



## Effects of Explicit Phonetic Instruction in the L2 Classroom

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### Research Questions

- Does **short-term, explicit** pronunciation instruction increase comprehensibility more than non-explicit instruction?
- Does instruction in **suprasegmental** features increase comprehensibility more than instruction in **segmental** features?

### Previous studies

- \* **Non-native pronunciation** affects all domains of L2 phonology (segmentals and suprasegmentals)
  - \* Results in foreign accent
  - \* Affects comprehensibility and intelligibility
- \* Debate whether suprasegmental deviations are more detrimental to foreign accent or intelligibility than segmental deviations (Anderson-Hsieh et al, 1992; Munro & Derwing 1995).
- \* **Teaching of L2 pronunciation** trends towards communicative framework (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Hinkel 2006)
  - \* Sometimes perceived as in conflict with explicit pronunciation instruction
  - \* Yet some argue that explicit instruction yields larger benefits (Lord, 2005)
- \* **Influence of research findings on instruction is minimal** (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Levis, 1999)
- \* Only few studies examined L2 classroom contexts to test how to apply laboratory findings to pronunciation instruction (e.g. Derwing, Munro & Wiebe, 1998)

### Pre and Posttest

- Delayed Sentence-Repetition Task (Trofimovich & Baker, 2006)
- Learners were audio-recorded individually before and after the treatment

#### Participants

- 4 participants in each group, who did pre- and posttest; Got the full training; Produced 24 sentences correctly
- Total: 12 English learners and 4 English native speakers

#### Comprehensibility Ratings

- Obtained from 12 native speakers
- 9-point Likert Scale (Derwing & Munro, 1997)
  - 1 = extremely easy to understand 9 = impossible to understand

#### Stimuli

- Sentences were the same for all groups
  - **Example:** He was in the [l[ae]b working
- Pre-test = 24 sentences;
- Post-test = 48 sentences
  - 24 sentences (same as pre-test)
  - 24 new sentences (to verify improvement)
- Selected for analysis: 24 sentences per participant (8 pre + 16 post) that were correctly produced

### Instruction

(3 weeks: 75 minutes per week, over 3 days (total : 225 min. of instruction))

Stages and Techniques	Class 1 (n=12) Suprasegmentals	Class 2 (n=8) Segmentals	Class 3 (n=10) Non-explicit
<b>Presentation</b> Visual aids Oral introduction of topic	<b>Explicit</b> instruction and analysis	<b>Explicit</b> instruction and analysis	<b>Non-explicit</b> instruction; pronunciation practice announced
<b>Guided Practice</b> Bottom-up skills, Analysis Recognition & Discrimination Minimal pair drills Reading short passages	<b>Rhythm, Stress &amp; reduction, Linking, Intonation</b>	<b>Vowels /i, ɪ, æ, ε/ and articulation</b> <b>Vowel contrasts</b> <b>Minimal pairs</b>	Classroom drills on words, sentences and phrases; combination of the same materials as other groups
<b>Production</b> Top-down skills; Fluency activities	Communicative tasks : Pair discussion; Group discussion; Role plays; Information gap activities		

