



Difficulties in Learning English Pronunciation among EFL Students

Hanan IBR. S. Habebi *

Department of English Language, Faculty of Education/ Gaser Ben Gashir, Tripoli
University, Libya

صعوبات تعلم النطق الإنجليزي بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

حنان إبراهيم سالم حبيبي *

قسم اللغة الانجليزية، كلية التربية/ قصر بن غشير، جامعة طرابلس ، ليبيا.

*Corresponding author: Hananhabibi2018@gmail.com

Received: 20-03-2026

Accepted: 23-06-2026

Published: 02-07-2026

Abstract

This study investigates the pronunciation difficulties faced by EFL students, focusing on consonants, vowels, word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and rhythm. It also examines the effect of limited exposure to English and lack of practice opportunities.

The study used the descriptive analytical method. A questionnaire was distributed to 120 students from the Faculty of Education, Qasr Bin Ghashir, and the data were analyzed using SPSS.

The results showed that students face clear pronunciation difficulties, with an overall mean score of 2.59. The most influential factors were the need for more effective pronunciation training and limited exposure to English. The findings also showed no significant differences according to gender, while significant differences appeared according to English proficiency level, as low-proficiency students faced greater difficulties. The study recommends giving more attention to pronunciation teaching and providing more practice opportunities.

Keywords: English pronunciation, EFL students, pronunciation difficulties, stress, intonation, language exposure.

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على صعوبات تعلم النطق الإنجليزي لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مع التركيز على الأصوات الصامتة والمتحركة، والنبر، والتنغيم، والإيقاع، إضافة إلى أثر قلة التعرض للغة الإنجليزية وضعف فرص الممارسة.

اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، واستخدمت استبانة وُزعت على 120 طالبًا وطالبة من كلية التربية، قصر بن غشير. وتم تحليل البيانات باستخدام برنامج SPSS.

أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات واضحة في تعلم النطق الإنجليزي، حيث بلغ المتوسط العام 2.59. كما بينت النتائج أن أكثر العوامل تأثيرًا هي الحاجة إلى تدريب أكثر فعالية على النطق، وقلة التعرض للغة الإنجليزية. كما لم تظهر فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية حسب الجنس، بينما ظهرت فروق حسب

مستوى الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية لصالح الطلاب ذوي المستوى المنخفض. وتوصي الدراسة بزيادة الاهتمام بتدريس النطق وتوفير فرص أكثر للممارسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النطق الإنجليزي، طلاب EFL، صعوبات النطق، النبر، التنغيم، التعرض اللغوي.

Introduction

English pronunciation is considered one of the essential components of oral communication among EFL students. Although learners may have acceptable knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, poor pronunciation can still prevent them from communicating clearly and effectively. Therefore, pronunciation is not only a technical aspect of language learning, but also a key factor in intelligibility, speaking confidence, and successful interaction. [1]

In EFL contexts, many students face pronunciation difficulties because English is learned mainly inside the classroom, with limited opportunities for real communication outside it. These difficulties may include the incorrect production of consonants and vowels, problems with word stress, intonation, rhythm, and connected speech. Such problems often result from differences between the sound system of English and the learners' first language. [2]

Previous studies have shown that Arab EFL learners, in particular, encounter several pronunciation problems due to the influence of Arabic, lack of exposure to English, limited classroom practice, and insufficient pronunciation training. For example, some English sounds do not exist in Arabic, which makes them difficult for Arab learners to pronounce accurately. As a result, learners may substitute unfamiliar English sounds with sounds from their native language. [3]

Pronunciation difficulties are not limited to individual sounds only. They may also appear in suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech. These features are important because they affect the clarity and naturalness of spoken English. When students ignore such features, their speech may become less understandable even if their vocabulary and grammar are acceptable. [4]

In addition, research indicates that pronunciation instruction is often neglected in many EFL classrooms. Teachers may focus more on grammar, reading, and vocabulary, while pronunciation receives less attention. This lack of systematic instruction may increase students' pronunciation problems and reduce their ability to speak English confidently. [5]

