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LA EFICACIA DE LA RETROALIMENTACIÓN CORRECTIVA ORAL PARA MEJORAR LA PRONUNCIACIÓN SEGMENTAL EN ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA DE NIVEL A2 EN UN CONTEXTO MILITAR

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK FOR IMPROVING SEGMENTAL PRONUNCIATION IN A2 EFL LEARNERS IN A MILITARY CONTEXT

Autores: [1]Pamela Elizabeth Casa Molina, [2]Nayeli Nicole Núñez Melo, [3]Josué Reinaldo Bonilla Tenesaca y [4]Diana Carolina Egas Herrera.

[1]ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8263-1749
[2]ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5603-5071
[3]ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6748-2345
[4]ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2878-0689
[1]E-mail de contacto: pecasam@ube.edu.ec
[2]E-mail de contacto: nnnunezm@ube.edu.ec
[3]E-mail de contacto: jrbonillat@ube.edu.ec
[4]E-mail de contacto: dcegash@ube.edu.ec
Afiliación: [1*2*3*4*]Universidad Bolivariana del Ecuador, (Ecuador).
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[1]Licenciada en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, mención Inglés, egresada de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato, (Ecuador), con 2 años de experiencia laboral.
[2]Licenciada en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, mención Inglés, egresada de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato, (Ecuador), con 2 años de experiencia laboral.
[3]Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, egresada de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, (Ecuador). Magíster en Pedagogía de los idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés, egresado de la Universidad Casa Grande, (Ecuador). Doctor en Pedagogía, egresado de la Universidad de Oriente, (Cuba).
[4]Licenciada en Asistencia Gerencial y Relaciones Públicas, egresada de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, (Ecuador). Magíster en Pedagogía de los idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés, egresada de la Universidad Casa Grande, (Ecuador). Doctorante en Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de Cienfuegos, (Cuba).

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue examinar los efectos de la retroalimentación correctiva oral en el desarrollo de la pronunciación segmental de estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera de nivel A2 en un contexto educativo militar. El estudio empleó un diseño cuasi experimental con enfoque mixto. Participaron treinta estudiantes adultos, quienes recibieron instrucción comunicativa en inglés con integración sistemática de la pronunciación en actividades orales. La retroalimentación correctiva fue proporcionada de manera natural durante la interacción en el aula, con énfasis en la reformulación y la corrección explícita. Para la recolección de datos se aplicaron pruebas de pronunciación antes y después de la intervención, así como grabaciones de sesiones de clase para identificar tipos de retroalimentación y patrones de respuesta de los estudiantes. Los resultados cuantitativos evidenciaron una mejora estadísticamente significativa en la precisión de la pronunciación segmental al finalizar el período de instrucción. El análisis cualitativo mostró que, aunque la reformulación fue el tipo de retroalimentación más frecuente, la corrección explícita generó mayores niveles de respuesta con reparación por parte de los estudiantes. Asimismo, se identificaron dificultades recurrentes en la producción de determinados sonidos consonánticos y vocálicos del inglés. Se concluye que la retroalimentación correctiva oral constituye una estrategia pedagógica eficaz para favorecer el desarrollo de la pronunciación segmental en estudiantes de nivel básico. En particular, la corrección explícita resulta especialmente beneficiosa para facilitar la identificación y modificación inmediata de errores fonológicos en

aprendientes con bajo nivel de competencia lingüística.
Palabras clave: Pronunciación, Retroalimentación correctiva, Inglés, Lengua extranjera, Fonética segmental.

Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of oral corrective feedback on the development of segmental pronunciation among A2-level learners of English as a foreign language in a military educational context. The study employed a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design. Thirty adult learners participated in communicative English instruction in which pronunciation was systematically integrated into oral classroom activities. Oral corrective feedback was provided naturally during interaction, with particular emphasis on recasts and explicit correction. Data collection included pronunciation pretests and posttests, as well as audio recordings of classroom sessions to identify feedback types and learner responses. Quantitative results revealed a statistically significant improvement in learners' segmental pronunciation accuracy at the end of the instructional period. Qualitative analysis indicated that while recasts were the most frequently used feedback strategy, explicit correction generated higher levels of learner uptake with successful repair. Recurrent pronunciation difficulties were also identified, particularly in the production of specific consonant and vowel sounds. The findings suggest that oral corrective feedback plays a significant role in supporting segmental pronunciation development in basic-level learners of English. Explicit corrective feedback, in particular, appears to be especially effective in helping learners notice and immediately modify inaccurate phonological productions. The study highlights the pedagogical value of integrating pronunciation-focused feedback into communicative classroom practices in foreign language instruction.