### Quantitative Results

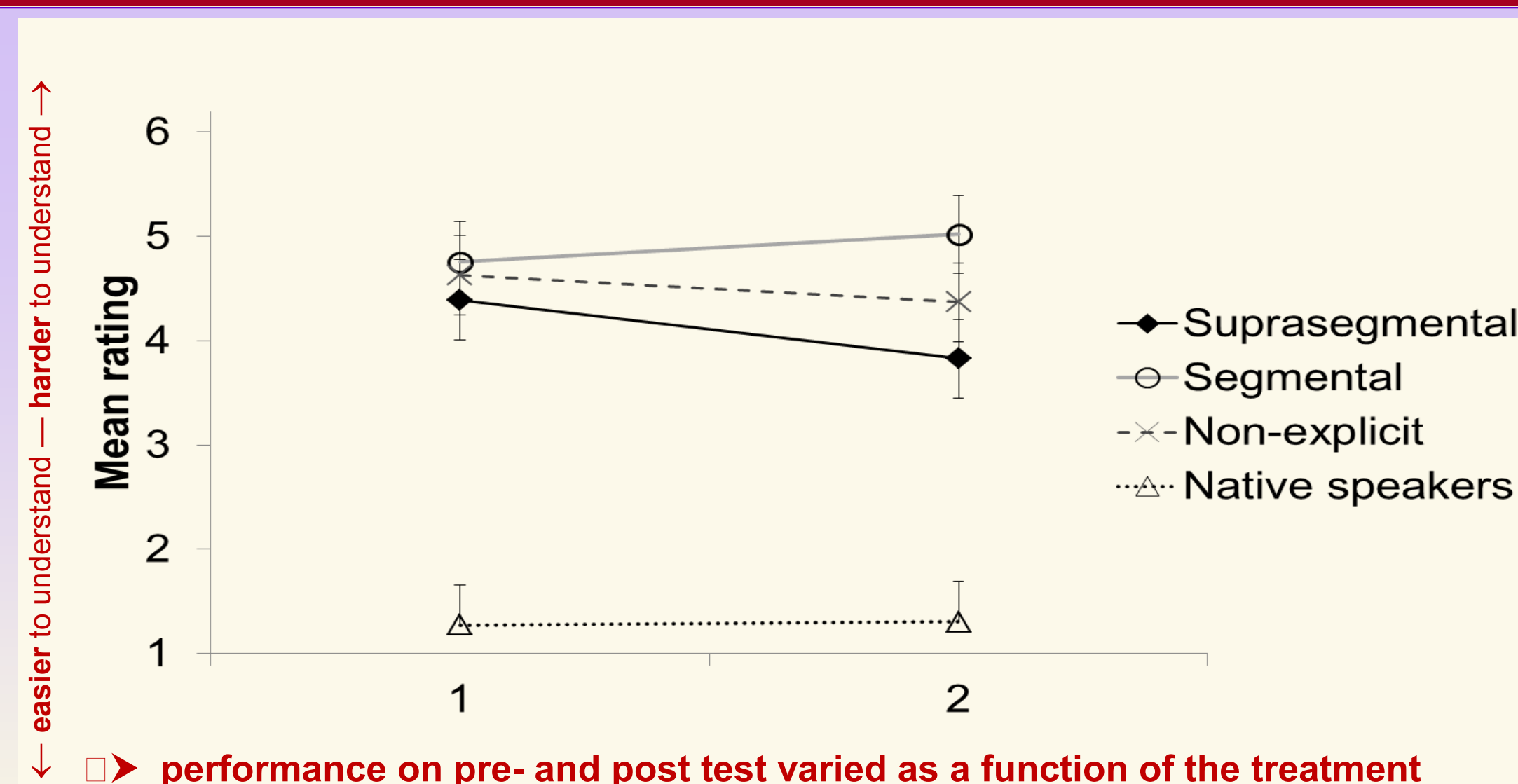


Figure 1: Effect of treatment Learners only:

Mean Rating	M	SD
Pretest	4.4	0.18
Posttest	4.2	0.57

- Marginal improvement from pre- to post:  $p = .072$
- Group difference :  $p > .2$  **BUT STRONG INTERACTION** between test and group:  $p < .001$