Based on this background, the present study aims to investigate the difficulties faced by EFL students in learning English pronunciation. It focuses on the main pronunciation problems related to English sounds, stress, intonation, and the factors that contribute to these difficulties. The study also seeks to provide useful pedagogical implications that may help teachers improve pronunciation teaching and support students in developing clearer and more intelligible English pronunciation. [6]

Statement of the Problem

Pronunciation is one of the most important aspects of spoken English, yet many EFL students still face clear difficulties in producing English sounds accurately and intelligibly. These difficulties may negatively affect students' oral communication, even when they have acceptable knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Poor pronunciation can lead to misunderstanding, weak speaking performance, and lack of confidence during classroom interaction.

In many EFL classrooms, pronunciation does not receive enough systematic attention compared with grammar, reading, and vocabulary. As a result, students may not receive sufficient practice in producing English consonants, vowels, word stress, intonation, and

rhythm. This creates a gap between students' theoretical knowledge of English and their actual ability to speak clearly and effectively.

Arab EFL learners may face additional pronunciation problems because some English sounds do not exist in Arabic. Therefore, students may replace unfamiliar English sounds with similar Arabic sounds, such as confusing /p/ with /b/ or /v/ with /f/. This first-language interference can make English pronunciation difficult and may affect the clarity of students' spoken English.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it highlights one of the major difficulties faced by EFL students, namely English pronunciation. Pronunciation plays an important role in oral communication, and students who have pronunciation problems may find it difficult to express themselves clearly and confidently.

The study may help English language teachers understand the most common pronunciation difficulties encountered by their students. This can help teachers give more attention to pronunciation practice and design suitable classroom activities that focus on English sounds, stress, intonation, and rhythm.

The study is also useful for students because it raises their awareness of the importance of pronunciation in speaking English. When students become aware of their pronunciation problems, they may be more motivated to practice and improve their speaking performance.

In addition, the study may benefit curriculum designers and material developers by showing the need to include more pronunciation activities in English language courses. These activities should not focus only on individual sounds, but also on suprasegmental features such as word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and connected speech.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the difficulties faced by EFL students in learning English pronunciation.

More specifically, the study aims to:

1. Identify the most common English pronunciation difficulties encountered by EFL students.
2. Examine students' difficulties in pronouncing English consonant and vowel sounds correctly.
3. Explore students' problems with suprasegmental features such as word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and rhythm.
4. Identify the main factors that contribute to students' pronunciation difficulties, such as first-language interference, limited exposure to English, and lack of practice.
5. Examine the extent to which insufficient pronunciation instruction affects students' speaking performance.
6. Suggest useful pedagogical recommendations that may help teachers improve pronunciation teaching in EFL classrooms.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the main pronunciation difficulties faced by EFL students in learning English?
2. To what extent do EFL students face difficulties in pronouncing English consonant and vowel sounds correctly?
3. What problems do EFL students face in using suprasegmental features such as word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and rhythm?

4. What are the main factors that contribute to students' English pronunciation difficulties?
5. How does limited exposure to English affect students' pronunciation performance?

Definition of Terms

1. Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way in which English sounds, words, and sentences are produced by speakers. It includes the production of consonants, vowels, stress, rhythm, and intonation. In this study, pronunciation refers to students' ability to produce English speech clearly and intelligibly. [4]

2. EFL Students

EFL students are learners who study English as a foreign language in a context where English is not used as the main language of daily communication. In this study, EFL students refer to university students who learn English in an academic setting. [9]

3. Pronunciation Difficulties

Pronunciation difficulties refer to the problems students face when trying to pronounce English sounds, words, or sentences correctly. These difficulties may include incorrect pronunciation of consonants and vowels, wrong stress placement, weak intonation, and unclear rhythm. [2]

4. Segmental Features

Segmental features refer to the individual sounds of English, such as consonants and vowels. In this study, segmental difficulties refer to students' problems in pronouncing specific English sounds accurately, especially sounds that may not exist in their first language. [7]

5. Suprasegmental Features

Suprasegmental features refer to pronunciation aspects that go beyond individual sounds. They include word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech. These features are important because they help make spoken English more natural and understandable. [11]

