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Teaching English Pronunciation on Social
Media

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ABSTRACT

This project addresses the way in which English pronunciation is taught on social media, in other words, what methodology and criteria are used, its effectiveness and its advantages and disadvantages. The content of two YouTube channels and two Instagram accounts that teach English pronunciation has been analysed to investigate what methodology teachers use and the main issues of foreign students that learn English pronunciation. Furthermore, a survey was filled out by forty participants where they were asked eight questions regarding the reliability and effectiveness they thought this method provides. Additionally, two site owners of the content analysed answered a short interview about the methodology and criteria they use to teach and whether they consider that up-to-date sources such as pronunciation learning through social media are more accurate than other traditional methods like textbooks and face-to-face lessons nowadays. The results suggest that students tend to be more confident learning with a teacher who is preferably a native speaker but prioritising their professionalism and qualifications. This method is thought to be more effective than the traditional ones for the student's concentration and learning process. However, the creators of this type of content on social media would not recommend it as the only source of information for learning pronunciation but as a means to complement the traditional methods.

Keywords: English pronunciation, social media, YouTube, Instagram, reliability, effectiveness

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1. Introduction

1.1. Technology and language learning

In the 21st Century there have been noticeable changes in technology, advances that provide us a new way of doing the things that have always been done in a more traditional way and also a new point of view of how they should be done. Plenty of things have evolved and we have adapted them to the new times. The way in which we learn a new language is one of them. Even though many people still exclusively use books, dictionaries and other traditional methods to learn new languages, nowadays a wide part of the population takes advantage of the new technologies, using websites or online dictionaries as the main method. Along with the study of the language itself, pronunciation is one of the fields that can be taught online in the most popular platforms and applications of today. YouTube and Instagram, among others, are some examples of these platforms in which we can find a great number of people teaching pronunciation. In this case, we will work on English pronunciation, the way it is taught and the effectiveness it provides to the English learners.

As aforementioned, technological developments have created a positive impact in many aspects, and education is one of them. Users on YouTube and Instagram provide a great variety of audiovisual content teaching how to pronounce single words, full sentences or expressions correctly in order for students of English to improve their pronunciation. Each video covers a different issue and students are expected to listen to it carefully and repeat the sounds the teachers are making, taking into account some features of pronunciation such as word stress, intonation and rhythm. Each channel or account makes a selection of content that they want to share: every single video is

dedicated to a particular issue of pronunciation in order to make students improve their pronunciation. According to Mulyani and Dewi Sartika (2019), pronunciation is an important aspect to take into account when learning a language because when learners master the sound system of the target language, they have more confidence and will have no problem to communicate verbally with other people, in this case, in English.

Something that seems to be important for learners when learning a new language is whether the teacher is a native speaker of the target language or not. Either way the person needs to be trained and they must know what they are talking about, and especially in the field of social media, where we can find a broad range of information of all types both reliable and non-reliable. Normally, as long as they are professionals and are capable of teaching the language properly, the teacher's nationality should not be an aspect to worry about; somebody who has studied a language no matter their origins is more apt to teach it than somebody who has spoken it forever but has not quite studied it.

Teaching pronunciation on social media can have both advantages and disadvantages. Combining lessons with materials provided on social media can be helpful and can have positive results, but an inappropriate use of these materials can hinder learning instead of supporting it (Siidoroff & Sundberg, 2018).

When we learn a new language we are expected to know how the grammar works and to learn vocabulary among others. Pronunciation is an important feature that we have to work on, but are we expected to sound like native speakers? Is it even possible? It is true that the more we work on pronunciation the more natural we will sound and once we have achieved a good level we get more confident and it makes it easier for us to communicate with others. However, having a good pronunciation is not a synonym of sounding like a native, it goes beyond; we should pay close attention to what are called

the suprasegmental elements of language: intonation, stress and rhythm (Odisho, 2003). When we acquire our first language, we acquire all of its aspects, including pronunciation, which means that we do not have to learn how to pronounce correctly because we have obtained it naturally. According to Claire Kramsch (2000), “after puberty, intensive pronunciation drills might be futile due to the maturational constraints on the acquisition of native-like phonology”, in other words, after puberty we do not have the same facility to achieve a native-like accent in another language. For us, it is more difficult to imitate and emit certain sounds that may not exist in our language when we grow up. However, the most important thing is not to sound like a native speaker since it has been demonstrated that it is very difficult, but to know where the stress should be placed and what pitch we should use in every occasion.

1.2. Objectives and structure of the project

With this project the main purposes are the following: first, do research on how English pronunciation is taught in social media and what type of methodology they use, as well as the main issues that they deal with in each lesson. Also, to see if the information provided in this type of media regarding English pronunciation is reliable and to what extent we can trust it. Plus, an interesting matter in this research is to consider whether we need to continue using exclusively the traditional methodology such as dictionaries or books to learn English and more specifically its pronunciation or if social media can be the principal source of information. To carry out the practical frame, one of the objectives is to contact some of the people whose content will be analysed in the theoretical frame in order to know whether they are native speakers, have studies related to the English language, what methodology and strategies they use when deciding what to teach in each lesson and what features of pronunciation are more challenging for students. Lastly, to

know their opinion about the effectiveness of their job. On the other hand, a survey will be created for students of English to ask them their opinion about learning English pronunciation on social media and its reliability and also what aspects they think are more important about the person they are learning from, such as nationality or professionalism.

2. Social media as a tool to teach English pronunciation

Ever since we start to learn a language we are recommended to watch TV shows or films in the original version and to listen to music in the target language in order to get used to its sound and to obtain new vocabulary. But it is probably not enough just to listen to people speaking and this is why some people decided to start online pronunciation teaching in different platforms of social media. For this research, two YouTube channels (*English with Lucy* and *mmmEnglish*) and two Instagram accounts (*improveyouraccent* and *pronunciationwithemma*) have been selected. Each of these channels or accounts have their own way to teach and they all teach what are probably the main issues that foreign students deal with when pronouncing in English. The methodology used in this part of the project is the following: analyse the content about English pronunciation of each teacher and explain the main issues and ideas and explain their own methodology. Finally, in the analysis, summarise the information and see what they have in common and if there is truly an important base of problems that non-native English speakers have when speaking in English.

2.1. YouTube

Nowadays, YouTube is the biggest audiovisual platform on the Internet where we can find a wide variety of videos, from movie clips, TV programmes and music videos, among others. This platform has become a quite successful and popular website due to the facility to post your own videos in an easy way. In the late years, YouTube has also been used as

a tool to teach tutorials, everyday life tips, and also languages. It is a useful means to learn, accessible to everyone and free. In the area of teaching languages, people from all over the world teach grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of their own language, and this project is focused on English. As aforementioned, two of the biggest YouTube channels who teach English on this platform have been selected; these are English with Lucy and mmmEnglish.