Keywords: Pronunciation, Corrective feedback, English, Foreign language, Segmental phonetics.

Sumário

O objetivo deste estudo foi examinar os efeitos da retroalimentação corretiva oral no desenvolvimento da pronúncia segmental de estudantes de inglês como língua estrangeira de nível A2 em um contexto educacional militar. O estudo adotou um desenho quase experimental com abordagem mista. Participaram trinta estudantes adultos que receberam instrução comunicativa em inglês, com a pronúncia integrada sistematicamente às atividades orais em sala de aula. A retroalimentação corretiva oral foi fornecida de forma natural durante a interação, com ênfase na reformulação e na correção explícita. A coleta de dados incluiu testes de pronúncia aplicados antes e depois da intervenção, além de gravações das aulas para identificar os tipos de retroalimentação e as respostas dos estudantes. Os resultados quantitativos indicaram uma melhora estatisticamente significativa na precisão da pronúncia segmental. A análise qualitativa revelou que, embora a reformulação tenha sido o tipo de retroalimentação mais frequente, a correção explícita produziu maiores níveis de resposta com reparo por parte dos estudantes. Também foram identificadas dificuldades recorrentes na produção de determinados sons consonantais e vocálicos. Conclui-se que a retroalimentação corretiva oral é uma estratégia pedagógica eficaz para promover o desenvolvimento da pronúncia segmental em aprendizes de nível básico. A correção explícita mostra-se especialmente útil para facilitar a identificação e a modificação imediata de erros fonológicos.

Palavras-chave: Pronúncia, Feedback corretivo, Inglês, Língua estrangeira, Fonética segmental.

Introducción

Pronunciation constitutes a fundamental component of oral communicative competence in second and foreign language learning, as it directly affects intelligibility,

comprehensibility, and listeners' perceptions of speaker proficiency. Research has consistently demonstrated that pronunciation plays a decisive role in successful communication, sometimes even more than grammatical accuracy (Derwing y Munro, 2015; Derwing et al., 2009). In English as a foreign language contexts, learners frequently experience persistent pronunciation difficulties due to limited exposure to authentic input, cross-linguistic phonological differences, and insufficient instructional focus on phonological development. These challenges are particularly evident at lower proficiency levels, where inaccurate pronunciation may hinder communication despite adequate lexical and grammatical knowledge.

Within communicative language teaching environments, pronunciation instruction is often embedded in speaking activities rather than addressed through isolated phonetic drills (Celce et al., 2010). In such contexts, oral corrective feedback emerges as a central pedagogical tool for addressing learners' phonological errors. Corrective feedback refers to responses to learner utterances that contain errors and are intended to promote noticing, modified output, and restructuring of interlanguage systems (Ellis, 2009). Interactionist perspectives emphasize that feedback facilitates attention to form and contributes to language development by triggering cognitive comparison processes (Long, 1996). Because learners frequently fail to perceive their own pronunciation inaccuracies, especially when communication is not disrupted, corrective feedback becomes essential for phonological development.

Seminal classroom-based research identified six primary types of oral corrective feedback: recasts, elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, and repetition (Lyster y Ranta, 1997). Subsequent research has demonstrated that the type of feedback provided influences learner uptake and repair (Lyster et al., 2013). Meta-analytic evidence confirms that corrective feedback generally has a positive effect on second language development, although its effectiveness is mediated by variables such as explicitness, learner proficiency, instructional context, and target structure (Li, 2010; Nassaji, 2020).

Although corrective feedback has been widely investigated in relation to grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation has historically received comparatively less attention. Nevertheless, research focusing specifically on phonological development indicates that feedback can significantly enhance both perception and production of segmental contrasts (Saito y Lyster, 2012). More recent research highlights that pronunciation gains are particularly evident when feedback is systematically integrated into communicative practice (Saito, 2021). Experimental comparisons between explicit and implicit feedback suggest that explicit corrective strategies may produce stronger immediate gains in pronunciation accuracy, especially among lower-proficiency learners (Zafar y Meenakshi, 2022).