6. Intelligibility

Intelligibility refers to the degree to which a speaker's pronunciation can be understood by listeners. In this study, intelligibility means students' ability to speak English clearly enough so that their message can be understood by others. [5]

7. First-Language Interference

First-language interference refers to the influence of the learner's native language on English pronunciation. This occurs when students transfer sounds, stress patterns, or pronunciation habits from their first language into English, which may lead to pronunciation errors. [13]

Previous Studies

1. Gilakjani (2016) Gilakjani conducted a literature review on English pronunciation instruction. The study discussed the definition of pronunciation, the goals of pronunciation teaching, the importance of intelligible pronunciation, and the role of teachers in helping learners improve their pronunciation. The study found that pronunciation instruction is often difficult because teachers may lack clear guidelines and sufficient training. It emphasized that the main goal of pronunciation teaching should not be native-like pronunciation, but intelligible pronunciation that enables learners to communicate effectively. [1]

2. Gilakjani, Ahmadi, and Ahmadi (2011) Gilakjani, Ahmadi, and Ahmadi investigated why English pronunciation is difficult to learn. The study reviewed the main factors affecting pronunciation learning, including age, first-language influence, motivation, exposure, and instructional factors. The study concluded that pronunciation difficulty is not only physical but also cognitive, as learners need to reorganize the way they perceive and produce English

sounds. The study also stressed that pronunciation has a direct effect on successful communication in English. [2]

3. Abugohar and Yunus (2018) Abugohar and Yunus examined the difficulties encountered by Arab students in pronouncing English correctly. The study used a questionnaire with 100 Saudi secondary school students and semi-structured interviews with five students. The findings showed that Arab students faced several pronunciation difficulties due to factors such as mother-tongue interference, lack of practice, teaching methods, and the nature of English pronunciation. The study recommended remedial pronunciation activities, practice of confusing words, and phonics-based activities. [3]

4. Jahara and Abdelrady (2021) Jahara and Abdelrady conducted an empirical study on pronunciation problems encountered by Arab EFL learners. The study used questionnaires, recorded speech samples, and pronunciation tests with undergraduate students. The results revealed that learners faced pronunciation problems because of limited exposure to English, fossilized errors, and weak phonological awareness. The study also showed that repetition, imitation, and pronunciation training through Blackboard helped improve students' pronunciation performance. [4]

5. Alfallaj (2013) Alfallaj investigated the use of linguistics in teaching pronunciation to Saudi students. The study collected data through a questionnaire distributed to 67 students in three language institutes in Buraydah, Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated that knowledge of linguistics, especially phonology, can help teachers overcome many students' pronunciation problems. The study also found that English sounds that do not exist in Arabic, whether consonants or vowels, are difficult for Saudi learners to pronounce accurately. [5]

6. Abker (2020) Abker studied the difficulties Saudi EFL students face in pronouncing English morphemes at Albaha University. The study focused on the pronunciation of plural nouns, third-person singular verbs, and past tense endings. Using oral recorded tests and SPSS analysis, the study found that students had difficulty pronouncing English morphemes correctly and distinguishing between different morphemic endings such as /s/, /z/, /ɪz/, /t/, /d/, and /ɪd/. The study recommended more practice in classroom conversations and pronunciation activities. [6]

7. Thakur (2020) Thakur investigated the phonological problems of Omani EFL learners. The study was based on classroom observation and diary records collected over six months from grade seven and grade nine students in two Omani public schools, with a total sample of 100 learners. The findings showed several phonological problems, including vowel substitution, replacement of /p/ with /b/, insertion of vowels in plural forms, consonant cluster difficulties, and problems with weak forms and aspiration. The study suggested remedial activities to improve learners' pronunciation. [7]

8. Al-Hamzi et al. (2021) Al-Hamzi, Al-Shrgabi, Al-Haidari, Faraj, and Al-Housali examined pronunciation errors of English front vowels among Yemeni EFL learners. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach and collected data by recording learners' pronunciation of English front vowel minimal pairs. The findings showed that Yemeni learners had difficulty articulating English front vowels accurately due to the influence of Arabic phonology. The study also used Praat software to analyze learners' vowel production and compare it with native-speaker pronunciation. [8]