As aforementioned, this platform provides an enormous variety of content. Certainly, a platform of this importance has many positive effects, but sometimes it can always be dangerous; the fact that everybody can upload their content with no previous revision might damage its reliability. Instead, we know that textbooks, dictionaries and other traditional learning methods are valid because they have been published with revision and they are used by professional teachers. However, regarding effectiveness, if the information is accurate, learning with up-to-date methods such as YouTube learning can be helpful for students that may have difficulty in concentrating with traditional methods.

2.1.1. English with Lucy

English with Lucy is one of the most popular YouTube channels that teach English (7.78 M subscribers). Lucy, the owner, is an English woman who covers many aspects of the English language and also characteristics and curiosities of British English.

In her playlist “British English Pronunciation” she talks about key aspects of English and teaches how to pronounce correctly in British English and provides a free PDF document and a quiz for the students to practise in each video. This is a long playlist with lessons that cover important aspects of British pronunciation such as vowel sounds,

mispronounced words or expressions, differences between homophones, silent letters and also more theoretical aspects such as connected speech.

From the very beginning of her lessons, English with Lucy clarifies that she does not intend to make her students get rid of their accent and that “accents make us unique” (English with Lucy, 2016, 1:00) as well as that, when learning pronunciation, “accents don’t matter, what does matter is bad pronunciation” (English with Lucy, 2016, 1:42).

According to Lucy, one of the most difficult parts in learning English is the pronunciation of many vowel sounds. In her lessons, she focuses on the schwa sound /ə/ and the sounds /eə/ (*hair, parent*), /ɪə/ (*here, clear*) and /əʊ/ (*oh, no*). She also has a video dedicated exclusively to the schwa sound at the end of the words. She focuses on the words ending in -er (e.g. *better* /'betə/), -or (e.g. *actor* /'æktə/), -ar (e.g. *calendar* /'kælɪndə/), -our (e.g. *colour* /'kʌlə/), -re (e.g. *centre* /'sentə/) and -ure (e.g. *leisure* /'leɪʒə/). She makes the student repeat after her in order to make them be more familiar with the sounds and the shape of the mouth that they should do to produce it.

In relation to the sound of the language, English with Lucy gives examples of some homophones, in other words, “a word that is pronounced the same as another word but has a different meaning or spelling, or both”, according to the Cambridge Dictionary. Some of the most confusing homophones, not only to non-native speakers but also to natives, are affect / effect [ə'fekt], weather / whether ['weðə], there / their / they're [ðeə] and your / you're [jɔ:]. These words should not cause any trouble when speaking. However, they might be confusing when writing them down because we might write the wrong word instead of the one we are referring to.

In this channel the rules of silent letters are also covered. She explains some rules of British English pronunciation regarding the sound of the letters that we should avoid if we want to pronounce correctly. This is the list of some of the rules she mentions:

- Letter A → Normally silent before the ending -lly (e.g. *logically* /'lɒdʒɪkli/)
- Letter G → Normally not pronounced when it comes before an “n” (e.g. *foreign* /'fɔːrən/), after a vowel and before the letter “h” (e.g. *high* /haɪ/), and sometimes it is pronounced like a letter “f” (e.g. *laugh* /lɑːf/).
- Letter H → Normally, it is silent after the letter “w” (e.g. *why* /waɪ/). However, this rule does not apply if it is followed by the letter “o” (e.g. *whoever* /huː'evə/). Sometimes it is also silent at the beginning of some words, like *honest* /'ɒnɪst/.
- Letter K → It is almost always silent when it goes before an “n” at the beginning of a word (e.g. *knowledge* /'nɒlɪdʒ/)
- Letter N → It is silent after an “m” at the end of the word, like in *autumn* /'ɔːtəm/.
- Letter P → It is usually silent in combinations such as “ps”, “pt” or “pn” at the beginning of a word (e.g. *psychology* /saɪ'kɒlədʒi/, *pterodactyl* /'terə'dæktɪl/, *pneumonia* /njuː'məʊniə/). Also, the combination “ph” is sometimes pronounced as an “f”, in words such as *elephant* /'elɪfənt/.
- Letter S → Not pronounced when it goes after an “l” in words such as *island* /'aɪlənd/.
- Letter T → Any word ending in -sten or -stle is likely to have a silent “t” (e.g. *listen* /'lɪsn/, *whistle* /'wɪsl/). The word *often* can be pronounced either /'ɒfn/ or /'ɒftən/.
- Letter W → Silent before an “r” at the beginning of a word (e.g. *wrong* /rɒŋ/) and also when it is followed by “ho” at the beginning of a word (e.g. *whole* /həʊl/)

The biggest part of the content in this channel regarding pronunciation consists of the pronunciation of words or expressions that are normally pronounced incorrectly by non-native English speakers. English with Lucy owns plenty of videos in which she tells how to pronounce words that might be difficult to pronounce and encourages the students to repeat after them in order for them to achieve a better pronunciation. We can find some examples of these, among others, in the video “10 English words that you pronounce incorrectly” (e.g. *chaos* /'keɪs/, *queue* /kju:/, *vegetable* /'vedʒtəbl/, *comfortable* /'kʌmfətəbl/...). There are also videos dedicated exclusively to a group of words that might be confusing because they are written similarly, which is the case of *though* /ðəʊ/, *through* /θru:/, *thought* /θɔ:t/ and *thorough* /'θʌrə/.

Finally, as aforementioned, not only practical lessons are taught in these videos. They are a minority, but there is also theoretical content. In this case, English with Lucy dedicates a full lesson to connected speech. She assures that, even though she does not like making the English language too theoretical, this lesson can help students speak more quickly and sound more like a native and also that it is important to be familiar with the terms “catenation”, “intrusion”, “elision” and “assimilation” in order to apply them to our daily speaking practise. The first word, catenation, refers to when a consonant at the end of a word is carried over to connect with the vowel sound of the beginning of the next word so that we avoid sounding like a robot. For example, “it isn’t” separately is pronounced /ɪt/ and /ɪzənt/, but when we say it naturally, it is pronounced /ɪt'ɪzənt/. Secondly, the term intrusion happens when an extra sound intrudes in order to make it easier to flow between two vowel sounds. The three most common sounds that intrude are /j/ (e.g. “we all play out” → /wɪj 'ɔ:l pleɪj 'aʊt/), /w/ (e.g. “I go out to open the window” → /aɪ gəʊw 'aʊt tu:w 'əʊpən ðə 'wɪndəʊ/) and /r/ (e.g. “better alone” → /betər

ə'ləʊn/). The next term is elision. It makes reference to the loss of a phoneme sound, which is normally a /t/ or a /d/ sound, and they are normally the last phoneme in a word. For example, “next door” separately is pronounced /nekst/ + /dɔ:(r)/ but when we say it all together it becomes /,neks 'dɔ:(r)/. Finally, assimilation happens when two phonemes come together and change into a new single phoneme. Two of the most frequent examples are the following:

- /t/ + /j/ = tʃ → “I’ll meet you there” is pronounced /aɪl 'mi:tʃʊ ðeə/.
- /d/ + /j/ = /dʒ/ → “did you?” is pronounced /'dɪdʒʊ/.

