

Native-speaker and English as a lingua franca pronunciation norms: English majors' views

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Abstract

Within the communicative approach to English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching, the aims of instruction are primarily to enable learners to communicate; hence, functional and communicative intelligibility has become the goal of pronunciation training. On the other hand, contemporary approaches to EFL teaching leave sufficient room for accommodating the individual learner and contextual factors which largely influence the choice of the target pronunciation models. Moreover, in a globalized world, where English has become a contemporary lingua franca for intercultural communication, the pronunciation norms of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) appear to meet the needs and expectations of learners of English in international settings, coexisting with or replacing native-speaker pronunciation models as the target of instruction. The ELF approach and the Lingua Franca Core elaborated by Jenkins (2000, 2002) have aroused controversy among both researchers and EFL teachers. The paper presents the findings of a questionnaire study involving 234 Polish students, English majors, which aimed to determine their preferences and opinions concerning native-speaker and ELF norms as pronunciation instruction targets. The findings revealed a strong preference for native-like pronunciation models in the subjects' own language development and a less strong preference for such models in pronunciation teaching at all levels of proficiency. Moreover, the results pointed to the significant role played by the intensity of pronunciation training and the level of awareness of native-speaker pronunciation models in shaping the subjects' attitudes toward native-like and ELF pronunciation norms.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); teaching pronunciation; Lingua Franca Core (LFC); native-speaker pronunciation norms

The emergence of English as lingua franca (ELF) has been a result of the globalization of English and the increasing need for a tool for intercultural and international communication (Cogo, 2012; Graddol, 2006; Jenkins, 2005a, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2011; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2005). Hence, in the field of pronunciation teaching, ELF offers an instructional paradigm that highlights achieving communicative intelligibility in interactions between non-native speakers (NNSs), and which does not view native-speaker (NS) pronunciation norms as the target of pronunciation instruction. Jenkins's (2000, 2002) *Lingua Franca Core (LFC)*, which is a suggestion for a research-based, systematic syllabus for teaching English pronunciation for ELF contexts, has sparked a heated debate among researchers (e.g., Dauer, 2005; Dziubalska-Kořaczyk, 2005; Scheuer, 2005, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2005; Sobkowiak, 2005; Sowden, 2012; Trudgill, 2005, and many others) regarding the relevance and place of ELF and NS pronunciation norms in the contemporary teaching of English pronunciation. The present article aims to investigate the attitudes of Polish majors in English toward NS and ELF pronunciation norms as the targets of their own language development as well as in their future work as teachers of English. First, however, a brief overview of issues related to pronunciation instruction in contemporary English as a foreign language (EFL) didactics will be provided.

The Aims and Position of Pronunciation Teaching in Contemporary ELT

The role and aims of pronunciation teaching have differed according to trends set by the approaches and foreign language teaching methods which were influential at a given time (Jones, 2002). In contrast with previous, more traditional, bottom-up approaches concentrated on accuracy achieved through practicing individual sounds, today, pronunciation instruction focuses on a top-down approach and emphasizes fluency, with a major focus on practicing suprasegmental features, such as stress, intonation and rhythm (Goodwin, 2001; Jones, 2002). This change in instructional focus resulted from the adoption of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching, the main aim of which is the development of communicative competence. Therefore, as many researchers (e.g., Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996; Goodwin, 2001) stress, a major aim of pronunciation instruction nowadays is to develop functional and communicative intelligibility in learners which will allow them to take part in oral interactions, and not necessarily to make them sound like NSs of English.

This broad aim of pronunciation teaching appears to be in line with the didactic rationale behind the ELF approach. It is grounded on the premise that since nowadays non-native users of English outnumber its NSs, the application

