

Agelat EFL Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives Towards Teaching English Pronunciation

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وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مدارس العجالات الثانوية تجاه تدريس
نطق اللغة الإنجليزية

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Abstract

Pronunciation is an essential skill for learning English language in EFL context. However, it is often ignored by EFL teachers. This study was conducted to investigate the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards teaching English pronunciation and the challenges they face in this process. A mixed-methods approach was employed in this investigation. The quantitative data were collected through administering a close-ended questionnaire to 42 EFL secondary school teachers in Agelat, while the qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with six teachers selected from those who participated in the questionnaire. A manual descriptive statistical analysis was employed to analyze the quantitative data, and the content analysis method was used for the qualitative data. The findings obtained revealed that the majority of participant teachers hold positive perspectives regarding the importance of teaching English pronunciation to EFL secondary students. A variety of teaching strategies have been reported by teachers, including audiovisual materials, role-play activities and repetition and drilling. However, the study identified a significant theory-practice gap: despite positive perspectives toward teaching pronunciation, teachers continue to prioritize vocabulary and grammar instruction. Teachers identified several challenges included inadequate professional training, limited time, insufficient materials and resources, L1 interference, large class sizes, and lack of student motivation. To address these challenges, it is essential for the Libyan Ministry of Education to reform curriculum, tailor teacher training, and provide necessary materials for effective pronunciation teaching in Libyan EFL secondary education.

Key words: English Pronunciation, EFL teachers, challenges, perspectives, secondary education, teaching.

الملخص

النطق مهارة أساسية في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغةً أجنبية، غير أنه كثيراً ما يُهمل من قِبَل معلمي هذه اللغة. جاءت هذه الدراسة للتحقيق في وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغةً أجنبية في المرحلة الثانوية في مدينة العجيلات تجاه تدريس النطق الإنجليزي، والتحديات التي يواجهونها في هذه العملية. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية مزدوجة تجمع بين الطريقتين الكمية والنوعية؛ إذ جُمعت البيانات الكمية عبر توزيع استبانة مغلقة على 42 معلماً من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية في مدينة العجيلات، فيما حُصِّلت البيانات النوعية من خلال مقابلات شبه مغلقة أُجريت مع ستة معلمين مختارين من بين المشاركين في الاستبانة. وقد وُظِف التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي اليدوي لتحليل البيانات الكمية، في حين استُعين بأسلوب تحليل المحتوى لمعالجة البيانات النوعية. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن غالبية المعلمين المشاركين يحملون توجهات إيجابية نحو أهمية تدريس النطق الإنجليزي لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية. كما أفاد المعلمون باستخدامهم طرق مختلفة من استراتيجيات التدريس، تشمل: المواد السمعية البصرية، وأنشطة لعب الأدوار، والتكرار والتدريب المنظم. مع ذلك فإن الدراسة رصدت فجوةً جوهريةً بين النظرية والتطبيق؛ فعلى الرغم من التوجهات الإيجابية تجاه تدريس النطق، يظل المعلمون يُولون الأولوية لتدريس المفردات والقواعد النحوية. وقد أشار المعلمون إلى جملة من التحديات، أبرزها: قصور التدريب المهني، وضيق الوقت المخصص، وشح المواد والموارد التعليمية، وتأثير اللغة الأم في اكتساب النطق، وكبر أحجام الفصول الدراسية، وانعدام الدافعية لدى الطلاب. ولمعالجة هذه التحديات، تغدو الحاجة ملحةً لأن تعمد وزارة التعليم الليبية إلى إصلاح المناهج الدراسية، وإعادة تصميم برامج تدريب المعلمين لتلبية الاحتياجات الفعلية، وتوفير المواد اللازمة لضمان تدريس فعال للنطق في مدارس المرحلة الثانوية الليبية.

الكلمات الدالة: النطق باللغة الإنجليزية، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، التحديات، وجهات النظر، التعليم الثانوي، التدريس.