2.1.2. mmmEnglish

This YouTube channel, owned by a woman who, despite having an Australian accent, focuses on teaching the English language rather than teaching how to pronounce in Australian English.

In mmmEnglish there are three main playlists in which we can find pronunciation lessons, which are “mmmEnglish Imitation Lessons”, “How to relax your accent! (Pronunciation Training)” and “Pronunciation Practice!”. From the very beginning of her lessons, mmmEnglish makes clear that practising the pronunciation of the target language is very important: “we all know that if you don’t practise your speaking and your listening skills regularly, your fluency can quickly disappear” (mmmEnglish, 2020, 1:00). First, in her playlist “mmmEnglish Imitation Lessons” she makes the viewers repeat what she says after her. In her video “English Speaking Practice | Advanced Imitation Lesson” she explains that there are three steps to follow when imitating someone in order to sound like them:

- Listen and read → first the student should listen to the story and read it at the same time in order to start being comfortable with the story and with her tone of voice.

- Listen and repeat → it consists on copying exactly as you hear what she says
- Shadow → this might be a challenge even for a native English speaker. Listen to what she says and say it at the same time so that the learner can catch the natural rhythm when speaking English.

Secondly, in the introductory video for her playlist “How to relax your accent! (Pronunciation Training)”, mmmEnglish explains that in this section she will help learners reduce words, contract them and link them together as English is spoken. “Natural English pronunciation is definitely not spoken perfectly. Words reduce, they contract and they link together” (mmmEnglish, 2019, 0:37). According to her, pronouncing words correctly is absolutely necessary and to do so, we must focus on natural pronunciation, which means that in most of the cases we need to reduce our accent a little and sound a bit more relaxed in English. In this section she teaches the theory of connected speech, more specifically vowel linking and consonant linking.

- Consonant to vowel linking → it occurs when the sounds blend together if a word ends in a consonant sound and the following begins with a vowel sound. For example, *hang out* /'hæŋ, aʊt/. We must keep in mind that sometimes a word can end in a vowel letter but a consonant sound, which means that we must focus on the sound and not the visual letter
- Consonant to consonant linking → it occurs when the sounds blend together if a word ends in a consonant sound and the following begins with a consonant sound (e.g. *small lake* /smɔ:l/ + /leɪk/ = /'smɔ:leɪk/) A sound that is frequently found in the English language is when /t/ and /j/ are pronounced together and we obtain /tʃ/ as a result (e.g. *did she hit you* /hɪt/ + /ju:/ = /'hɪtʃu:/).

➤ Vowel to vowel linking → it occurs when the sounds blend together if a word ends in a vowel sound and the following begins with a vowel sound. In this case, when we speak we add sounds to make it easier for us to speak. (e.g. *your eyes* /jɔ:/ + /aɪz/ = /jɔ:r'aɪz/).

Finally, in this channel there is a playlist named “Pronunciation Practice!”. This playlist consists of a variation of lessons of important issues regarding pronunciation that are apparently frequent among English students, which include, among others, the difference between confusing words such as *though* /ðəʊ/, *thought* /θɔ:t/ and *cough* /kɒf/.

In the video “English Imitation Lessons | Speak More Clearly & Confidently” she makes the learner follow the three aforementioned steps (listen and read, listen and imitate and shadow), because according to her “practising with the imitation technique can dramatically improve your english communication skills” (mmmEnglish, 2017, 0:23). This technique is useful because it is an interesting way of learning how to communicate with more than just words. When we speak English, clear pronunciation is as important as stress, intonation, tone and body language – to express our emotions – and pause – to create suspense and emphasis –. In other words, “it’s not just what you say but *how* you say it” (mmmEnglish, 2017, 1:07).

Another lesson that I must highlight is the lesson about silent letters. These are some of the rules that will help learners pronounce English words correctly:

- Letter A → Especially silent in words that end in “-ally” (e.g. *romantically* /roʊ'mæntikli/).
- Letter G → Silent when the “g” is followed by a letter “n” (e.g. *champagne* /ʃæm'peɪn/) and also with the combination “gh” after a vowel sound (e.g. *though* /ðəʊ/).

- Letter H → Often silent when it follows a “w”, as in the word *what* /wɒt/ and sometimes not pronounced at the beginning of a word (e.g. *honest* /'ɒnɪst/. Sometimes it is also silent when it follows a “c”, a “g” or an “r” (e.g. *choir* /kwaɪə/, *ghost* /gəʊst/, *rhythm* /'rɪðəm/)
- Letter K → not pronounced when it comes before an “n”, for example in *knife* /naɪf/.
- Letter N → It is silent when it follows an “m” (e.g. *hymn* /hɪm/).
- Letter P → It can be silent in words like *receipt* /rɪ'si:t/, *psychology* /saɪ'kɒlədʒi/ or *psycho* /'saɪkəʊ/. Also, it changes when it is next to an “h” (e.g. *paragraph* /'pærə,grɑ:f/).
- Letter S → It can be silent in words like *island* /'aɪlənd/ or *isle* /aɪl/.
- Letter T → It is silent in random words like *listen* /'lɪsn/ or *castle* /'kɑ:sl/.
- Letter W → It is silent at the beginning of a word and followed by an “r” (e.g. *wrong* /rɒŋ/). Also in words like *who* /hu:/ or *sword* /sɔ:d/.

When learning English, the words with the spelling “th” together might be confusing for some people because they can have two possible pronunciations. On the one hand, “th” can be unvoiced (θ). This can occur when it is found at the beginning of the word (e.g. *think* /θɪŋk/), in the middle of the word, before a consonant (e.g. *bath tub* /'bɑ:θ,tʌb/) and at the end of the word, which is the most usual (*month* /mʌnθ/). On the other hand it can be voiced (ð). It can happen at the beginning of structure or function words, such as *this* /ðɪs/ or *that* /ðæt/, in the middle of the word and between two vowels, like in *brother* /'brʌðə/, and at the end of words except if the word ends in “-the”, like in *bathe* /beɪð/. These are the general rules, however there are also exceptions (e.g. *smooth* /smu:ð/, *clothes* /kləʊðz/).