of NS norms in teaching English is less justified, being both unnecessary and unrealistic (Jenkins, 2000). Therefore, Kopperoinen (2011) finds it surprising that most contemporary Finnish textbook tapes promote NS pronunciation models, largely neglecting NNS accents. Wells (2005) makes the point that in setting goals for pronunciation teaching one needs to take into account several factors, such as the context in which instruction takes place, the reasons for teaching English, the communicative needs of the learners, and the learners' motivations and aspirations. Summing up the goals of pronunciation teaching, Levis (2005) highlights two contradictory principles: the *nativeness principle* (which sets achieving NS pronunciation as the aim of teaching) and the *intelligibility principle*. The proponents of ELF believe in the intelligibility principle, assuming that learners of English need phonetic norms which will prepare them to function in international communication. Jenkins (2000, 2002) compiled a research-based LFC, which provides a description of those elements of the phonetic system of English which are indispensable in communication among NNSs. The description is based on research which investigated intelligibility problems and the use of phonological accommodation (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). However, although it largely addresses the communicative needs of non-native users of English, LFC does not incorporate such pronunciation features as rhythm, intonation and phonostylistics, despite the significant role that they play in communication (Dziubalska-Kořaczyk, 2005).

The idea of LFC has aroused considerable controversy among researchers. Some are in favor, highlighting its merits for intelligibility and usefulness for international communication as well as its learnability (Graddol, 2006; Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2005). Seidlhofer (2004, p. 214) stresses the fact that LFC excludes sounds which are considered "particularly English", and hence difficult to master for NNSs, and sees "the relative manageability of its features" as a significant trait of LFC. Matsumoto (2011) discusses the benefits of LFC in fostering negotiation among learners and serving as a basis for a relevant pronunciation syllabus. Others express a more balanced view, pointing out the strong and weak points of the ELF approach to pronunciation teaching. Dauer (2005), for example, examines the features of LFC and concludes that they do not lower the learnability burden considerably enough. On the other hand, she values the positive influence of the LFC on the perception of NNS identity. Still others object very strongly to the idea of LFC. Dziubalska-Kořaczyk (2005) stresses the production/perception conflict apparently overlooked by LFC (i.e., even if learners are not expected to be able to produce certain sounds, they still need to perceive them in order to understand native speakers) and the problem with accommodating LFC to speakers with different L1s. Similarly, Scheuer (2005, p. 113) notes that the features of LFC do not really reflect NNS intelligibility, as

they are “heavily biased towards the phonetic preferences of L1 speakers of English.” Sobkowiak (2005) argues that all the sounds of English are important for communication, and limiting the sound system to “core” features makes it artificial and unnatural. Furthermore, he claims that the positive “self-image” of learners results mainly from the acquisition of native-like pronunciation and imposing ELF norms may be demotivating for them. In Trudgill’s (2005) opinion, the LFC proposal is unnecessary, as NS speech is not necessarily less intelligible to NNSs (although some studies reveal opposite findings, as Jenkins et al. 2011 note). Moreover, he questions the validity of the NS/NNS division, crucial to the idea of ELF. Van den Doel (2010) points out that the application of some of the LFC recommendations may put NNSs at a communicative disadvantage, as they may be stigmatized by other users of English as less competent. Addressing much of the criticism of LFC, Jenkins (2005b) makes the point that most of the arguments against her proposal result from confusing ELF with EFL pronunciation teaching goals.

Another current dimension of pronunciation teaching concerns the problem of empowerment and identity-related issues. The acquisition of foreign language pronunciation may affect one’s identity and perceptions by others; therefore, the issues of native-like and foreign accents from the social and ideological perspectives within both NS and ELF contexts are discussed by several researchers (Cogo, 2010; Gatbonton, Trofimovich, & Magid, 2005; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Jenkins, 2005a; Momenian, 2011; Rivers, 2011).

Research on Attitudes toward NS and ELF Pronunciation Norms in Learning and Teaching English

A comprehensive account of studies on attitudes toward NS and English-as-an-international-language norms in the learning and teaching of English (including its pronunciation) is presented in Jenkins (2007); moreover, more recent studies are referred to by Jenkins et al. (2011).