1.Introduction

Learning English in EFL school contexts involves mastering a variety of skills and abilities that together support the development of a particular level of language proficiency. One of these skills is pronunciation. Pronunciation is considered an essential skill that EFL students must master, primarily because it affects their language accuracy and comprehension. Mastering English pronunciation skills proves challenging for EFL students. Despite its significance, pronunciation has not received adequate attention in Libyan EFL secondary school instructional practices, leading to deficiencies among EFL secondary school students. Teaching English pronunciation in Libyan EFL school contexts has often been overlooked. As a result, many students consistently struggle to speak confidently due to insufficient pronunciation skills. This study aims to investigate the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards teaching English pronunciation and the challenges they face in this domain.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of English pronunciation in Libyan EFL language learning contexts, it is often neglected (Zabiya, 2017; Hamuda et al., 2024). There is a lack of specific research on teachers' voices and practical challenges regarding pronunciation teaching at Agelat EFL secondary schools.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims to investigate the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards teaching English pronunciation and to identify the challenges they face in their classrooms.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by two research questions:

- What are the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards teaching English pronunciation?
- What are the main challenges these teachers face in teaching English pronunciation?

2.Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

English is one of the most widely used languages in the world today. It is used for work, study, travel, and communication with people from different countries. Pronunciation is a key dimension of communication that must be focused on so that the speaker's intended message is clearly conveyed. According to Yates and Zielinski (2009), pronunciation refers to how speakers produce the sounds used to make meaning. It encompasses consonants and vowels (segments), as well as suprasegmental features such as stress, timing, rhythm, intonation, phrasing, and voice quality. Since these features operate together, difficulties in one area can adversely affect others and ultimately compromise the intelligibility of speech. EFL students must develop proficient pronunciation in order to communicate effectively in English. However, in Libyan EFL secondary schools, both students and teachers find pronunciation difficult to learn and teach. Without adequate pronunciation, even strong grammatical competence and rich vocabulary do not guarantee effective spoken communication. One of the main reasons EFL students tend to transfer their mother tongue rules to the target language is to feel more comfortable, which in turn places additional demands on EFL teachers (Abdulwahid, 2023). Teaching pronunciation in academic settings therefore presents substantial challenges that must be addressed (Gut, 2009).

Investigating the challenges of English pronunciation teaching at the EFL secondary level is especially important, as it provides a systematic means of clarifying difficulties in this area. It also deepens understanding of the specific barriers teachers face, potentially paving the way for more

effective pronunciation teaching methods and, in turn, enhancing students' overall language learning. According to Mohd Asikin and Ibrahim (2020), gaining insight into these challenges helps refine teaching practices. Similarly, Gatbonton et al. (2005) highlight the value of research in addressing difficulties in language teaching, while Derwing and Munro (2005) link effective communication to the nuances of pronunciation. Research on this topic therefore holds both academic significance and practical value.

Teaching pronunciation at the secondary school level is particularly challenging due to native language interference, diverse linguistic backgrounds, and variation in accent (Paudel, 2024). Szyszka (2016) adds that limited teaching time within extensive course programs is a major factor reducing sensitivity to phonetic differences during adolescence. Furthermore, a lack of appropriate resources and insufficient specialised training for teachers significantly compound the challenge of effective pronunciation instruction (Thomson & Derwing, 2015).

2.2 Strategies for Teaching English Pronunciation

Effective pronunciation is a critical component of success in spoken communication in any language, as it directly influences how well the listener understands the speaker's message (Adinda & Ahmad, 2024; Tolibovna, 2023). Previous research has documented a range of strategies used in pronunciation instruction. These include explicit instruction with audio and video models, drills, recordings, and comparisons with native-speaker samples (Pardede, 2018). Teachers also integrate audiovisual materials, video cues, hand gestures, and phonetic charts to make sound production visible and kinaesthetic (Panyathikul et al., 2024). Gazan and Gürbüz (2025) report that using audiovisual resources such as films, songs, YouTube videos, and digital recordings for listening and shadowing can significantly improve EFL students' pronunciation. The use of social media platforms such as Telegram can similarly enhance pronunciation learning outside the classroom (Xodabande, 2017). Despite the recognised importance of pronunciation, some teachers neglect it due to perceived challenges, as discussed in the following section.