This channel also dedicates a few videos to vowel sounds and diphthongs. This is the most highlighting information:

- The letter “e” can be pronounced as short (e.g. *egg* /eg/), long (e.g. *she* /ʃi:/), long with an accent (e.g. *café* /'kæfeɪ/) or the “lazy” schwa sound (e.g. *eleven* /ə'levən/).
- The letter “i” can be pronounced in two different ways, which are /i:/ (e.g. *eat* /i:t/) and /ɪ/ (e.g. *fit* /fɪt/). This causes problems with English learners because sometimes two words might seem to be pronounced the same way but, in fact, they are pronounced differently due to these two different vowel sounds.
- The letter “u” also has two different ways to be pronounced. These are the short sound /ʊ/ (e.g. *sugar* /'ʃʊgə/) and the long sound /u:/ (e.g. *shoe* /ʃu:/).
- Vowel sound /æ/. You hear this sound in words like *cat* /kæt/ or *compact* /kəm'pækt/.
- The schwa sound /ə/ is the most commonly heard sound in English. We can hear it in words like *teacher* /'ti:tʃə/ or *around* /ə'raʊnd/.
- The /ɔ:/ sound can be heard in words such as *four* /fɔ:/ or *bought* /bɔ:t/.
- The sound /ʌ/ can be found in words like *butter* /'bʌtə/ or *truck* /trʌk/.
- Next, we have the sound /ɑ:/, which is found in *far* /fɑ:/ and *heart* /hɑ:t/.
- The sound /ɒ/. It can be heard in words like *not* /nɒt/, *on* /ɒn/, *log* /lɒg/, *God* /gɒd/ or *forgot* /fə'gɒt/.

As for the diphthongs, there are eight diphthongs in British and Australian English but only five in American English. She only focuses on the three main ones.

- /eɪ/ → found in words like *play* /pleɪ/ and *imagination* /ɪ,mædʒɪ'neɪʃən/.
- /ɔɪ/ → found in words like *toy* /tɔɪ/ or *employ* /ɪm'plɔɪ/.

- /aɪ/ → found in *hike* /haɪk/ and *style* /stɑɪl/.

This channel also covers the past tense of regular verbs. The spelling of regular verbs is easy: you just take the regular verb and add a “d” or “ed” depending on the infinitive form. For example, *want* becomes *wanted* and *waste* becomes *wasted*. When the infinitive form ends with a letter “y”, it becomes “ied” in the past form, like in *spied* or *replied*. However, the pronunciation of regular verbs is not so simple. There are three different ways to pronounce the “-ed” ending of a past tense regular verb.

- First, it can be pronounced as /ɪd/, for example, in the verbs *needed* /'niːdɪd/, or *wasted* /'weɪstɪd/.

The other two sounds do not add an extra syllable to the verb but it creates a cluster or group of consonants that might be a bit difficult to pronounce.

- When a verb in its infinitive form ends in a voiced consonant sound, we pronounce -ed as a /d/ sound. For example, *allowed* /ə'laʊd/, or *loved* /lʌvd/.
- When a verb in its infinitive form ends in an unvoiced consonant sound, we pronounce the -ed as a /t/, like in verbs such as *watched* /wɒtʃt/, or *laught* /lɑːft/.

Finally, in mmmEnglish we can find lessons talking about specific words that people tend to mispronounce or that might be difficult to pronounce for English learners. This is the case of the words *girl* /gɜːl/, *curl* /kɜːl/, *pearl* /pɜːl/ and *world* /wɜːld/, in the video “How to pronounce GIRL & WORLD”, in which she explains the difference between American English and British and Australian English and shows what shape of your mouth you need to put in order to pronounce these words correctly. In other videos she selects random words that are difficult to pronounce for English learners but also sometimes for native speakers, which is the case, for example, of the words *chaos* /'keɪs/,

prestigious /pre'stɪdʒəs/, *mischievous* /'mɪstʃɪvəs/, *genre* /'ʒɒnrə/ and *espresso* /e'spresəʊ/.

Finally, she dedicates a whole video to some common pronunciation mistakes that might reduce your English level such as not pronouncing the final “s” in third person verbs, which may sound like a grammar mistake, as well as not pronouncing the “-ed” in the past tense of regular verbs among others.

2.2. Instagram

Instagram is one of the most popular platforms of social media nowadays, projected to reach nearly 1.2 billion users in 2023, according to Statista. It is an American networking service founded in 2010 which allows users to upload photos and videos using filters, hashtags and geographical tagging. It is common among users to use this mobile application to socialise and show your life through it. However, it can also be used as a tool for other purposes such as marketing and promotions, among others. One of the purposes that probably many people are not aware of is the teaching field on Instagram. There is a side of the app that consists of accounts that teach, among other things, languages and we will focus on pronunciation teaching. Many accounts upload pronunciation lessons, in both photo and video, according to their native accent and they teach you how to pronounce challenging words while they show you the transcription below. They also give you tips on how to move your mouth in order for you to have the ability to pronounce more native-like.

As previously mentioned, YouTube can be as useful as dangerous for learning. This is also the case of Instagram. Needless to say, YouTube and Instagram are two different platforms with different purposes; Instagram is a mobile application for users to upload their videos and pictures, therefore the learning field is more invisibilized and in

order for users to have this content on their feeds, they need to search for it. It may look like an easier way to learn because everyone has access to it, however since Instagram is not an official site to learn languages, the reliability of the information provided can be doubted.

2.2.1. Improveyouraccent

Improveyouraccent, an Instagram account run by Luke, which has over 117k followers, is one of the Instagram users that teach English pronunciation, more specifically British English pronunciation. Since Instagram is a platform where you can upload media such as videos and photos, the owner of this account alternates both to offer lessons on a variation of issues: he teaches the pronunciation of single words that might be challenging to pronounce, also homophones and homonyms and silent letters. For the lessons on the pronunciation of single words, improveyouraccent uses videos where he pronounces the word correctly, gives a definition and explains where the stressed syllable is. For the lessons on homophones and homonyms he uses pictures, which can be more helpful and visual using emojis above the two words and the transcription for each. As for the silent letters, they are not quite lessons such as the others, but Luke gives a word and the letter that is not pronounced and on the caption he provides the transcription and a brief explanation of what the word means. As examples of the pronunciation of single words we have: *cliché* /'kli:ʃeɪ/, *gauge* /geɪdʒ/, *withdrawal* /wɪð'drɔ:əl/, *tough* /tʌf/, *girl* /gɜ:(r)l/, *world* /wɜ:(r)ld/, *blood* /blʌd/, *rural* /'rʊərəl/, *literature* /'lɪtrətʃə(r)/, *focus* /'fəʊkəs/, *anxiety* /æŋ'zaɪəti/ and *awkward* /'ɔ:kwə(r)d/. Here are some of the homophones: *peace* and *piece* /pi:s/, *isle* and *aisle* /aɪl/, *aloud* and *allowed* /ə'laʊd/, *tale* and *tail* /teɪl/, *right* and *write* /raɪt/, *night* and *knight* /naɪt/, *missed* and *mist* /mɪst/ and *flower* and *flour* /'flaʊə/. And some of the homonyms that change pronunciation depending on the meaning: *record*

/ˈrɛkɔ:d/ and /rɪˈkɔ:d/, *read* /ri:d/ and /rɛd/, *live* /lɪv/ and /laɪv/, *minute* /ˈmɪnɪt/ and /maɪˈnju:t/, *polish* /ˈpɒlɪʃ/ and /ˈpəʊlɪʃ/, *entrance* /ˈɛntrəns/ and /ɪnˈtrɑ:ns/, *tear* /tɪə/ and /teə/, *wind* /wɪnd/ and /waɪnd/. Finally, as aforementioned, improveyouraccent also teaches silent letters in words such as *hymn* /hɪm/, *numb* /nʌm/, *yolk* /jɒk/, *cupboard* /ˈkʌbə(r)d/, *salmon* /ˈsæmən/, *whistle* /ˈwɪs(ə)l/, *psychology* /saɪˈkɒlədʒi/, *resign* /rɪˈzaɪn/, *island* /ˈaɪlənd/, *column* /ˈkɒləm/ and *sword* /sɔ:(r)d/. Finally, this Instagram account also shares some interactive TikTok videos in which the owner makes the students pronounce certain words and he pronounces them afterwards, so that students can correct themselves whether they have made any mistake.