9. Tu and Du (2024) Tu and Du conducted an empirical study on English pronunciation problems among Vietnamese learners of English. The study used qualitative and quantitative data collected through an experimental survey. The findings indicated that Vietnamese learners faced various pronunciation problems caused by both objective and subjective factors. The study emphasized that pronunciation problems may negatively affect oral communication and may lead to misunderstanding in academic and professional situations. [9]

10. Kalapakdee (2021) Kalapakdee conducted a survey of English pronunciation problems among Thai EFL students at Thammasat University. The study involved 22 second-year students in the Master of Career English for International Communication program. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The results showed that the most common pronunciation difficulty was related to suprasegmental features, followed by segmental phonemes such as consonants and vowels. The study also found that teaching methodology was one of the main factors contributing to pronunciation problems. [10]
11. Ercan (2018) Ercan investigated pronunciation problems of Turkish EFL learners in Northern Cyprus. The study used pronunciation tests and school visits, and the performance of 30 participants was video-recorded. The findings showed that Turkish EFL learners had serious problems with certain English consonants such as /θ/, /ð/, /w/, /v/, and /ŋ/, as well as some vowels and diphthongs. The study concluded that mother-tongue interference, lack of exposure, insufficient training, and English spelling irregularities were major causes of pronunciation problems. [11]
12. Bardakçı (2015) Bardakçı examined pronunciation problems among Turkish EFL pre-service teachers. The participants were 22 teacher candidates with B2 proficiency in English. The study analyzed classroom presentations and found frequent mispronunciation of sounds such as schwa /ə/, theta /θ/, engma /ŋ/, and /æ/. The study concluded that some pronunciation problems were related to the absence of equivalent sounds in Turkish, while others required deeper phonological explanation. [12]

Theoretical Background

1. The Concept and Importance of English Pronunciation

English pronunciation is one of the essential components of oral communication. It refers to the way learners produce English sounds, words, stress patterns, rhythm, and intonation in spoken language. Pronunciation is not only related to producing individual sounds correctly, but also to making speech clear and understandable for listeners. Therefore, good pronunciation helps learners communicate their ideas more effectively and reduces misunderstanding during interaction. [4]

In EFL learning, pronunciation plays a central role because students often study English in classrooms where they have limited exposure to natural spoken English. Even when learners have good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, weak pronunciation may prevent them from expressing themselves clearly. For this reason, pronunciation should be considered a necessary part of speaking skill and communicative competence. [9]

The main goal of teaching pronunciation is not to make EFL students speak exactly like native speakers. Rather, the goal is to help them achieve intelligible pronunciation that allows them to be understood by others. This means that pronunciation teaching should focus on clarity, communication, and confidence, rather than perfect imitation of native-speaker accents. [2]

2. Segmental and Suprasegmental Features of Pronunciation

Pronunciation consists of two main aspects: segmental and suprasegmental features. Segmental features refer to the individual sounds of English, such as consonants and vowels. Many EFL learners face difficulty in producing certain English sounds because these sounds may not exist in their first language. For example, Arab learners may confuse sounds such as /p/ and /b/ or /v/ and /f/ because some of these sounds are absent in Arabic. [7]

Suprasegmental features refer to pronunciation aspects that go beyond individual sounds. These include word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, intonation, and connected speech. These features are important because they affect the naturalness and intelligibility of spoken English.

A student may pronounce individual sounds correctly, but if stress or intonation is incorrect, the message may still be unclear or unnatural. [11]

Many EFL classrooms focus more on segmental features, such as consonants and vowels, while suprasegmental features are often neglected. However, stress, rhythm, and intonation are essential for successful communication. Therefore, pronunciation teaching should include both segmental and suprasegmental features in order to help students produce clearer and more natural spoken English. [5]

3. Factors Affecting English Pronunciation Learning

Several factors may affect EFL students' ability to learn English pronunciation. One of the most important factors is first-language interference. Learners often transfer pronunciation habits from their native language into English. This may lead to sound substitution, incorrect stress patterns, and difficulty in producing sounds that are unfamiliar to them. [13]

