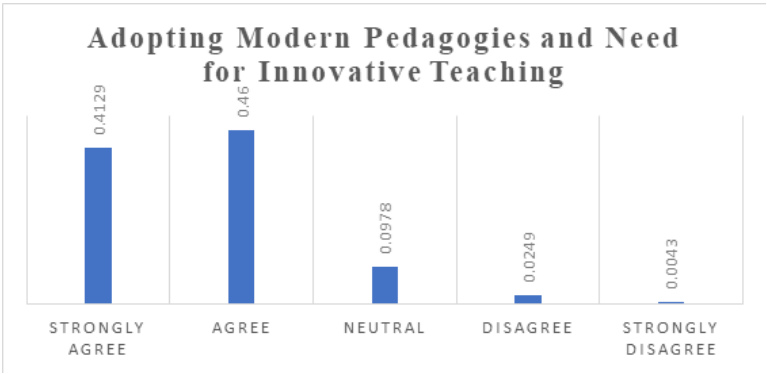
**Table 2: Adopting Modern Pedagogies and Need for Innovative Teaching to Teach English Pronunciation**

Adopting modern pedagogies and need for modern teaching are innovative steps towards teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level students		
z-Test: Two Sample for Means		
	Adopting Modern Pedagogies	Innovative Teaching
Known Variance	23.89605	10.92686
Observations	299	299
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Z	34.63366252	
P(Z<=z) one-tail	0	
z Critical one-tail	1.644853627	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0	
z Critical two-tail	1.959963985	

Table 2 portrays the results of the z-test meant for two sample means. The purpose of this z-test is to check whether there is any difference between the means of two large samples when the variance of the population is made known. This test aims to explore the difference between the means of the following samples namely, 'Adopting Modern Pedagogies' and 'Innovative Teaching'. It is identified that the variance of the population is statistically significant with 23.89 and 10.92 points out of the total observations, 299. Moreover, the hypothesised mean difference with 0 implies that the means are equal. Z value is 34.63, whereas the one tailed p-value is 0. On the other hand, the z critical one-tail value is recorded as 1.64 which is greater than one-tailed p-value. The two-tailed p-value is 0 like invariably similar to the one-tail score. Ultimately, the z critical value two-tail score is statistically significant with 1.95 which is greater than z critical



one-tail value. Thus, it is understood that there is statistically significant difference is found between the means of the two selected samples.



**Figure 2: Adopting Modern Pedagogies and Need for Innovative Teaching**

As it is highlighted above in figure 8, the population of this present research implies positively in terms of adopting modern pedagogies and need for innovative teaching in this digital age. Figure 2 clearly states the percentage of the responses given by the respondents during the survey. It is inferred that 0.41 percent of the respondents opted for the above-mentioned cause. The highest score was recorded for “agree” with 0.46 percent. Then, 0.09 percent of the population takes neutral stand. Positively, only 0.02 percent of population disagrees with the proposal mentioned above. Most interestingly, only 0.00 percent of the population strongly disagrees with the adopting of modern pedagogies and innovative teaching. Therefore, through this analysis it is comprehended that most of the teachers are very much willing to adopt modern pedagogies and innovative teaching methods to meet the needs of the students at tertiary level in learning English pronunciation.

**Hypothesis 3 :** The teachers who are aware of innovative teaching prefer the use of digital tools in teaching English Pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

**Null Hypothesis:** The teachers who are aware of innovative teaching do not prefer the use of digital tools in teaching English Pronunciation to the tertiary level students.

The Teachers Who Are Aware of Innovative Teaching Prefer the

## Use of Digital Tools in Teaching English Pronunciation to the Tertiary Level Students

**Table 3**

### t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Teachers Aware of Innovative Teaching	Use of Digital Tools
Mean	42.06	30.23
Variance	23.89605351	10.92685619
Observations	300	300
Pearson Correlation	0.711137477	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	299	
t Stat	59.54689128	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0036	
t Critical one-tail	1.649965767	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0072	
t Critical two-tail	1.967929669	