Contemporary studies have also examined learner perceptions and contextual factors influencing corrective feedback. Learners frequently report perceiving explicit feedback as clearer and more helpful for pronunciation development, while recasts are often viewed as less noticeable despite being interactionally smooth (Bougataia y Brigui, 2025; Skenderi y Ejupi, 2024). Teacher beliefs, institutional norms, and classroom dynamics further shape how feedback is delivered and interpreted (Soruç, 2025). Systematic reviews of classroom

corrective feedback practices indicate that feedback effectiveness depends not only on form but also on frequency, timing, and learner engagement (Maslucha et al., 2024). Additionally, recent research on technologically mediated pronunciation training suggests that even feedback that is not perfectly accurate may still promote measurable improvements, reinforcing the importance of consistent phonological input and response opportunities (Silpachai et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of research, several gaps remain. A considerable proportion of pronunciation-focused corrective feedback studies have been conducted under laboratory or short-term experimental conditions, limiting ecological validity. There is comparatively less research examining pronunciation development through corrective feedback in authentic classroom settings, particularly among lower-proficiency adult learners with professional communication demands. Furthermore, institutional contexts such as military education remain underrepresented in pronunciation research. While prior studies have examined feedback types in general educational environments (Rahimi y Katal, 2019; Fotovatnia y Pishghadam, 2021), there is limited empirical evidence addressing how multiple feedback types function within structured institutional training contexts and how they affect learner uptake and segmental development over time.

In response to these gaps, the present study examined the effects of oral corrective feedback on the segmental pronunciation development of A2-level learners of English as a foreign language enrolled in a military educational institution. The research employed a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design combining quantitative analysis of pretest and posttest pronunciation measures with qualitative examination of classroom interaction and learner uptake patterns. The study aimed to determine whether systematic oral corrective feedback would lead to statistically significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy and whether different feedback types would generate distinct patterns of learner response within an authentic instructional setting.

Materiales y Métodos

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach using a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest single-group design. The quantitative component was employed to measure changes in segmental pronunciation accuracy before and after the instructional intervention, while the qualitative component allowed for the analysis of oral corrective feedback types and learner uptake patterns during classroom interaction. The population consisted of learners of English as a Foreign Language enrolled in a military educational institution. The sample was composed of 30 adult learners between 18 and 22 years of age who were classified at the A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Due to institutional constraints that prevented random assignment, a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was employed, and an intact class was selected for participation.

The instructional intervention was implemented over a period of eight weeks and consisted of ten classroom sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. Pronunciation instruction was integrated into communicative speaking activities rather than taught in isolation. The main activities included guided reading aloud tasks, role-play interactions, structured group conversations, and voice-recording analysis activities. Oral corrective feedback was provided at different moments during the activities depending on the pedagogical objective. During fluency-oriented

activities such as role plays and group discussions, feedback was typically provided through recasts in order to maintain communicative flow. In contrast, during accuracy-focused activities such as reading aloud or pronunciation review tasks, explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback were more frequently employed. This combination allowed pronunciation development to occur within meaningful communicative practice while still providing clear phonological guidance.

The inclusion criteria were: (a) official enrollment in the A2-level English course at the institution; (b) regular attendance in classroom sessions; and (c) voluntary agreement to participate through informed consent. No additional exclusion criteria were applied beyond voluntary withdrawal from the study. To assess segmental pronunciation accuracy, pronunciation pretests and posttests were administered. The tests included controlled word lists, sentence-reading tasks, and short oral production activities designed to elicit specific consonant and vowel sounds that were identified as problematic for the learner population. All learner productions were audio-recorded for subsequent analysis.

Pronunciation accuracy was evaluated using a 0–3 analytic scoring rubric for each targeted segment, where higher scores indicated greater phonological accuracy. The analytic scoring rubric was adapted from commonly used pronunciation assessment criteria in applied linguistics research and pronunciation pedagogy (Celce et al., 2010; Derwing y Munro, 2015). The scale ranged from 0 (incorrect or unintelligible production) to 3 (accurate and intelligible production). The rubric focused on segmental accuracy, phoneme realization, and intelligibility of the produced sound within word and sentence contexts. To enhance content validity, the scoring criteria were reviewed by two specialists in English language teaching with experience in phonetics instruction. Pronunciation recordings were analyzed by two evaluators using the established scoring criteria. Inter-rater agreement was established through independent scoring of a subset of recordings, followed by comparison and discussion to ensure consistency in the application of the rubric.

In addition, classroom sessions were audio-recorded in order to document episodes of oral corrective feedback. Feedback types were categorized according to the typology proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997), including recasts, explicit correction, elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare pretest and posttest pronunciation scores in order to determine whether the instructional intervention produced statistically significant improvements. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d to assess the magnitude of the observed differences. The study employed methodological triangulation by integrating quantitative pronunciation test results with qualitative classroom interaction data in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of pronunciation development.

Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. Episodes of oral corrective feedback were identified and coded according to feedback type. Learner responses were categorized into uptake with repair, uptake without repair, and no uptake, allowing for examination of interactional patterns associated with each feedback type. Participant confidentiality was ensured through the use of coded identifiers. All data were securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes. The

study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without academic consequences.

Resultados y Discusión

The analysis of the data collected through pronunciation tests and classroom observations reveals both quantitative improvement in segmental accuracy and qualitative variation in learner uptake patterns associated with different types of oral corrective feedback. Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine changes in learners' pronunciation accuracy between the pretest and posttest. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest Pronunciation Scores (N = 30)*

Test	M	SD	Min	Max
Pretest	1.15	0.17	0.77	1.47
Posttest	1.23	0.15	0.77	1.53

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 1 shows that learners demonstrated a relatively low level of segmental pronunciation accuracy in the pretest (M = 1.15, SD = 0.17). Following the instructional intervention, the mean score increased to 1.23 (SD = 0.15), indicating overall improvement in the production of the targeted segmental features. To determine whether this improvement was statistically significant, a paired-samples t-test was conducted. The inferential results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. *Paired-Samples t-Test Comparing Pretest and Posttest Pronunciation Scores*

Test Comparison	M Difference	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Posttest-Pretest	0.06	3.83	29	.001	0.70

Source: Authors' elaboration

The analysis revealed a statistically significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy, $t(29) = 3.83$, $p = .001$. The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.70$) indicates a moderate and pedagogically meaningful impact of systematic oral corrective feedback. From an interactionist perspective, this improvement may reflect enhanced noticing and form–meaning comparison processes triggered by corrective feedback during communicative interaction. This increased awareness likely encouraged learners to adjust their phonological production and refine their articulation over time. Furthermore, the consistent presence of feedback may have helped learners internalize more accurate pronunciation patterns through repeated interaction and practice. The distribution of oral corrective feedback types observed across the classroom sessions is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. *Frequency of Oral Corrective Feedback Types Across Five Classes*

Corrective Feedback Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Recast	36	37.5
Explicit correction	22	22.9
Clarification request	16	16.7
Elicitation	11	11.5
Metalinguistic feedback	6	6.3
Repetition	5	5.1
Total	96	100

Source: Authors' elaboration

Recasts were the most frequently employed feedback strategy (37.5%), followed by explicit correction (22.9%). This distribution suggests that teachers prioritized maintaining communicative flow while still addressing pronunciation errors. Such preference for recasts aligns with classroom practices that favor minimally intrusive feedback during interaction. Learner uptake following corrective feedback episodes is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Learner Uptake Following Different Types of Oral Corrective Feedback*

Target Segmental Feature	Common Error Pattern	Example
/θ/	Substitution with /t/ or /s/	*think → tink*
/ð/	Substitution with /d/	*this → dis*
/ɪ/	Lengthened to /iː/	*ship → sheep*
/æ/	Centralized to /ʌ/	*cat → cut*
/v/	Substitution with /b/	*very → bery*

Source: Authors' elaboration

Although recasts were the most frequent strategy, they generated the highest proportion of no-uptake responses (16 instances), suggesting that learners did not consistently interpret them as corrective. In contrast, explicit correction resulted in the highest number of uptake-with-repair episodes (14 instances). This pattern indicates that feedback explicitness may play a critical role at lower proficiency levels, where learners benefit from direct error signaling and clear phonological modeling. Recurrent segmental pronunciation errors identified across classroom sessions are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Recurrent Segmental Pronunciation Errors Observed Across Classes*

Corrective Feedback Type	Uptake with Repair	Uptake without Repair	No Uptake	Total
Recast	8	12	16	36
Explicit correction	14	5	3	22
Clarification request	6	5	5	16
Elicitation	6	3	2	11
Metalinguistic feedback	3	2	1	6
Repetition	2	2	1	5
Total	39	29	28	96

Source: Authors' elaboration

Analysis of classroom recordings also revealed gradual improvement in the production of several problematic phonemes throughout the instructional period. During the initial sessions, learners frequently substituted interdental fricatives (/θ/ and /ð/) with alveolar stops or sibilants, and confusion between /v/ and /b/ was consistently observed. However, as corrective feedback was repeatedly provided during communicative activities, learners progressively demonstrated increased awareness of these contrasts. By the final sessions, several participants were able to self-correct pronunciation errors or successfully repair them following explicit feedback, suggesting progressive phonological restructuring rather than isolated posttest improvement.