2.3 Challenges in Teaching Pronunciation

In order to master English, students must acquire competence across the four essential skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Accurate pronunciation is vital for speaking, since phonological variation can produce ambiguity and lead to miscommunication. Various challenges lead teachers to neglect pronunciation instruction, including insufficient knowledge of phonetics,

lack of clear pedagogical guidelines, and inadequate training (Fauzia & Amri, 2023). Panyathikul et al. (2024) and Kirkova-Naskova (2019) further note that many English teachers, both native and non-native speakers, lack proficiency in pronunciation teaching strategies due to limited professional development. Hamed (2019) identifies insufficient access to appropriate audiovisual and multimodal resources as an additional barrier. Some teachers rely exclusively on textbooks rather than adopting innovative techniques, and time constraints further restrict the scope of pronunciation instruction (Fauzia & Amri, 2023). Low motivation and limited classroom participation among both teachers and students are also frequently cited concerns. First language interference, or negative transfer, is considered a key challenge for both teachers and students in Libyan EFL contexts (Abdulwahid, 2023). These challenges underscore the need for curriculum development, tailored teacher training, and appropriate resource provision to promote effective pronunciation teaching and learning in EFL secondary education.

3.Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research paper employs a mixed-method research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Research design is described by Leedy and Ormrod (2015, p. 92) as "the overall structure for the procedure the researcher follows, the data the researcher collects, and the data analyses the researcher conducts." This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards teaching English pronunciation, as well as to identify the challenges they face in their classrooms. The integration of both methodological approaches provided a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, as quantitative methods focus on measurable outcomes while qualitative methods explore teachers' perspectives in naturalistic settings.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Gathering data through a questionnaire combined with interviews is a widely utilised approach in educational research (Nunan, 1992). To address the research questions posed in this study, both a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were employed.

According to Brown (2001, p. 6), a questionnaire is "any written instrument that provides respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers." An online closed-ended questionnaire was distributed to 42 Agelat EFL secondary school teachers. The questionnaire items were developed based on a review of relevant theoretical literature and previous empirical studies. It was organised into three main thematic categories, each comprising a set of related statements, for a total of 29 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (Dörnyei, 2009) including strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. According to Nayak and Singh (2015, p. 111), Likert scales are "summated scales, that is, the overall scale score may be a summation of the attribute values of each item as selected by a respondent." Closed-ended questionnaires were considered appropriate due to their simplicity in coding and tabulation and their capacity to gather data from a broad sample (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

Interviews serve as a widely used instrument for accessing individuals' experiences and internal perceptions (Babbie, 2008). Accordingly, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of the questionnaire participants to elicit more in-depth insights regarding their experiences in teaching pronunciation and the challenges they encounter. According to Babbie (2008, p. 336), a qualitative interview is "essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent." An interview schedule was developed to guide the process, comprising open-ended questions informed by the questionnaire findings. The interview participants were selected from questionnaire respondents who expressed willingness to participate in the follow-up phase (Mack et al., 2005).

3.3 Sampling Methods

According to Kumar (2011, p. 177), sampling is "the process of selecting a few from a bigger group to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation, or outcome regarding the bigger group." In this study, a non-probability volunteer sampling method was employed for selecting participants for both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, as this approach was deemed appropriate for encouraging participants to provide richer data.

3.4 Participants of the Study

The study participants were divided into two groups. A total of 42 EFL secondary school teachers completed the questionnaire. Six of these teachers subsequently volunteered to participate in the semi-structured interview phase. The data collected from both groups contributed to an understanding of the participant teachers' perspectives on pronunciation teaching and the challenges they face.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

At the outset of the data collection process, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time and were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially (Mack et al., 2005). Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher obtained each participant's consent and reaffirmed the anonymity of their responses to enhance the trustworthiness of the data (Babbie, 2008).

4.Data Analysis

This section presents the data analysis drawn from a closed-ended questionnaire and six semi-structured interviews, employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate EFL secondary school teachers' perspectives on teaching English pronunciation and the challenges they face.

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire administered to 42 Agelat EFL secondary school teachers. The questionnaire was divided into three thematic categories: (1) teachers' perspectives on teaching English pronunciation (Statements 1–8); (2) strategies and experiences in teaching pronunciation (Statements 9–18); and (3) challenges faced in teaching pronunciation (Statements 19–28). Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). For clarity, Strongly Disagree and Disagree responses are merged to indicate disagreement, and Agree and Strongly Agree are combined to indicate agreement.