**Table 3** portrays the results of the t-test meant for two sample means. The purpose of this t-test is to check whether there is any difference between the means of two large samples when the variance of the population is made known. This test aims to explore the difference between the means of the following samples namely, ‘Teachers’ Awareness of Innovative Teaching’ and ‘Adopting of Digital Tools’. The mean values of the selected variables are 42.06, 30.23 respectively. It is identified that the variance of the population is statistically significant with 23.89 and 10.92 points out of the total observations, 300. The Pearson Correlation is recorded as 0.71 which implies that there is statistically strong relationship between the two samples. Moreover, the hypothesised mean difference with 0 implies that the means are equal. The one tailed p-value is 0.00. On the other hand, the t critical one-tail value is recorded as 1.64 which is greater than one-tailed p-value. The two-tailed p-value is 0.00 like invariably similar to the

one-tail score. Ultimately, the t critical value two-tail score is statistically significant with 1.96 which is greater than t critical one-tail value. Thus, it is understood that there is statistically significant difference found between the means of the two selected samples. Hence, the Null Hypothesis, **“The teachers who are aware of innovative teaching do not prefer the use of digital tools in teaching English Pronunciation to the tertiary level students”** is rejected.

Subsequently, the Alternative Hypothesis, **“The teachers who are aware of innovative teaching prefer the use of digital tools in teaching English Pronunciation to the tertiary level students”** is accepted.

## 6.1 Findings

1. It is learnt that the ESL teachers' perspectives of teaching English pronunciation are influential in the administration of digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the ESL tertiary level students.
2. The ESL teachers unanimously observe that adopting modern pedagogies and need for modern teaching are innovative initiatives towards teaching English pronunciation to the tertiary level students.
3. It is recorded that the teachers who are aware of innovative teaching pedagogies mostly prefer to use digital tools to teach English pronunciation to the ESL tertiary level students.

## 6.2 Discussion

### 6.2.1 ESL Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Pronunciation

The English as a second language teachers' perspectives on teaching English pronunciation has a notable impact on their teaching. Most of them prefer the knowledge of grammar to pronunciation. Also, they tend to be complacent with their English and pronunciation. It is this thought that dilute their interest in teaching English accents and intonations with agreeable accuracy. Contrarily, teachers with optimistic mindset strive to be proficient and accurate in English in terms of grammar and pronunciation. Such teachers master their language and pronunciation with the assistance of any language learning tools or Android Applications, or artificial intelligence based sources. Thus, the teachers can empower their pronunciation using vital online tools and the same can be recommended for the students as well.

### 6.2.2 Modern Pedagogies

Teaching subjects and pedagogies should be dynamic and need-based according to the changing needs of the society. At this juncture, ESL teachers should realise the significance of modern pedagogies and their desirable impacts on teaching and learning. Therefore, to make teaching of English pronunciation interesting and creative, the teachers have to adopt innovative modern pedagogies namely, CAPT (Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training), Communicative Approach, Phonetic Method, Cooperative Language Learning, and so on. Hence, it is need of the hour for the teachers to do away with traditional methods of teaching, as they have less effectiveness comparing to modern pedagogies in terms of teaching English pronunciation.

### 6.2.3 Digital Tools

The twenty-first century has been the age of technological reformation in all fields. Since ESL learners are known to be digital natives or they are much exposed to growing technology, ESL teachers necessarily update their knowledge and teaching strategies and pedagogies by using the digital resources available nowadays. The digital resources like speech-learning software or speech-assessing software and online resources, namely, PRAAT, Better Accent Tutor2.0, WebGraderTM, YouGlish, VoiceTube, VoiceThread, Android applications, ELSA, British Council and so on are viable online resources to impart English pronunciation effectively as well as with intelligible accuracy. One of the significant advantages is that the online resources encourage independent learning and stress-free learning for learners. Moreover, the online resources help teachers in saving their time and energy as they need not repeat their demonstrations and remarkably these tools are tireless. Ultimately, these digital tools assure learners' autonomy by which both teachers and learners are highly benefited.

## 7. Conclusion

Adopting modern pedagogies, i.e., the twenty-first century pedagogies, to impart intelligible English pronunciation is deemed need of the hour for the ESL teachers to surmount the barriers which obstruct them from acquiring and teaching intelligible English pronunciation to the nonnative students. Furthermore, implementing digital tools, i.e., language-learning and speech-assessing software and Android Applications can serve the

purpose better in terms of acquiring and teaching native-like or near-native-like intelligible English pronunciation. According to Fraser, "...with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors; with poor pronunciation, a speaker can be very difficult to understand, despite accuracy in other areas" (Fraser, ANTA Innovative Project 7). Henceforth, the importance of intelligible pronunciation is deemed essential criterion for a speaker to be understood better, rather than grammatical accuracy. Herewith, it is comprehended that teaching of intelligible English pronunciation to the ESL tertiary level students with great accuracy is necessary, and it is possible with the administration of the twenty-first century pedagogies and language learning software or online resources in classrooms.

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