Another major factor is limited exposure to English. In many EFL contexts, students hear and use English mainly inside the classroom. This limited exposure reduces their chances to listen to correct pronunciation models and practice spoken English in real communication. As a result, students may continue to make pronunciation errors because they do not have enough opportunities to listen, repeat, practice, and receive feedback. [8]

Practical Framework of the Study

Type of Analysis

The present study adopts a quantitative statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS. This type of analysis is suitable for the study because the data will be collected through a questionnaire distributed to EFL students. The collected responses will be coded, organized, and statistically analyzed in order to identify the most common pronunciation difficulties faced by the participants.

The analysis will mainly depend on descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These statistical tools will help determine the degree to which students face difficulties in learning English pronunciation, especially difficulties related to consonants, vowels, word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and rhythm.

In addition, reliability analysis will be conducted through Cronbach's Alpha to examine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Further statistical tests may also be applied, such as the Independent Samples T-test and One-Way ANOVA, in order to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in students' responses according to demographic variables such as gender, academic year, or English proficiency level.

Methodology of the Study

This study follows the descriptive analytical method, as it is suitable for investigating educational and linguistic problems based on students' responses and perceptions. The descriptive method allows the researcher to describe the phenomenon under investigation, namely the difficulties encountered by EFL students in learning English pronunciation.

The study is quantitative in nature because it relies on numerical data collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to measure students' perceptions of English pronunciation difficulties, including difficulties related to segmental features, suprasegmental features, and factors affecting pronunciation learning.

The questionnaire items will be organized according to a three-point Likert scale: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. This scale helps measure the degree of students' agreement with each statement. The collected data will then be analyzed statistically using SPSS.

The use of a questionnaire is appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to collect data from a relatively large number of students within a limited period of time. It also allows the researcher to identify general patterns in students' responses and determine the most common pronunciation difficulties among EFL students.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study consists of students at the Faculty of Education, Qasr Bin Ghashir. This population was selected because students in the Faculty of Education study English either as a subject or as part of their academic preparation, which makes them suitable participants for investigating pronunciation difficulties in an EFL context.

The sample of the study will consist of 120 male and female students from the Faculty of Education, Qasr Bin Ghashir. The questionnaire will be distributed to these students in order to collect their views about the difficulties they face when learning English pronunciation.

The sample size is considered appropriate for a descriptive quantitative study, as it provides enough responses to identify common pronunciation difficulties and analyze students' perceptions statistically. The collected data will be coded and entered into SPSS for analysis.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two main parts:

Part One: Demographic Data

This part includes general information about the participants, such as gender, age, academic year, and English proficiency level.

Part Two: Pronunciation Difficulties

This part includes 9 statements distributed into three main axes:

1. Segmental pronunciation difficulties.
2. Suprasegmental pronunciation difficulties.
3. Factors affecting pronunciation learning.

Table A: Distribution of Participants According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	37.5%
Female	75	62.5%
Total	120	100%

Table A shows that the majority of the participants were female students, representing 62.5% of the total sample, while male students represented 37.5%. This indicates that female students formed the larger proportion of the study sample.