Persistent difficulties were observed in the production of interdental fricatives (/θ/ and /ð/), vowel contrasts (/ɪ/–/iː/ and /æ/–/ʌ/), and the /v/–/b/ distinction. These recurring patterns suggest strong first-language influence and limited phonemic differentiation of specific English contrasts. The consistency of these errors across tasks underscores the need for sustained and targeted corrective feedback to support phonological category formation. In particular, the substitution of interdental fricatives with more familiar alveolar or bilabial

sounds reflects the absence of these phonemes in the learner's first-language inventory. Similarly, the neutralization of tense–lax vowel contrasts indicate insufficient perceptual sensitivity to duration and quality differences. The ongoing confusion between /v/ and /b/ further points to challenges in distinguishing voicing and manner of articulation. Together, these patterns highlight the importance of explicit phonetic instruction, focused listening discrimination activities, and repeated production practice to facilitate more stable phonological representations. The relationship between classroom activity type and predominant feedback strategy is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. *Corrective Feedback Use by Activity Type*

Activity Type	Most Frequent Feedback Type	Observation
Reading aloud	Explicit correction	Used to draw clear attention to pronunciation errors
Role-play	Recast	Used to maintain communicative flow
Voice recording review	Explicit correction	Feedback provided after playback
Group conversation	Recast	Feedback embedded in interaction

Source: Authors' elaboration

Explicit correction was most frequently used during reading aloud and voice-recording review activities, where instructional emphasis was placed on accuracy. In contrast, recasts were more common during role-play and group conversation activities, where communicative fluency was prioritized. This distribution indicates that feedback practices were sensitive to pedagogical objectives and that effectiveness must be interpreted within the context of task demands. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrate that systematic oral corrective feedback contributes meaningfully to segmental pronunciation development among A2-level learners. The statistically significant gains observed in pronunciation accuracy, coupled with moderate effect size, suggest that feedback facilitated measurable phonological restructuring rather than incidental improvement. The differential uptake patterns across feedback types further indicate that explicit corrective feedback may be particularly beneficial for lower-proficiency learners. While recasts preserve communicative continuity, their implicit nature may reduce salience and limit immediate learner response. Explicit correction, by contrast, enhances error noticeability and appears to promote more immediate repair.

Despite these findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a single-group quasi-experimental design without a control group. The absence of a control group was primarily due to institutional constraints within the military educational setting, where class organization and instructional scheduling limited the possibility of randomly assigning participants to different instructional conditions. Second, the relatively small sample size restricts the generalizability of the results beyond similar institutional contexts. Finally, pronunciation ratings were conducted by two evaluators. Although inter-rater agreement procedures were implemented to ensure scoring consistency, some degree of subjectivity cannot be entirely ruled out.

Nevertheless, the study attempted to strengthen methodological rigor through methodological triangulation combining quantitative pronunciation measures and qualitative classroom interaction analysis. Future research should incorporate control groups, larger samples, and inter-rater reliability procedures to strengthen methodological rigor. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that

combining communicative recasts with strategically timed explicit correction may create optimal conditions for pronunciation development, particularly in contexts where intelligibility and professional communication are essential.

Conclusions

Based on the results obtained, their analysis, and their discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the use of oral corrective feedback in the development of segmental pronunciation in A2-level learners of English as a foreign language: 1) oral corrective feedback constitutes an effective pedagogical strategy for supporting the development of segmental pronunciation in basic-level EFL instructional contexts; 2) the systematic use of oral corrective feedback during classroom activities contributes to addressing persistent pronunciation difficulties, particularly in segmental features that are strongly influenced by learners' first language; 3) the use of different types of oral corrective feedback in the classroom reflects instructional demands and the nature of the speaking activities employed during pronunciation practice; 4) explicit oral corrective feedback plays a particularly important role in facilitating immediate pronunciation correction among A2-level learners, who require clear and direct signals to identify and modify inaccurate phonological productions; and 5) the integration of controlled and communicative speaking activities accompanied by oral corrective feedback creates favorable conditions for the progressive development of segmental pronunciation accuracy.

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Declaraciones éticas y editoriales del artículo

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La presente investigación no recibió financiamiento específico de agencias públicas, comerciales o de organizaciones sin fines de lucro. En caso de existir financiamiento institucional o externo, este deberá ser declarado explícitamente por los autores en esta sección.

Declaración del editor

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