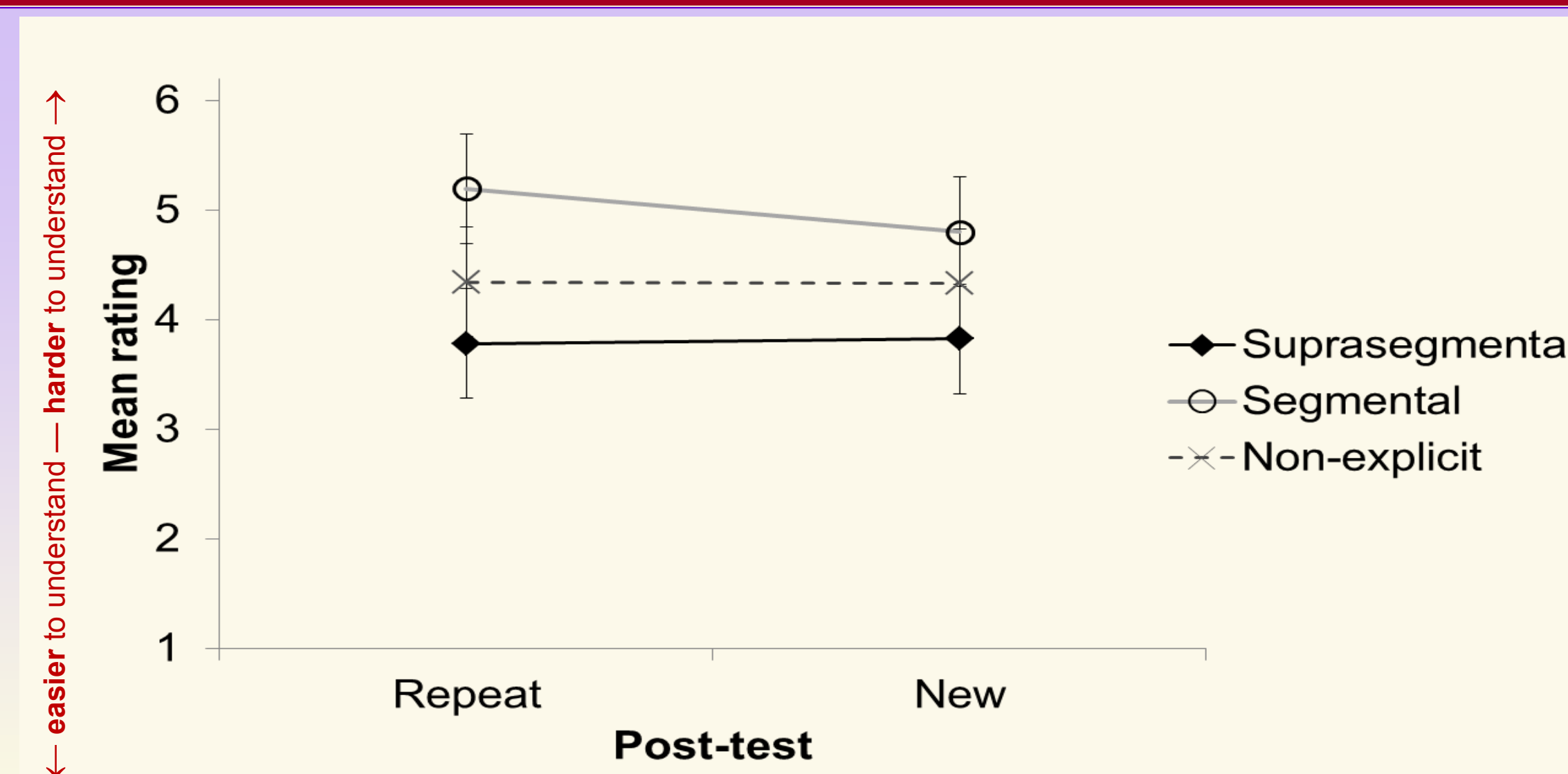


Figure 2: Repeat vs. New sentences

Post-test: No difference in ratings between „new“ and „repeat“ sentences

• no effect of repeat vs. new ( $F(1, 12.8) < 1, p > .6$ )

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### Qualitative Results (see handout)

- Experimental groups were similar in terms of explicit feedback
- More vocabulary explanations occurred in the control & segmental groups
- Overall, explicit analysis of materials was more complex and global in the suprasegmental group, and more limited in the segmental group
- Such differences may account for the ratings, but more controlled research is needed

### Conclusions

- **Explicit phonetic instruction benefits L2 learners overall**, but differences in treatment yield different outcomes (i.e. segmental group became *less* comprehensible)
- **Explicit suprasegmental instruction yields rapid improvement in comprehensibility**, but qualitative analysis together with comprehensibility ratings reveal complex interactions of instructional focus and teacher implementation (i.e. explanation and feedback practices )