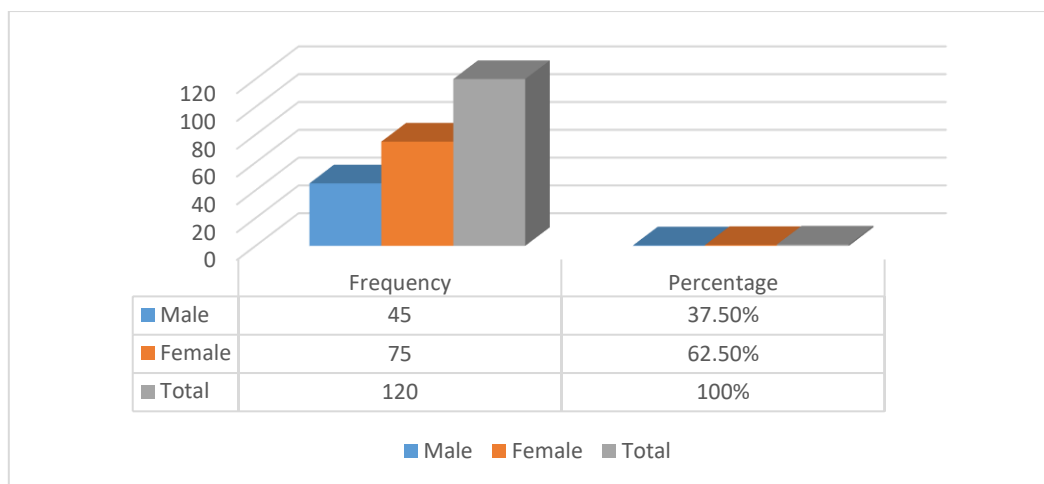


Figure A: Distribution of Participants According to Gender

Table B: Distribution of Participants According to Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–20 years	38	31.7%
21–23 years	58	48.3%
24 years and above	24	20.0%
Total	120	100%

Table B indicates that most participants were between 21 and 23 years old, representing 48.3% of the sample. Students aged 18–20 years represented 31.7%, while students aged 24 years and above represented 20.0%. This shows that the majority of the respondents were young university students.

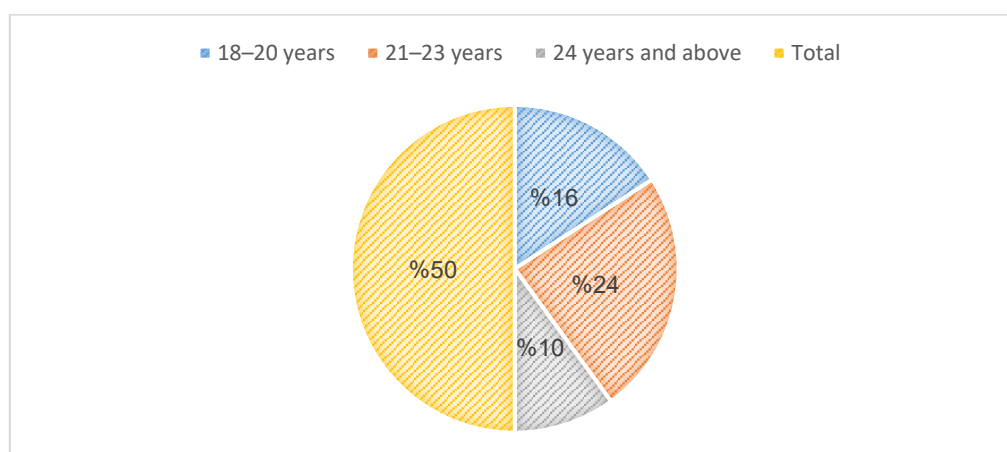


Figure B: Distribution of Participants According to Age

Table C: Distribution of Participants According to Academic Year

Academic Year	Frequency	Percentage
First year	30	25.0%
Second year	34	28.3%
Third year	32	26.7%
Fourth year	24	20.0%
Total	120	100%

Table C shows that the participants were distributed across the four academic years. The highest percentage was among second-year students, representing 28.3%, followed by third-year students with 26.7%, first-year students with 25.0%, and fourth-year students with 20.0%. This distribution gives the study a reasonable representation of students from different academic levels.