2.2.2. Pronunciationwithemma

Pronunciationwithemma is the second Instagram account that I selected to do this project. It has over 225k followers and it is run by a British woman, Emma. In this account, we find short video lessons of the pronunciation of single words, words that are similar among them but are pronounced differently, as well as homophones, differences between two phonetic symbols and a few theoretical lessons. The methodology she uses is the following: for the single words she provides the transcription on the screen and separates the word into syllables, making it easier and more visual for the people who do not understand phonetic symbols. She also emphasises on the shape of her mouth when she pronounces them. Some of the words taught in her lessons are: *torture* /ˈtɔ:tʃə/, *theatre* /ˈθɪətə/, *choir* /ˈkwaɪə/, *chaos* /ˈkeɪs/, *ache* /eɪk/, *queue* /kju:/ and *schedule* /ˈʃɛdʒu:l/, even though for this last one there is another way to pronounce it in American English that some British people also use, /ˈskɛdʒu:l/. Then, she shows the difference between words that might be spelled similarly but that they are not pronounced the same way, which is the case of, for example, *touch* /tʌtʃ/ and *taught* /tɔ:t/, *loose* /lu:s/ and *lose* /lu:z/.

man /mæn/ and *men* /men/, *woman* /'wʊmən/ and *women* /'wɪmɪn/, *can* /kæn/ and *can't* /kɑ:nt/. Regarding homophones, she gives the following examples, among others: *weather* and *whether* /'weðə/, *sight* and *site* /saɪt/, *source* and *sauce* /sɔ:s/, *dear* and *deer* /dɪə/ and *night* and *knight* /naɪt/. Next, she gives examples of words that contain different phonetic symbols even though they might be confusing, such as /ɪ/ (e.g. *fit* /fɪt/, *sit* /sɪt/, *bit* /bɪt/) and /i:/ (e.g. *feet* /fi:t/, *seat* /si:t/, *beat* /bi:t/) or /æ/ (*bat* /bæt/, *sat* /sæt/) and /e/ (e.g. *bet* /bet/, *set* /set). Finally, she talks about two features that might not be as practical but a little theoretical, which are the glottal stop and the English word stress rule. The glottal stop, also known as glottal “t” is a sound that British people tend to produce when there is a “t” between two vowel sounds in a word, for example in *better*, *city*, *British* or *bottle of water*. According to Emma, the person behind this Instagram account, it is probably easier for students to say “uh oh”, because you do a little stop between the two sounds so that you can feel a little closure in your throat, similar to what you feel when producing the glottal stop. As a result, with the examples she gives, we obtain /'beʔə/, /'sɪʔɪ/, /'brɪʔɪʃ/ and /'bʊʔ(ə)l ðv 'wɔ:ʔə/ respectively. As for the English word stress rule, it makes reference to the words that are spelled the same but can have two different pronunciations depending if you are referring to the noun or the verb. For example, the words *object*, *refund* and *present* can be either a noun or a verb. If they are a noun, the stressed syllable will be the first one, in other words, they would be pronounced as /'ɒbdʒɪkt/, /'ri:fʌnd/ and /'prezənt/. However, if they are a verb, they should be pronounced as /prɪ'zɛnt/, /əb'dʒɛkt/ and /rɪ'fʌnd/.

3. Practical part

The aim of this project is to find out what methodology and criteria teachers on social media use, and whether students trust the information provided online regarding English

pronunciation and what aspects they consider more important when learning pronunciation through social media. This is why the practical frame of this project consists of two parts: for the first part, a survey was sent to forty people in a range from 14 to 51 years old who have studied English or are currently studying English. Most of the subjects are between 19 and 22 years old.

For the second part, seven questions in the form of a questionnaire were sent to the creators of this type of content that were selected to do the theoretical frame.

With the results of the surveys and the short interviews, the objective is to compare the answers of the students and the site owners and find out what criteria the teachers use when teaching pronunciation, the main issues that foreign students have regarding English pronunciation and whether the students' opinion about this method is accurate according to the site owners.

3.1. Method

For the first part, the participants were requested to fill out the survey, containing ten questions, some with "yes" or "no" answers and some with open answers. The points of the survey are to know what students of English think about the idea of learning English pronunciation through up-to-date methods and online materials such as videos on social media. Another goal is to know whether they have ever used this method and the aspects they consider to be more important when learning English pronunciation. With these questions they will provide an idea of the interest and motivation that students have in learning proper pronunciation as well as their opinion about the different ways in which you can learn it.

To carry out the second part of the practical frame, the idea was to contact two of the people whose content was analysed in the theoretical frame. Lucy from *English with*

Lucy (YouTube) and Luke from *improveyouraccent* (Instagram) agreed to answer a brief questionnaire covering different aspects:

1. What is your native language?
2. How long have you been teaching English pronunciation on social media? Why did you decide to do it?
3. Do you have previous studies / are you a graduate in English studies?
4. What criteria do you use to decide what to teach in each video? Do you have a strategy or randomly choose among all pronunciation issues?
5. What do you think are the main issues with English pronunciation for foreigner students?
6. Do you think it is easier or more effective for English learners to learn pronunciation on social media rather than the traditional ways?
7. To someone who is starting to learn English, would you recommend that they use only your content, only traditional methods, or combine the two of them? Why?

The full interviews can be accessed in the Appendix.

3.2. Results

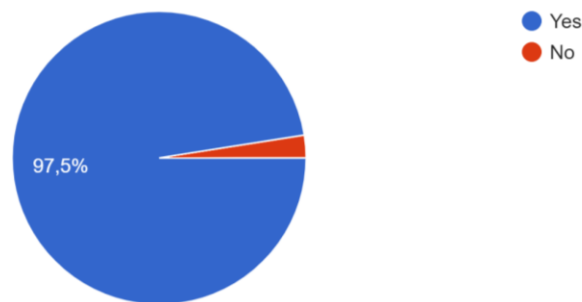
The following are the results of the user survey:

- If you had to pronounce a word / sentence in English and you were not sure how to pronounce it correctly, how would you check it?