Table 1*Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Pronunciation*

No.	Questionnaire Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Pronunciation is essential for Agelat EFL secondary school students' language learning.	7.9%	5.3%	0.0%	42.1%	44.7%
2	Teaching pronunciation is effective for Agelat EFL secondary school students' speaking skills.	5.1%	10.3%	7.7%	25.6%	51.3%
3	Teaching pronunciation improves Agelat EFL secondary school students' speaking skills.	5.3%	5.3%	10.5%	26.3%	52.6%
4	Pronunciation should be given more attention by Agelat EFL secondary school teachers.	7.7%	5.1%	0.0%	35.9%	51.3%
5	Teaching pronunciation should be involved in planning lessons.	5.1%	10.3%	7.7%	28.2%	48.7%
6	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers often prioritize teaching grammar and vocabulary over pronunciation.	2.6%	10.3%	12.8%	41.0%	33.3%
7	Agelat EFL secondary school students' poor pronunciation can lead to misunderstanding.	5.3%	13.2%	18.4%	28.9%	34.2%
8	Pronunciation practices in Agelat EFL secondary school had little effect on students' pronunciation skills.	2.6%	25.6%	25.6%	28.2%	17.9%

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | N = Neutral | A = Agree | SA = Strongly Agree

Table 1 presents the perspectives of EFL secondary school teachers on teaching English pronunciation. The findings demonstrate that the majority of participant teachers hold positive

views regarding the importance of pronunciation instruction. Statement 1 indicates that 86.8% of participants agreed that pronunciation is essential for EFL students' language learning, while 13.2% disagreed. Statement 2 shows that 76.9% agreed that teaching pronunciation is effective for developing students' speaking skills, with 15.4% disagreeing and 7.7% remaining neutral. For Statement 3, 78.9% agreed that teaching pronunciation improves students' speaking skills. Statement 4 yielded the highest level of agreement, with 87.2% of respondents indicating that pronunciation deserves greater attention in teaching practice, while only 12.8% disagreed. Statement 5 shows that 76.9% agreed that pronunciation should be incorporated into lesson planning. A considerable 74.3% of teachers acknowledged that grammar and vocabulary are typically prioritised over pronunciation (Statement 6). Statement 7 reveals that 63.1% agreed that poor pronunciation can cause miscommunication, while 18.5% disagreed and 18.4% were neutral. Statement 8 yielded mixed results, with 46.1% agreeing that current pronunciation practices have had little effect on students, 28.2% disagreeing, and 25.6% remaining neutral.

Table 2*Strategies and Experiences in Teaching Pronunciation*

No.	Questionnaire Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
9	I provide clear explanations of phonetic rules to my students.	0.0%	88.8%	28.9%	34.2%	21.1%
10	I frequently use teacher modelling and student imitation as a core technique in my pronunciation lessons.	2.7%	16.2%	18.9%	54.1%	8.1%
11	I use visual aids to explain how sounds are produced.	5.3%	10.5%	21.1%	39.5%	23.7%
12	I incorporate audio recordings of native speakers to model natural pronunciation.	2.6%	10.3%	15.4%	48.7%	23.1%
13	I use pronunciation games to make practice engaging and interactive.	0.0%	5.1%	25.6%	46.2%	23.1%
14	I design role-plays or dialogues where students use correct pronunciation to communicate effectively.	5.1%	7.7%	7.7%	43.6%	35.9%
15	Agelat EFL secondary school administrations should provide the necessary materials for teaching pronunciation.	7.7%	0.0%	17.9%	33.3%	41.0%
16	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers should design classroom activities that enhance students' pronunciation skills.	5.1%	0.0%	12.8%	33.3%	48.7%
17	I provide immediate feedback on pronunciation errors during class activities.	7.7%	5.1%	17.9%	28.2%	41.0%
18	I connect pronunciation instruction directly to listening comprehension.	2.6%	7.7%	15.4%	48.7%	25.6%

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | N = Neutral | A = Agree | SA = Strongly Agree