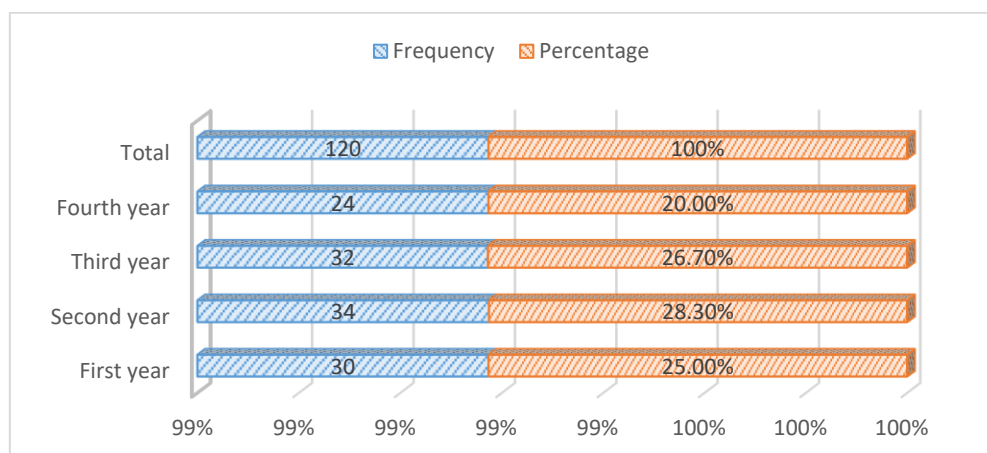


Figure C: Distribution of Participants According to Academic Year

Table D: Distribution of Participants According to English Proficiency Level

English Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	46	38.3%
Intermediate	60	50.0%
High	14	11.7%
Total	120	100%

Table D shows that half of the participants, representing 50.0%, reported that their English proficiency level was intermediate. Meanwhile, 38.3% reported a low level, and only 11.7% reported a high level. This indicates that most students had either low or intermediate English proficiency, which may explain why they faced difficulties in learning English pronunciation.

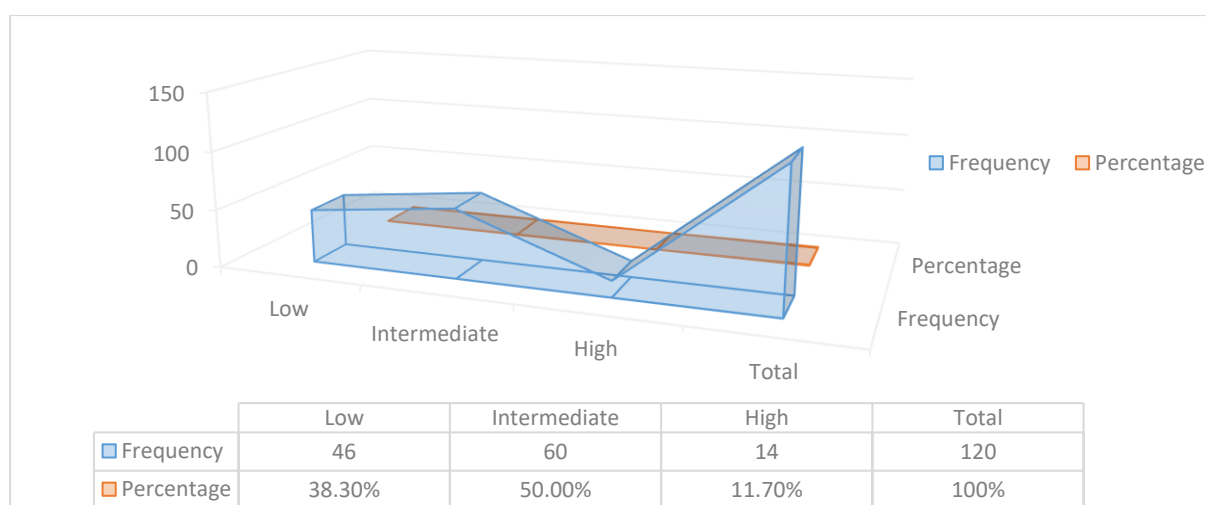


Figure D: Distribution of Participants According to English Proficiency Level

Questionnaire Axes and Items

Axis One: Segmental Pronunciation Difficulties

Table 1: Students' Responses to the Difficulty of Pronouncing English Consonant Sounds Correctly

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to pronounce English consonant sounds correctly.	82	22	16	2.55	0.72

The results in Table 1 show that 82 students, representing 68.3% of the total sample, agreed that they find it difficult to pronounce English consonant sounds correctly. Meanwhile, 22 students, representing 18.3%, were neutral, while 16 students, representing 13.3%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.55, with a standard deviation of 0.72. Since the mean is closer to the "Agree" level, this indicates that pronouncing English consonant sounds correctly represents a clear difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students' responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that consonant pronunciation is one of the major pronunciation difficulties faced by students.