I received different answers but most of them mentioned an Internet source: thirteen people said that what they would do is type the word or sentence on Google Translate and click on the sound option in order to hear it from the machine. The second most repeated option, with seven answers, is consulting an online dictionary, some mentioned Oxford

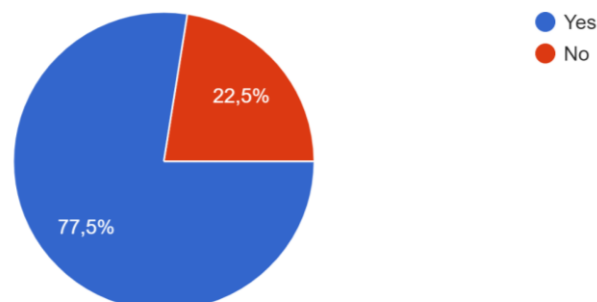
Dictionary Online, and others mentioned other websites such as WordReference, Linguee and Grammarly. Something that surprised me is that some people answered that they would look for the transcription on Google or on other dictionaries. Finally, three people mentioned that they would ask it to a friend who has English speaking skills or a native speaker. Only one person said that they would repeat the word or sentence as many times as needed until it sounds good for them.

- Are you a frequent consumer of social media?



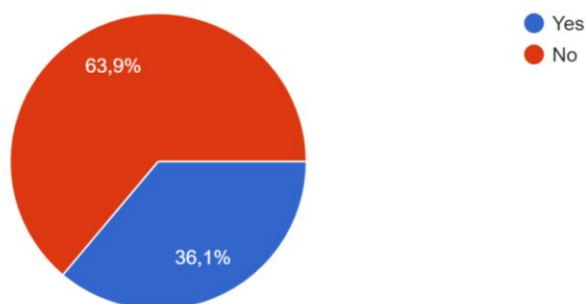
Nowadays almost everyone owns a technological device, either a phone, a tablet or a laptop and mostly among young people it is common to make frequent use of social media. This is why I expected that most of the subjects would answer “yes” and indeed, it was the answer of the majority of them.

- Did you know that there are people who teach English pronunciation on social media?



Only nine out of the forty subjects are not aware of the side of social media that teaches English pronunciation.

- If so, are you a consumer of / have you ever tried to improve your pronunciation through this type of media?



However, even though most subjects voted that they knew about pronunciation teaching on social media, only thirteen voted that they are consumers of this type of media or that they have at least tried this method once.

- Do you think we can always trust what we see on social media? In this case, would you trust a person who is teaching pronunciation even if you do not know if they are professionals?

This question required an open answer. There was a tie between the people who think that they would trust a person who teaches English pronunciation on social media and the people who do not. On the one hand, some reasons in favour are that, if the level of the people teaching is good enough, there would not be a problem in trusting them. Also, some think that even if they are not professionals, the fact that they are native speakers makes their information reliable as well. However, someone mentioned that if they are natives, the information would only be reliable as well as they exclusively teach pronunciation and not other aspects of the language. On the other hand, there are people who think that the information provided on this type of media is a good means of support,

but they would search information to complete and expand the knowledge, comparing sources and seeing what is more reliable. Others would make sure that the teachers are native speakers or that they have a certificate and others think it is better to consult other sources such as online dictionaries. Finally, some people were neutral and mentioned that they would trust the information depending on some factors such as whether the person is qualified, the variety of different accents in English and the level of pronunciation of the student – if the student is bad at pronunciation, they would probably trust the information more easily, however if the student is good at pronunciation, they can be more cautious when they notice that the other is mispronouncing something.

- Do you think that learning English pronunciation on social media is more effective than the traditional methods (books, dictionaries...)? Why?

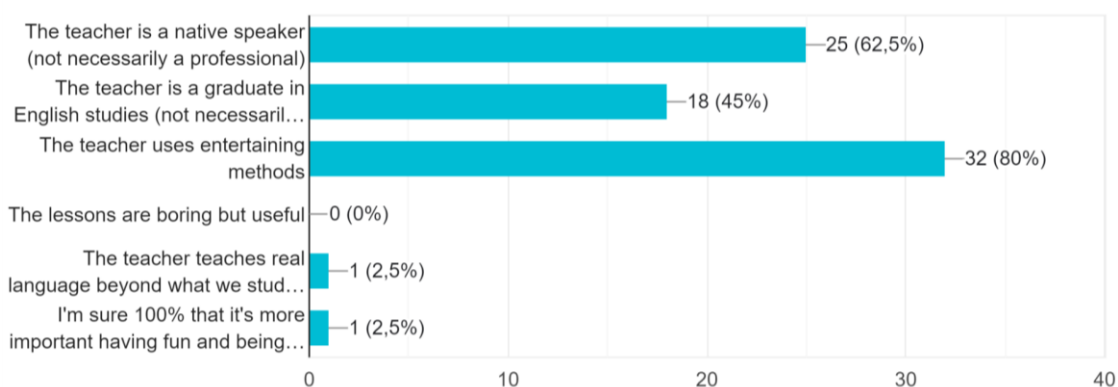
There was a huge difference in the results of this question. Twenty-seven subjects consider that an up-to-date method such as learning English pronunciation through social media is, indeed, more effective than the traditional methods. These are some of the main benefits according to the answers: it might be more visual, therefore easier to understand; it is not as boring as learning with books might be; it is a faster way to learn and better for one's concentration; you have the opportunity to hear "more realistic" English conversation instead of Standard English and to be able to repeat after; and that it is free and easy to access for everyone.

Eight people consider the contrary, because of the unreliability that social media might have nowadays, i.e. a high percentage of people on social media do not write or speak correctly, or because it might be dangerous because you might end up speaking a mixture of British English, American English and Spanish accent at the same time. Some

others think that it is not more effective but more accessible, and some think that it should not be the only way to learn but complementary up-to-date materials.

Only four people considered that it is neither more effective nor less effective and that it probably depends on other aspects such as the person who is studying pronunciation. Also, some consider that platforms such as YouTube or TikTok are more “direct” than reading and that social media is diverse and wide and thus it could and could not be a good source of information; there can be both good and bad content equally.

- What aspects do you find more important when learning English pronunciation?



In this question the subjects were expected to state which aspects about the site owner who teaches pronunciation they consider the most important. They were offered a few possible answers and the option to add new ones if they considered that what they thought was not already an option. The suggested answers were: the teacher is a native speaker (not necessarily a professional); the teacher is a graduate in English studies (not necessarily a native speaker); the teacher uses entertaining methods; and lessons are boring but useful. According to the results, subjects consider that the most important aspect is that the teacher uses entertaining methods to teach. In fact, none of them think that boring lessons, even if they are useful, are a good method of teaching. The second most voted answer is, with 25 votes, that the person who teaches is a native speaker

independent of whether they are professionals, followed by the contrary, in other words, that the person is a professional independent of whether they are a native speaker.

Below the answers I let them write their own ideas and two subjects gave their opinions: one of them considers that it is positive that “the teacher teaches real language beyond what we study in a textbook”. The other assures that “it’s more important having fun and being active while learning rather than some boring lecture where you can’t interact”.

- If your answer in question 5 was "no", would you give a try to the pronunciation teaching on social media and, from now on, use this method to improve?