Table 2 reveals generally positive perspectives among Agelat EFL secondary school teachers regarding the strategies used in pronunciation instruction. Statement 16 recorded the highest level of agreement, with 82% of participants agreeing that teachers should design classroom activities to enhance students' pronunciation skills, while only 5.1% disagreed. Statement 15 showed that 74.3% agreed that school administrations should supply necessary materials for pronunciation teaching. Statement 14 indicates that 79.5% agreed that they design role-plays and dialogues enabling students to practise correct pronunciation in communicative contexts. Statements 11 and 12 showed comparably high agreement levels, with 71.8% reporting use of audio recordings of native speakers and 63.2% using visual aids to explain sound production. Statements 13 and 18 demonstrated similar patterns, with 69.3% using pronunciation games and 74.3% integrating pronunciation with listening comprehension activities. Statement 17 shows 69.2% provided immediate feedback on pronunciation errors, while Statement 10 shows 62.2% used teacher modelling and student imitation. Statement 9 revealed that only 55.3% provided explicit explanations of phonetic rules, with 28.9% remaining neutral.

Table 3

Challenges of Teaching Pronunciation

No.	Questionnaire Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
19	Agelat EFL secondary school students do not show interest in learning pronunciation.	5.3%	21.1%	21.1%	28.9%	23.7%
20	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers do not make an effort to teach pronunciation.	7.9%	15.8%	31.6%	21.1%	23.7%
21	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers do not have appropriate training in teaching pronunciation.	2.6%	7.9%	26.3%	31.6%	31.6%
22	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers have insufficient time for teaching pronunciation.	0.0%	17.1%	11.4%	40.0%	31.4%
23	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers have a lack of knowledge in teaching pronunciation.	7.9%	13.2%	31.6%	31.6%	15.8%

No.	Questionnaire Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
24	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers lack confidence in teaching pronunciation.	7.9%	23.7%	26.3%	28.9%	13.2%
25	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers face difficulties in teaching pronunciation as they are non-native English speakers.	5.3%	21.1%	26.3%	26.3%	21.1%
26	First language of Agelat EFL secondary school students and teachers is considered as a challenge in teaching and learning English pronunciation.	2.6%	23.7%	23.7%	34.2%	15.8%
27	Lack of motivation on the part of EFL secondary school students is considered as a challenge in teaching English pronunciation.	5.4%	8.1%	24.3%	40.5%	21.6%
28	Agelat EFL secondary school teachers do not follow the pedagogical instructions of teaching pronunciation.	5.3%	5.3%	34.2%	42.1%	13.2%

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | N = Neutral | A = Agree | SA = Strongly Agree

Table 3 highlights a range of challenges that hinder effective pronunciation teaching in Agelat EFL secondary schools. Statement 22 recorded the highest agreement, with 71.4% of participants identifying insufficient time as a major challenge, while 17.1% disagreed and 11.4% were neutral. Statement 21 shows that 63.2% reported a lack of appropriate professional training in pronunciation teaching, with 26.3% neutral and 10.5% disagreeing. Statements 23, 25, and 26 showed moderate agreement: 47.4% acknowledged insufficient knowledge of pronunciation pedagogy; 47.3% agreed that being non-native speakers posed difficulties; and 50.0% identified first language interference as a challenge. Statement 24 indicates that 42.1% agreed they lacked confidence in teaching pronunciation, while 31.6% disagreed. Statement 27 shows that 62.1% identified low student motivation as a notable challenge. Statement 28 reveals that 55.3% agreed that teachers do not consistently follow pedagogical instructions for pronunciation, with 34.2% neutral. Statement 19 shows that 52.6% agreed students show limited interest in learning

pronunciation. Statement 20 indicates mixed views, with 44.7% agreeing that teachers do not make sufficient effort to teach pronunciation, while 31.6% were neutral and 23.7% disagreed.

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

This section presents the qualitative data analysis drawn from six semi-structured interviews conducted with Agelat EFL secondary school teachers, referred to hereafter as Teacher A through Teacher F. The analysis followed an iterative process of thorough reading and thematic coding aligned with the three pre-identified themes.