Research into learners’ and teachers’ attitudes toward NS or English-as-an-international-language pronunciation standards at different levels indicates, on the whole, a preference for NS norms, although some variation is evident. Timmis (2002) investigated over 400 learners and 180 NS and NNS teachers from different countries to see whether the learners wanted to conform to NS pronunciation norms. The majority of the learner-respondents (67%) expressed their preference to sound like NSs, which shows that they “saw native-speaker pronunciation as a benchmark of achievement” (Timmis, 2002, p. 242). In contrast, 39% of the teacher-respondents stated that their students would opt for being intelligible in international interactions rather than sounding native-like,

and 27% of them thought the learners would like to reach NS standards. Sifakis and Sougari (2005) conducted a study on 421 primary and secondary school EFL teachers in Greece. The subjects clearly associated their own high levels of competence in pronunciation with NS standards. Paradoxically, although communicative intelligibility was considered a significant aim of instruction, few of them viewed ELF norms as relevant targets. Sifakis and Sougari (2005) concluded that this "reflects a strong norm-bound perspective that conflicts with the stated views of some teachers that they should promote intelligibility rather than accuracy when teaching accent" (p. 481). In He and Zhang's (2010) study, involving 1030 subjects, 820 non-English major university students and 210 college teachers of English in China, for the majority (55.4%) of the respondents it was acceptable for NNSs of English to retain their L1 accent as long as it did not impede communication. However, the subjects associated native-like English with positive characteristics more often than China English. The researchers concluded that NS English norms still need to be the basic model for teaching English in China, but it should be complemented with carefully selected forms of China English to meet the needs of Chinese EFL learners.

Another group of studies were conducted on English majors (most of whom were prospective teachers of English) with the aim of exploring their attitudes toward NS and/or ELF pronunciation norms as the target of instruction. Dziubalska-Kotaczyk et al. (2006) provided an account of several university-based studies focused on English majors' attitudes toward NS accents. Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak (2005) compared two groups of university students: English majors and non-English majors (students of economics and sociology). For both groups, pronunciation training was high on the list of learning priorities and both expressed a preference for British English as the variety they would like to speak, although the groups differed regarding their belief in their abilities to achieve NS pronunciation standards (82% of English majors and 44% of non-English majors considered this as an attainable target). The researchers highlighted the role of phonetic awareness as a factor contributing to more confidence in setting achievement goals. Margić and Širola (2009) investigated 45 English majors in Croatia. Eighty percent of BA and 50% of MA students stated that they wanted to sound like NSs of English, and 60% and 45% of them, respectively, would only teach NS norms to their students. The researchers pointed out that knowledge about ELF concepts contributed to increased awareness levels and an openness to non-native English standards, as the MA students had some training and appeared more tolerant toward ELF forms. The conclusions that Sobkowiak (2002) drew from a study conducted on 645 English majors, all of whom had intensive training in NS pronunciation, indicate that pronunciation is a very important area for English majors, that they are willing to practice it on

their own, and that they would appreciate even more training offered by their institution. Janicka, Kul, & Weckwerth's (2005) findings from a study conducted on 240 Polish majors in English point to their very strong preference for NS (either British or American) models in their own pronunciation training. Moreover, attaining NS pronunciation standards was of utmost importance to the subjects. Finally, as prospective teachers, they thought that NS norms should also be the target of pronunciation instruction at lower levels of proficiency.

The Study

The main aim of the study was to investigate Polish English majors' attitudes towards NS and ELF pronunciation norms in learning and teaching English. In order to meet this primary aim, four specific questions were addressed:

1. How important is it for the participants to sound like NSs of English?
2. What is their opinion on the usefulness of non-native pronunciation norms for the purpose of international communication?
3. Do they evaluate NS or ELF pronunciation norms as appropriate for teaching English as a foreign language?
4. Are there differences in the attitudes toward pronunciation norms between the participants with more focus on pronunciation training in their course of study and the ones with less of such a focus?

Method

This section provides information about the participants of the study and describes the data collection tool which yielded information about the students' attitudes.