In this last question of the survey, there were as many people who answered “yes” as people who voted “no”. Here are some of the reasonings they gave: some would try this method if they had more information about channels or users that do this type of content, some would do it for curiosity, because they were not aware of this type of media, and some would try it depending on the English level of the person teaching if they are not native speakers, or would only try it if they are credited or native. On the other hand, people who would not try it state, for example, that they are not really interested in pronunciation or that they do not need it because they already have good pronunciation skills, or because they are not studying English at the moment and they do not find it necessary. Somebody mentioned that they would not try it because they love having a Spanish accent when speaking English.

4. Analysis

According to the results of the survey carried out for this project, several things must be highlighted. First, it has been proven that people tend to look for the pronunciation of words or sentences on the Internet, mostly on Google Translate but also other online

sources. Some also mention that they also look for the transcription of such words or sentences, however these subjects must be studying English further than a second language or something related to the English language, because not everyone has the ability to read transcriptions.

The majority claim that they are frequent consumers of social media, however only thirteen of them are consumers or have at least tried this method once.

The main aspects that subjects consider to be important regarding reliability on social media in terms of pronunciation teaching seem to be the English level of the person, their native language and their professionalism. Some consider that learning pronunciation from different people might cause confusion due to the variety of English accents, but this factor may only be a matter of worry for some people, for instance those who might expect to use English in professional areas. The main idea is that we should complement the information with official materials. Regarding the person who teaches pronunciation, people prefer entertaining lessons rather than boring ones even if they are useful, because it is tough to be in a classroom or to be in front of a book for hours. Apparently, most people have a preference for a native speaker that is not a certificate, however many also consider that it is important that they are certificate independent of what their native language is. This can be explained by the following: a person might not be a native speaker but have the ability to explain how pronunciation works perfectly, but at the same time, a person might be a native speaker and not be able to teach pronunciation.

Finally, would people give a try to this method of learning pronunciation? Some would, if they were informed and have references about it. However, some consider that they do not need it, to the point of claiming that they are content with their Spanish accent.

But clearly, accent is not a synonym of pronunciation, so your accent might not be truly what you have to improve by learning pronunciation.

As for the questionnaires, the two site owners who answer are native British English speakers. Luke from *improveyouraccent* (Instagram) has been teaching English pronunciation for ten years, nine on social media. He started to promote his business and raise his profile. On his social media, he teaches the words that his followers request him.

Luke owns an International Phonetic Association (IPA) Certificate by University College London, which certifies an advanced knowledge of English phonetics among other languages; the CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), which is the standard qualification for English Language teaching in the UK); First-class BA (Hons) German Studies & Italian Studies at the University of Birmingham, in which he could train linguistics; and studied MA Acting (Distinctio in Voice and in Articulation) at East 15 Acting School, which, according to him, provided an advanced knowledge of how the voice and speech organs work.

He claims that the main issues that foreigner students have with English is the lack of awareness of the sound system of their native language as the sound system of English, how sounds are created in the mouth, the relationship between spelling and sound in English, ear training and their fossilised habits.

According to Luke, the level of effectiveness depends on the aim and the stage where the student is in terms of awareness. Also, practising pronunciation through social media at least once a day is easy due to its accessibility. However, at the end of the day each student has to do what suits them the most.

Luke states that he would only recommend exclusively his content depending on the purpose of the student. However, he would indeed recommend his course, adjusted to

each student's native language. This course, says Luke, comprises ear training games, exercises to train the articulators, mouth animations and access to live classroom sessions.

On the other hand, Lucy from *English with Lucy* (YouTube) has been a teacher on social media since 2016. She started exclusively with grammar lessons, but then realised that students were very interested in pronunciation, so she started teaching pronunciation, as well. Her content is based taking into account three aspects: what her students want, what she thinks her students want and what the YouTube algorithm suggests. Lucy owns no further official qualification except for the TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualification.

According to Lucy, these are the main issues for foreigner students who study English regarding pronunciation: first, confidence when speaking with an English accent, sometimes because people might laugh at them; then, watching dubbed TV shows makes it more difficult for them to reproduce the phonemes of the English language; also, it is difficult to get feedback since social media does not; finally, the difference pronunciation and accent, in the sense that some people want to get rid of their accent and some just expect to pronounce words correctly, however, she promotes the second option as the first one is more challenging to achieve. What she wonders is whether students really want to lose their accent or they feel that they have to lose it due to social matters. However, she makes clear that learning pronunciation for fun instead of under pressure makes the process more relaxed.

Regarding effectiveness, she says, "nothing can replace in-person feedback"; it is a good option if one cannot afford one-to-one classes. She recognises that sometimes the people who create this type of content on social media can become "too commercial", although social media can be a good tool for helping students.

Lastly, she states that she would never recommend exclusively using her content to students. According to her, people who do this seem to care more about the money than for students to succeed. What is more accurate is to combine it: the ideal is to familiarise with this type of free online content and use it as extra material to support traditional methods such as one-to-one classes.

5. Discussion

The main purposes of this study were to find out how English pronunciation is taught on social media and what type of methodology and criteria was used. Along with it, the aim was to see what matters of the English pronunciation are more challenging for foreign students and also the main issues they have when pronouncing in this language. Another goal was to find out whether the information regarding English pronunciation found on the Internet is reliable and to what extent students are willing to trust it and whether it is more effective than other traditional methods such as face-to-face classes or textbooks, from the students and teachers points of view.

The methodology used to teach pronunciation on different platforms is very similar: the main activity for students is to listen to the teacher pronounce a word, sentence or expression and repeat after them. In most cases, students can find the transcription on the screen, however not everyone understands phonetic symbols, so in some cases they can find the word separated by syllables with the stress marked. The criteria the teachers use to teach is, in most cases, based on what their students want to learn. In other cases, they choose matters that they know may be difficult for foreign students to learn. This is why some of the sources share the same examples or rules, which is the case of silent letters and their respective examples – as in silent letter “s”, where the word *island* is repeated, or in silent letter “t” with the words *listen* or *whistle* –; the case of homophones

– with the pairs *weather* and *whether* or *night* and *knight*; or the case of single words that may be challenging for students – as the words *girl*, *world*, *chaos* and the words *though*, *thought* and *through*.

On the one hand, the expectation was that students prefer somebody who has English as their first language, but on the other hand, that as long as they provided true information, they would find it useful, too. It was expected that many students would state that they would trust the information provided because nowadays Internet is the main source of information and the main source for important research; however, even though half of them declared that they think it is trustful, the other half expressed that this method might be as helpful as dangerous: helpful because it can indeed be a source of support for the main materials and a good way to hear a native speaker, but dangerous because we cannot always trust what we see on the internet. Nevertheless, in general students would be more confident knowing that the person who teaches is qualified and even more knowing that they are native speakers of English. As has been proven, the majority of people who teach pronunciation on social media are natives of the language they teach, so probably this helps to a great extent to make students trust them and thus they have reached a big number of subscribers and followers. Further, as being a qualified person also seems to matter to students, the creators were asked whether they own any certificate and they do, indeed, have official qualifications and further information due to research that they have done.