4.2.1 EFL Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching English Pronunciation

The first theme focused on teachers' perspectives on teaching English pronunciation. All six interviewees recognised pronunciation as essential for students' communicative ability. Teacher A stated that pronunciation is important for secondary school students and that it helps them speak properly. Teachers B and C described it as a very important part of learning that helps students speak clearly and understand others, while Teacher D noted that teaching pronunciation is essential for building language skills, especially speaking. Teachers B, C, D, E, and F indicated that pronunciation teaching builds students' confidence and motivation. Teacher E further noted that mastering pronunciation lowers the affective filter and increases students' ability to participate in communicative activities. Additionally, Teachers E and F indicated that pronunciation teaching is about intelligibility over native-like accent. Teacher E stated that pronunciation teaching is about intelligibility, not just accents, and that students must master sounds and rhythm to be understood in global contexts. Teacher F similarly described teaching pronunciation as building intelligibility and long-term communicative success rather than achieving native-speaker phonology.

4.2.2 Strategies and Experiences in Teaching Pronunciation

The second theme focused on the strategies and experiences that EFL secondary school teachers employ in pronunciation instruction. All teachers confirmed that they typically use audiovisual materials and native speaker exposure, including videos and audio recordings. Teacher A noted that students are allowed to listen to native speakers through songs and short films, while Teacher B reported using listening activities and pronunciation videos. Teachers C and D similarly used videos and audio recordings, Teacher E referenced YouTube clips and podcasts, and Teacher F described songs, dialogues, and self-recording tasks in which students compared their output with

that of native speakers. Teachers A, B, D, E, and F identified repetition and drilling as essential pronunciation practice strategies. Teacher B also mentioned providing feedback on pronunciation errors and creating a supportive classroom environment. Minimal pairs and stress pattern work were mentioned only by Teachers E and F, making them the least frequently employed strategies. Teacher F stated that students practise sounds they confuse using minimal pairs such as ship/sheep and live/leave to strengthen phonological discrimination.

4.2.3 Challenges of Teaching Pronunciation

The interviewed teachers identified several challenges in teaching pronunciation. Teachers A, B, C, and F identified learner anxiety, shyness, and low confidence as major barriers to oral participation. Teacher A noted that students feel ashamed to speak in English, Teacher C observed that students feel shy or afraid to speak, and Teacher F described learner anxiety and fear of making mistakes as causing hesitation in oral tasks. Teachers B, C, D, and F identified large class sizes as a challenge, with Teacher B noting that large classes reduce the range of activities that can be feasibly implemented and Teacher C observing that the greater the number of students, the fewer activities can be conducted. Teachers B, D, E, and F cited L1 interference as a major challenge, with Teacher B noting that students frequently apply Arabic phonological rules to English and Teacher D observing that students extensively use their first language in the classroom. Limited time, insufficient materials, and exam-oriented culture were identified by Teachers B, D, E, and F as central challenges. Teacher B noted both limited time and lack of resources, Teacher D observed that both teachers and parents focus more on examinations than speaking skills, and Teacher E identified curriculum overload with grammar and vocabulary content as a significant constraint.

5. Discussion

This section discusses and interprets the findings obtained from both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, organised around the two main research questions: (1) What are the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards teaching English pronunciation? and (2) What are the main challenges Agelat EFL secondary school teachers face in teaching English pronunciation? The discussion follows the three thematic categories derived from the data analysis process.

5.1 Teachers' Perspectives

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the majority of participant teachers hold positive views regarding the importance of pronunciation instruction. Specifically, 86.8% of questionnaire respondents perceived pronunciation as essential for EFL students' language learning, and 87.2% agreed that it deserves greater attention in classroom teaching. These results align with the perspectives expressed by interviewees, who consistently identified pronunciation as a crucial component of effective communication. These findings are consistent with prior research by Adinda and Ahmad (2024) and Tolibovna (2023), which emphasises pronunciation as a fundamental skill in language learning.

However, a significant tension emerges when these positive perspectives are contrasted with actual classroom practice. While 74.3% of respondents acknowledged that vocabulary and grammar are typically prioritised over pronunciation, and 46.1% agreed that current pronunciation practices have had limited impact on students, 76.9% expressed strong support for integrating pronunciation into lesson planning. This gap between theoretical stance and pedagogical practice reflects a well-documented challenge in EFL contexts, where pronunciation is recognised as essential yet consistently marginalised within the curriculum (Zabiya, 2017; Hamuda et al., 2024).