Participants. The participants of this study were 234 Polish majors of English, enrolled in years 1 to 3 in the BA program. It needs to be mentioned here that in English philology studies in Poland pronunciation is taught as a separate course; the intensity of pronunciation instruction may, however, depend on a given institution. The participants of the present study studied at two different universities, where the length, intensity and scope of pronunciation training differed, and therefore, here they are treated as two separate groups, Group A and Group B. Group A consisted of 132 subjects and received pronunciation training for the three initial semesters of the study, with 60 hours in each of the first two semesters and 30 hours in the third one. Moreover, Group A students were trained either in Received Pronunciation (89 of the subjects) or General American (43 of them) pronunciation according to their

choice. Group B students ($n = 102$), on the other hand, had 60 hours of pronunciation instruction limited to the first year of study, and they had no choice of the pronunciation model: All the students in this group received training in RP. Moreover, in Group A's institution pronunciation training was considered one of the priorities of instruction, and students frequently failed their year-final oral exams because their pronunciation was deficient (i.e., not native-like enough). Taking into account this background information about the pronunciation instruction received by both groups, an assumption is formulated for the interpretation of the study results that Group A students focused more on their own pronunciation and were more aware of different pronunciation standards and norms than Group B students.

Procedure. The instrument employed in the study was a two-part questionnaire. In the first part, the respondents answered 7 open-ended questions about their own motivations to study a given variety of English and to sound native-like, and about their opinions about the LFC. This part of the questionnaire yielded qualitative findings. The other part of the questionnaire consisted of 13 statements, to which the subjects responded using a 5-point scale: 1 (*I strongly disagree*), 2 (*I somewhat disagree*), 3 (*I have no opinion*), 4 (*I somewhat agree*), and 5 (*I strongly agree*). The respondents' answers provided quantitative data. The statistical procedures utilized in the study were run by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 Windows, including descriptive statistics and independent-samples *t* test. The required statistical significance was set at the level of .05.

Results. The findings obtained from the two parts of the questionnaire will be presented and analyzed in this section.

Qualitative findings. Two of the initial questions concerned the subjects' motivations behind choosing a given variety of English or their preferences if they had such a choice (since it was known to the researcher that Group B students could only study British English). A number of responses were collected, which were subsequently broken down into four groups of reasons: the attractiveness or aesthetic value of a given accent, the usefulness of a particular variety of English (mostly arguments connected with the geographical location were mentioned, but also the availability of input), culture-related reasons (personal, highly subjective associations, such as favorite artists) and, finally, the subjects' previous teachers who spoke a given accent. Selected responses to these questions are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 The respondents' reasons for the preference of British or American English as a target model of instruction

Attractiveness	Usefulness	Associations with culture	Previous teachers
BrE/AmE is nicer to the ear/ It sounds better.	BrE is more frequently used in Europe.	I adore British culture.	My teacher at high school was a native speaker of BrE.
BrE is more sophisticated/posh/aristocratic/prestigious.	More chances to visit GB than USA.	My favorite music band is American.	My teachers at school spoke BrE.
British English – the English/proper English.	Friends/family in GB or USA.	I want to speak like Hugh Grant.	
American English is less snobbish/more “user-friendly.”	More exposure to BrE (teaching materials)/ AmE (movies).	I love books by Tolkien.	

It needs to be noted here that most of the justifications provided by the respondents had a very personal and emotional character. A similar observation was recorded by Janicka et al. (2005). It seems, therefore, that the study participants developed strong feelings for and some kind of identity with the target pronunciation varieties. It was evident, among other things, in the upgrading of one's chosen variety and at the same time downgrading of the other one. Interestingly, such highly emotional responses were much more frequent among Group A than among Group B students.

Another question asked whether the respondents had ever been taken for NSs of English and, if they had, how it made them feel. Sixty-three out of the 132 Group A and 18 out of the 102 Group B participants stated that they had been taken for NSs of English, although some of them made a reservation that this was by other NNSs. All of them recalled it as a highly rewarding, extremely flattering experience. The most frequent comments provided by the study participants were similar to these examples: *“I was surprised and pleased,” “It felt so goood!”* other comments pointed to native-like pronunciation being considered a sign of achieving goals: *“My effort paid off,” “It was my personal victory”* or high proficiency levels: *“I felt as if I were a more educated person.”* These results are similar to the reactions expressed by the participants in Jenkins's (2005a) study.