The level of effectiveness might depend on different aspects. At first, the expectations were that in general, students would find it useful as a means to support theoretical study of the language, and they were expected to mention other sources as more effective to practise English pronunciation such as TV shows or films, which helps

your ears be more familiar with the sound system of the target language. However, with this method normally you do not really practise since you are not requested to repeat what you hear, just to listen. According to this study, students consider that learning English pronunciation through social media is effective because it is not a boring way to learn, because with it you can learn from a native speaker who might be as well a professional and thus learn natural and realistic English. Plus, it is easy to access for everyone. However, the conclusion would be that students consider this method better due to its format and the way in which it is taught but not as trustful because of its possible lack of credibility.

On the other hand, teachers state that this method is effective but depending on the previous level of each student; in other words, if the student has a low level of pronunciation, their lessons will most probably be useful for them. However, if the level of the student is high enough, teaching them how to pronounce certain words would be completely useless. Another point is that this method is effective as a means to help students but not as the main method to learn. Before carrying out this study the idea was that the content would be based on the matters that teachers thought would be important or common errors that their possible face-to-face students made. However, the content in these lessons is mostly based on what students want or ask according to their needs.

6. Conclusion

The field of language learning on social media is accessible for everyone and is becoming more popular everyday. The methodology used to teach English pronunciation on this type of media depends on each site owner, but most of them share the same pattern: to pronounce correctly a word, expression or sentence and make the student repeat after them. Normally, the criteria they use is based on what the students need and what the

teachers themselves think may be interesting and helpful. Certainly, the content of each creator of content is different, however, there are several matters repeated, thus, certain difficulties for foreign students are notably highlighted. Students usually trust the information regarding pronunciation if the site owner is qualified and a native speaker of the target language. As has been proven, most of the teachers on these platforms tend to be natives and qualified or, at least, well informed. However, promotions and becoming commercial may be dangerous and affect the effectiveness of this tool. Up-to-date sources are a good means to train your ears and practise your pronunciation, however, they should not be used as the main tool to learn a language but materials to support the traditional methods which we are certain that provide accurate information.

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8. Appendix

Two creators of content, *English with Lucy* from YouTube and *improveyouraccent* from Instagram agreed on answering seven questions regarding their work on social media and its effectiveness.

8.1. English with Lucy interview

1. What is your native language?

English (UK)

2. How long have you been teaching English pronunciation on social media?

Why did you decide to do it?

Since 2016. I started with grammar videos, as that's what I thought my students wanted most, but they expressed a really interest in pronunciation.

3. Do you have previous studies / are you a graduate in English studies?

I have no official qualification in English teaching aside from a TEFL qualification. I taught English in academies and privately from 2014. I fell in love with it, and started reading around the subject and doing lots of research.

4. What criteria do you use to decide what to teach in each video? Do you have a strategy or do you randomly choose among all pronunciation issues?

It's a balancing act between 3 points - what my students tell me they want, what I think my students want, and what the YouTube algorithm 'wants'. Combining those three points has helped me reach a large audience.

5. What do you think are the main issues with English pronunciation for foreigner students?

1. Confidence - you can feel a bit 'ridiculous' attempting to pronounce with an English accent, and at first people may laugh at you. You have to break through that barrier.
2. Dubbed TV shows - If the student has grown up watching dubbed TV shows, they usually find it much more challenging to reproduce English phonemes.
3. Feedback - Social media tends to not provide feedback, and it's expensive to pay for feedback. Genuine, in-person classes cannot be replaced by videos on social media.
4. Pronunciation vs accent - some students want to sound like a native and completely get rid of their accent, others simply want to pronounce words clearly and correctly, without stressing out about accent reduction. I always promote the latter as it's far more achievable.
5. Do you **want** to lose your accent, or do you feel you **have** to lose your accent?
- A lot of students face discrimination in their lives, which drives them to feel they have to change their accent. When a student is desperate and stressed, it doesn't create a good foundation for learning. Other students simply enjoy aiming for a native accent, and the learning process is much more relaxed.

6. Do you think it is easier or more effective for English learners to learn pronunciation on social media rather than the traditional ways?

- a. Nothing can replace in-person feedback. Learning on social media is a fantastic cost-effective option for those who cannot afford one-to-one classes.
- b. On social media, classes are designed to please algorithms as well as students. As a content creator, I fully understand the pressure to have your content perform, and sometimes I miss the mark and go ‘too commercial.’
- c. Social media is amazing for helping many students all at once.

7. To someone who is starting to learn English, regarding pronunciation, would you recommend that they use only your content, only traditional methods, or combine the two of them? Why?

- a. I would never recommend using only my content - anyone in this industry who recommends that wants students’ money, not for them to succeed.
- b. A combination is ideal - familiarise yourself with free, online content, and put it into practice with traditional methods such as one-to-one classes.

8.2. Improve your accent interview

1. What is your native language?

English

2. How long have you been teaching English pronunciation on social media?

Why did you decide to do it?

I’ve been teaching English pronunciation for 10 years. I’ve been posting on social media for probably nine years, but only two years on Instagram. I did it to promote my business and raise my profile.

3. Do you have previous studies / are you a graduate in English studies?

International Phonetic Association (IPA) Certificate (at University College London.

This qualification certifies an advanced knowledge of English phonetics and the sounds of hundreds of world languages.)

CELTA – Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (This is the standard qualification for English Language teaching in the UK)

First-class BA(Hons) German Studies & Italian Studies (at the University of Birmingham. This provided excellent training in linguistics.)

MA Acting – Distinction in Voice and in Articulation (at East 15 Acting School. This provided advanced knowledge of how the voice and speech organs work.)

4. What criteria do you use to decide what to teach in each video? Do you have a strategy or do you randomly choose among all pronunciation issues?

I teach words that followers request me to teach.

5. What do you think are the main issues with English pronunciation for foreigner students?

Lack of awareness of:

(1) the sound system of their native language and how stress/rhythm works in their native language

(2) the sound system of English and how stress/rhythm works in English

(3) how sounds are created in the mouth

(4) the relationship between spelling and sound in English

(5) ear training

and (6) their fossilised habits

6. Do you think it is easier or more effective for English learners to learn pronunciation on social media rather than the traditional ways?

Depends what the aim is and depends at what stage the student is in terms of awareness.

Depends what you mean by traditional ways – there have been different approaches to teaching pronunciation in the past.

Obviously, a little bit of pronunciation instruction a day or multiple times a day is easy to get through social media on your phone. So that's good. But at the end of the day, it should be whatever works for the student.

7. To someone who is starting to learn English, regarding pronunciation, would you recommend that they use only your content, only traditional methods, or combine the two of them? Why?

Depends what their aims are. But I would of course recommend my course

(<https://improveyouraccent.co.uk/course/>) which is tailored to the user's native language and prioritises intelligibility. It includes ear training games, exercises to train the articulators (and for proprioception), mouth animations, and access to live classroom sessions with me.