5.2 Strategies and Experiences in Teaching Pronunciation

The data from both instruments indicate that Agelat EFL secondary school teachers employ a variety of strategies in pronunciation instruction, with audiovisual materials and communicative activities being most common. A strong majority 82% expressed agreement that designing classroom activities can enhance students' pronunciation skills, and 79.5% agreed that role-play and dialogue activities help students practise pronunciation in communicative contexts. These findings align with Gazan and Gürbüz (2025) and Xodabande (2017), both of whom demonstrate that audiovisual resources provide authentic models of the target language and can significantly improve pronunciation outcomes. While 62.2% acknowledged the effectiveness of repetition and drilling, this practice, though sometimes criticised as mechanical, remains a valuable strategy in contexts where students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom (Pardede, 2018). Notably, minimal pairs and stress pattern work were the least frequently used strategies, a gap that is particularly significant given that phonemic discrimination directly addresses L1 interference issues, as illustrated by Teacher F's use of minimal pairs such as ship/sheep and live/leave.

5.3 Challenges of Teaching Pronunciation

The findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews consistently highlight significant challenges that impede effective pronunciation teaching. The most widely acknowledged challenge was insufficient time, with 71.4% of participants identifying this as a major constraint, consistent with findings reported by Paudel (2024) and Szyszka (2016) regarding curricular overload at secondary school level. Inadequate professional training was reported by 63.2% of respondents, consistent with Thomson and Derwing (2015) and Kirkova-Naskova (2019), who document a widespread lack of specialised preparation for pronunciation instruction among both native and non-native EFL teachers.

First language interference was identified as a major challenge by teachers B and D in the interviews, with Arabic phonology differing from English in consonant and vowel usage and syllable structure. This phenomenon, referred to as negative transfer (Abdulwahid, 2023), is particularly salient in the Libyan EFL context. Low student motivation and engagement were noted by 62.1% of participants as a notable challenge, closely linked to emotional factors such as shyness, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes, consistent with findings by Fauzia and Amri (2023). Large class sizes were identified by Teachers B, C, D, and F as a practical constraint that limits the types of interactive and communicative activities that can be implemented, and makes individualised feedback on pronunciation difficult to provide.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the perspectives of Agelat EFL secondary school teachers towards pronunciation teaching and the challenges they encounter in this process. The main findings indicate that participant teachers hold positive views regarding the importance of teaching pronunciation, recognising it as a crucial component of communicative competence. The participating teachers reported using a range of strategies in their pronunciation instruction, most notably audiovisual materials, repetition and drilling, role-play activities, and the integration of pronunciation with listening comprehension. These perspectives reflect a clear understanding of effective approaches to pronunciation pedagogy.

However, the study also reveals a persistent theory–practice gap: despite positive theoretical orientations toward pronunciation, teachers continue to prioritise grammar and vocabulary in their

instructional practices. The challenges identified include insufficient time within heavily loaded curricula, inadequate professional training, L1 interference, lack of student motivation and confidence, limited materials and resources, and large class sizes. Together, these factors create an educational environment in which pronunciation teaching is progressively marginalised. The study underscores the need for systemic intervention, including curriculum reform, targeted teacher training, and institutional resource provision.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

The researcher carefully sought to adopt an appropriate research design for investigating Agelat EFL secondary school teachers' perspectives on pronunciation teaching. However, certain limitations were identified. The relatively small sample size utilised for the questionnaire and interviews, while appropriate for yielding valuable qualitative insights, does not support generalisation to broader populations. The limited geographical scope of the study may also restrict the transferability of findings to other contexts. These limitations suggest avenues for further investigation.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are offered for teachers, curriculum developers, school administrators, and policymakers:

- The Ministry of Education should develop and implement professional training programmes for EFL secondary school teachers aimed at improving their pronunciation teaching strategies and pedagogical confidence.
- Schools should be adequately resourced with the materials necessary for effective pronunciation instruction, enabling teachers to incorporate diverse and authentic inputs into their teaching.
- Pronunciation should be formally embedded within the EFL curriculum as a distinct and measurable component, rather than treated as supplementary to grammar and vocabulary teaching.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study investigated EFL secondary school teachers' perspectives on pronunciation teaching and the challenges they face. A more comprehensive understanding of this topic may require further investigation addressing related issues, such as exploring Libyan EFL secondary school students' attitudes towards English pronunciation learning, or examining the impact of specific teacher training interventions on pronunciation pedagogy.

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