Another question that the respondents answered was: *“Do you think you speak English with a Polish/non-native accent? If you do, is it a problem for you?”* In Group B, 5 students evaluated themselves as speaking like NSs, for 24 out of the remaining 97 speaking with a Polish accent constituted a

problem, and 73 stated it was not a problem. Those students mentioned functional intelligibility (*"I don't mind sounding Polish because others can understand me"*) and the hope for further improvement in the course of the study (*"I am still learning"*). The following comment made by a Group B student is an apt summary of the views expressed: *"Of course I speak Polish English. It's not a problem for me because my speech is comprehensible and I have no intention in pretending someone else. It would be nice to sound more British, but it doesn't bother me."* In Group A, 34 students said they sounded (almost) like NSs, while the remaining 98 acknowledged that they spoke with a Polish accent. Out of these, only 13 stated it was not a major problem, as they focused on the communicative aspect of learning English; for the rest of the respondents (85 out of 132), however, speaking with a non-native accent was a problem. The responses indicated very clearly that getting rid of the foreign accent was a desired goal (*"I do my best to sound native-like"*) and that speaking with a Polish accent was a source of great discomfort. A number of the respondents expressed their frustration resulting from the inability to master native-like pronunciation: *"I realize that to achieve native-like pronunciation I'd have to spend hours daily, and I'd still be unsuccessful . . ."* The responses stimulated by this question made it very clear that native-like pronunciation generally was a priority for the students, and accomplishing it was perceived as a sign of proficiency, while retaining the L1 accent was considered a deficiency. However, a difference between the two groups was noticeable, with Group B being less determined to reach native-like pronunciation standards and more comfortable with retaining their L1 accent.

The final questions in this part of the questionnaire pertained to the participants' familiarity and evaluation of the LFC as a model for teaching English pronunciation. It was expected that some of the students might have heard about the LFC in their courses in linguistics. Only the ones who were familiar with the concept were asked to evaluate it. Their selected opinions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 The respondents' opinions about the concept of the Lingua Franca Core

Positive comments about LFC	Negative comments about LFC
Very useful for non-native speakers.	It deforms the language/It is artificial/hybrid English.
A universal code for learning pronunciation.	A wrong idea – there will be L1-derived differences anyway.
Not everybody needs to master native-like pronunciation.	English is a living language with its rules, which should be respected by NNSs.
Easier and less frustrating for learners.	Native-speaker accents, with all the varieties, are very precious and should be protected.

It turned out that only 31 out of the 234 respondents had heard about the concept of LFC and provided their comments. The positive opinions highlighted the usefulness of LFC for international communication, as well as the clarity and easiness of teaching pronunciation on the basis of the LFC. Negative opinions, however, outnumbered positive ones and focused on the presence of 'deformed' forms in LFC, the insufficiency of LFC as a basis for mastering the language, or the value of NS accents, which should be protected, according to the respondents.

Quantitative findings. The Likert-type statements fall into three broad thematic categories: the participants' preferences for pronunciation models, their opinions about the appropriateness of ELF pronunciation norms in communicative contexts, and their attitudes toward the application of NS and ELF norms in learning/teaching contexts; the findings will be presented under such headings. Moreover, the numerical and percentage values for selected statements are included in Table 6 in the Appendix.

Preference for pronunciation models. As can be seen in Table 3, scores for the statement concerning the willingness to sound like NSs represent the highest mean values (above 4 on a 5-point scale) in the study overall for both groups, which highlights the participants' very positive attitudes toward NS norms in their own pronunciation development. In fact, as Table 6 indicates, as many as 117 (88%) of the 132 Group A and 57 (58%) of the 102 Group B students opted for the *strongly agree* answer to this statement. Only 2 Group B (and no Group A) students *somewhat disagreed* with the statement. *T*-test results indicate very significant differences between the two groups ($p = .000$). Similarly, as Table 3 indicates, statistically significant differences were found for the following statement: "It's ok for me to retain my Polish accent." The mean scores indicate more negative reactions to this statement expressed by Group A students. As Table 6 shows, 59% of Group A and 22% of Group B subjects strongly disagreed with this statement. Moreover, the high standard deviation value for Group B indicates considerable variation among the opinions within this group, while Group A answers were definitely more homogenous and more definitely negative.

Another statement, which posed the question of whether there is too much focus on native-like pronunciation in the university program, did not yield statistically significant differences between the groups. As the mean values indicate (Table 3), the participants did not agree with the statement, which may be interpreted as their willingness to practice even more to achieve native-like pronunciation (a similar observation was recorded by Sobkowiak, 2002). Signifi-

cant differences were found, however, for the last statement: More Group A subjects expressed their belief that their native-like accent in English would contribute to better future career prospects. It needs to be highlighted, however, that both groups' mean values point to positive answers.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-test results for statements concerning the participants' preferences for target pronunciation models (**p* < .05, ***p* < .01)

Statement	Group	Mean	SD	Levene's Test		Sig. (2-tailed)
				F	Sig.	
I would like to sound like a NS of English.	A	4.88	.350	89.332	.000	.000**
	B	4.47	.699			
It's ok for me to retain my Polish accent when I speak English.	A	1.59	.847	31.759	.000	.000**
	B	2.67	1.237			
At my university, there is too much focus on NS pronunciation.	A	1.77	1.069	.007	.934	.294
	B	1.91	1.045			
I will have better career prospects because of my NS accent.	A	3.98	1.056	5.525	.020	.001**

Relevance of ELF pronunciation norms in L2 communication. Table 4 shows group means, standard deviations and statistical significance levels for statements concerning the relevance of ELF norms in communication.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-test results for statements concerning the relevance of NS and ELF pronunciation norms in L2 communication (**p* < .05, ***p* < .01)

Statement	Group	Mean	SD	Levene's Test		Sig. (2-tailed)
				F	Sig.	
It is acceptable to sound like a NNS, as long as you are understood by others.	A	3.42	1.099	1.947	.164	.004**
	B	3.83	1.100			
In international communication it's better to sound like a NNS, because people understand you more easily.	A	2.94	1.246	1.323	.251	.765
	B	2.89	1.125			
If you speak with a perfect NS accent, you are perceived as a more intelligent, knowledgeable person.	A	4.08	1.074	31.443	.000	.000**
	B	3.32	1.436			
NS pronunciation standards are not important when you communicate mostly with other NNSs.	A	2.77	1.264	2.404	.122	.029*
	B	3.13	1.166			
If you achieve very high standards of NS pronunciation, your identity as a Polish person suffers.	A	1.53	.869	1.272	.261	.639

One of the statements claimed that NNS pronunciation is acceptable on condition that it is intelligible. The mean values suggest rather positive answers; yet it needs to be noted that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p = .004$). The data in Table 6 show that 29% of Group A and 17% of Group B participants disagreed with the statement, while 63% and 72%, respectively, agreed with it. Group B seemed to value functional intelligibility over sounding native-like. Surprisingly, though, more Group A participants (41% versus 36%) agreed that NNS accents are more intelligible in international communication, while more Group B participants (43% versus 39%) appeared to disagree with this statement. These differences, however, were not statistically significant. Very high significance levels ($p = .000$), however, were recorded for the statement concerning the perception of a person who sounds native-like as being more intelligent and knowledgeable. As the data in Table 6 show, considerably more Group A students (82% versus 55% of Group B students) agreed with this claim, which is another indication of these participants' high appreciation of NS pronunciation norms. Similarly, as the mean values in Table 4 show, Group A's opinions concerning whether NS norms are not important in communication with other NNSs were less favorable than Group B's. These differences were statistically significant ($p = .029$), which again points to a difference between the two groups in their perception of the relevance of ELF norms in international communication. The final statement in this topic area concerned one's L1 identity faced with the acquisition of native-like L2 pronunciation. Statistically significant differences were not revealed here ($p = .639$) and, as the mean values suggest, the respondents largely did not agree with this statement. As the data show, the participants apparently did not associate the acquisition of L2 NS pronunciation with a threat to one's L1 identity.

Pronunciation learning/teaching-related issues. Table 5 includes statistics of the participants' responses to the four statements concerning the application of NS and ELF norms as targets in learning and teaching pronunciation.

As the data in Table 5 show, the mean values for the statement concerning the acceptability of teaching ELF norms to learners of English are at a level below 3, which reveals rather negative opinions being voiced by the respondents. However, the differences between the groups turned out to be significant ($p = .009$). According to Table 6, while 56% of Group A participants disagreed and only 17% of them agreed with the statement, the percentage values for negative and positive opinions were more or less equal for Group B (36% and 37%, respectively). This clearly indicates that for Group A students the application of NS norms in teaching EFL is significantly more crucial than for Group B students. Both groups,

however, seemed to have similar opinions about the differences in setting pronunciation goals for philology students and learners at lower educational levels. Here, the differences between the answers' of the groups were not statistically significant ($p = .276$). It may thus be inferred that while the participants as a whole did agree that for English majors (though not necessarily for other learners) acquiring native-like pronunciation is a priority, Group A still viewed NS pronunciation norms as the target in teaching English to learners regardless of their level. This was further confirmed by the participants' responses to another statement, which concerned the relevance of teaching native-like pronunciation to learners from the very beginning. The differences between the responses provided by both groups were statistically significant ($p = .021$). Finally, as the mean values above a level of 4 (Table 5) show, both groups seemed to agree that teachers of English should have very good, native-like pronunciation. However, the responses of Group A participants were again more positive (almost all of them, 98%, and 85% of Group B participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement) and the standard deviation levels were smaller, which indicates that there was more agreement among Group A students. The differences between the groups were significant ($p = .000$).

Table 5 Descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-test results for statements concerning pronunciation norms in L2 learning and teaching (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$).

Statement	Group	Mean	SD	Levene's Test		Sig. (2-tailed)
				F	Sig.	
It is acceptable to teach 'international' pronunciation norms to learners of English.	A	2.45	1.066	1.240	.267	.009**
	B	2.84	1.192			
NS pronunciation norms are important in English philology institutes, but not at lower levels of education.	A	3.10	1.271	.431	.512	.276
	B	3.28	1.315			
Learners of English should be taught proper, NS pronunciation from the very beginning.	A	4.58	.752	6.331	.013	.021*
	B	4.33	.894			
Teachers of English should have NS pronunciation.	A	4.70	.549	6.209	.013	.000**

Discussion

The findings obtained in the present study clearly indicate that the studied population of English majors, as a whole, expressed a strong preference for acquiring NS pronunciation as opposed to ELF pronunciation levels. This finding

largely corroborates the outcomes of other research projects (e.g., Janicka et al., 2005; Jenkins, 2005a; Sifakis & Sigouri, 2005; Waniek-Klimczak & Klimczak, 2005). Moreover, taken as a whole, the participants voiced positive opinions about the relevance of NS pronunciation norms in learning and teaching pronunciation at lower levels of proficiency. They were, however, less convinced about the relevance of NS pronunciation standards in the context of international communication, admitting that sounding like a non-native speaker may have some advantages, one of them being functional intelligibility.

However, the differences between the responses provided by the respondents from the two groups lead to interesting conclusions. First of all, they show the significance of the intensity of pronunciation training for raising awareness levels of NS pronunciation standards and, subsequently, for attitudes toward NS and ELF pronunciation norms. Group A students, who received more intensive instruction in pronunciation and who were expected to achieve native-like standards to a greater extent than Group B students, consistently expressed more favorable opinions about NS pronunciation norms as the target for learning and teaching, largely undermining the value and applicability of ELF pronunciation norms. Their responses displayed highly emotional, personal evaluations of their preferred NS standards and their willingness to achieve them. Such attitudes were less evident in Group B, whose opinions, although primarily very positive about NS pronunciation standards, appeared to be more balanced. Generally, Group B participants expressed more sensitivity towards acknowledging the value of ELF pronunciation norms in learning and teaching English, including their own language development. While for Group A respondents achieving native-like pronunciation was the ultimate aim of instruction, Group B respondents seemed to view it as a welcome sign of language development, yet not necessarily the major indication of proficiency. Therefore, it appears that a more balanced approach manifested by Group B reflects more closely the contemporary trend in foreign language pronunciation training, which highlights the primacy of communicative intelligibility over achieving NS standards as the aim of teaching.

Moreover, the role of the educational context, so essential in setting the aims of pronunciation teaching, needs to be mentioned as a factor which influenced the findings of the present study. Since the participants of the study were English majors, for whom English will be a tool for pursuing professional careers, and most of whom will become teachers of English, their strong motivation to attain native-like pronunciation standards should be viewed as a very positive indication of their involvement in their university work. Both NS and NNS teachers of English are, after all, their learners' pronunciation models and pronunciation instructors; hence, EFL teachers' own awareness of English pro-

nunciation norms and their phonetic competence (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Dziubalska-Kořaczyk, 2002) will always be beneficial to the learners, regardless of whether the learners themselves will be motivated to sound like NSs or merely be able to communicate with other NNSs in international contexts.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

The results of the study may serve as a basis for conclusions regarding the position of pronunciation instruction in teacher training courses. The application of the nativeness principle (Levis, 2005) in setting the goals for pronunciation instruction seems well grounded in such contexts. First of all, L2 teachers are their learners' pronunciation models; moreover, such goals appeared to be a source of satisfaction and intrinsic motivation for the study participants. On the other hand, although achieving native-like levels of competence in all areas of English by teacher-trainees is justified and welcome, they need to be well acquainted with the concept of ELF and its implications for teaching in order to be fully prepared for the challenges of teaching in the contemporary L2 classroom. As previous research shows, NS pronunciation is often unnecessary and unattainable for many L2 learners, while it may still be a priority for others. A well prepared L2 teacher needs to be aware of different options in pronunciation instruction and sensitive enough to embrace them.

The main limitation of the study is its lack of generalizability because of the limited number of study participants and settings (two Polish universities). As research on ELF attitudes is a relatively new and fast developing area, more studies, conducted in a number of educational settings, will be necessary to draw broader conclusions. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate in more detail a correlation between English majors' acquaintance with the ELF concept and their willingness to set NS or ELF norms as targets in teaching. Another point worth further investigation is a correlation between teachers' or teacher trainees' proficiency levels in English with their readiness to pursue NS or ELF standards in learning and teaching.

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Appendix

Table 6 Numbers and percentages of the subjects' responses to selected statements

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	No opinion	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would like to sound like a native speaker of English.					
Group A (n = 132)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1% (1)	11% (14)	88% (117)
Group B (n = 102)	0% (0)	2% (2)	6% (6)	35% (36)	57% (58)
It's ok for me to retain my Polish accent when I speak English.					
Group A (n = 132)	59% (77)	30% (40)	5% (7)	6% (8)	0% (0)
Group B (n = 102)	22% (22)	27% (28)	20% (20)	25% (26)	6% (6)
At my University, there is too much focus on correct native-like pronunciation.					
Group A (n = 132)	57% (75)	23% (30)	9% (12)	9% (13)	2% (2)
Group B (n = 102)	48% (49)	22% (23)	21% (21)	8% (8)	1% (1)
It is acceptable to sound like a NNS, as long as you are understood by others.					
Group A (n = 132)	4% (5)	25% (33)	8% (11)	52% (68)	11% (15)
Group B (n = 102)	3% (3)	14% (14)	11% (11)	42% (43)	30% (31)
In international communication it's better to sound like a NNS, because people understand you more easily.					
Group A (n = 132)	17% (22)	22% (29)	20% (27)	33% (43)	8% (11)
Group B (n = 102)	10% (10)	33% (34)	21% (21)	30% (31)	6% (6)
If you speak with a perfect native-like accent, you are perceived as a more intelligent, knowledgeable person than when you speak with a non-native accent.					
Group A (n = 132)	4% (5)	8% (11)	6% (8)	40% (53)	42% (55)
Group B (n = 102)	15% (15)	21% (21)	9% (9)	29% (30)	26% (27)
It is acceptable to teach 'international', non-native-like pronunciation to learners of English.					
Group A (n = 132)	20% (27)	36% (47)	23% (31)	19% (25)	2% (2)
Group B (n = 102)	20% (20)	16% (16)	27% (28)	32% (33)	5% (5)
Teachers of English should have native-like pronunciation.					
Group A (n = 132)	0	2% (2)	0	25% (33)	73% (97)
Group B (n = 102)	2% (2)	8% (8)	7% (7)	52% (53)	31% (32)