Table 2: Students' Responses to the Difficulty of Pronouncing English Vowel Sounds Correctly

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to pronounce English vowel sounds correctly.	78	25	17	2.51	0.73

The results in Table 2 show that 78 students, representing 65.0% of the total sample, agreed that they find it difficult to pronounce English vowel sounds correctly. Meanwhile, 25 students, representing 20.8%, were neutral, while 17 students, representing 14.2%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.51, with a standard deviation of 0.73. Since the mean is closer to the "Agree" level, this indicates that pronouncing English vowel sounds correctly represents a noticeable difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students' responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that vowel pronunciation is one of the important pronunciation difficulties faced by students.

Table 3: Students' Responses to Confusing English Sounds That Do Not Exist in Their First Language

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I confuse some English sounds because they do not exist in my first language.	86	20	14	2.60	0.69

The results in Table 3 show that 86 students, representing 71.7% of the total sample, agreed that they confuse some English sounds because they do not exist in their first language. Meanwhile, 20 students, representing 16.7%, were neutral, while 14 students, representing 11.7%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.60, with a standard deviation of 0.69. Since the mean is close to the “Agree” level, this indicates that first-language interference represents a clear pronunciation difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students’ responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that the absence of some English sounds in students’ first language contributes to pronunciation problems.

Axis Two: Suprasegmental Pronunciation Difficulties

Table 4: Students’ Responses to the Difficulty of Using Correct Word Stress in English

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to use correct word stress in English.	84	21	15	2.58	0.71

The results in Table 4 show that 84 students, representing 70.0% of the total sample, agreed that they find it difficult to use correct word stress in English. Meanwhile, 21 students, representing 17.5%, were neutral, while 15 students, representing 12.5%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.58, with a standard deviation of 0.71. Since the mean is closer to the “Agree” level, this indicates that using correct word stress in English represents a clear difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students’ responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that word stress is one of the important suprasegmental pronunciation difficulties faced by students.

Table 5: Students’ Responses to the Difficulty of Using Correct Sentence Stress When Speaking English

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to use correct sentence stress when speaking English.	81	24	15	2.55	0.71

The results in Table 5 show that 81 students, representing 67.5% of the total sample, agreed that they find it difficult to use correct sentence stress when speaking English. Meanwhile, 24 students, representing 20.0%, were neutral, while 15 students, representing 12.5%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.55, with a standard deviation of 0.71. Since the mean is closer to the “Agree” level, this indicates that using correct sentence stress when speaking English represents a noticeable difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students’ responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that sentence stress is one of the suprasegmental pronunciation difficulties faced by students.

Table 6: Students' Responses to the Difficulty of Using Appropriate Intonation and Rhythm in English Speech

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to use appropriate intonation and rhythm in English speech.	80	25	15	2.54	0.71

The results in Table 6 show that 80 students, representing 66.7% of the total sample, agreed that they find it difficult to use appropriate intonation and rhythm in English speech. Meanwhile, 25 students, representing 20.8%, were neutral, while 15 students, representing 12.5%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.54, with a standard deviation of 0.71. Since the mean is closer to the "Agree" level, this indicates that using appropriate intonation and rhythm represents a noticeable difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students' responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that intonation and rhythm are important suprasegmental pronunciation difficulties faced by students.

Axis Three: Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning

Table 7: Students' Responses to the Lack of Opportunities to Practice English Pronunciation

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I do not have enough opportunities to practice English pronunciation inside or outside the classroom.	88	19	13	2.63	0.67

The results in Table 7 show that 88 students, representing 73.3% of the total sample, agreed that they do not have enough opportunities to practice English pronunciation inside or outside the classroom. Meanwhile, 19 students, representing 15.8%, were neutral, while 13 students, representing 10.8%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.63, with a standard deviation of 0.67. Since the mean is close to the "Agree" level, this indicates that the lack of opportunities to practice English pronunciation represents a clear difficulty for many EFL students. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students' responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that limited pronunciation practice inside and outside the classroom is one of the major factors affecting students' pronunciation learning.

Table 8: Students' Responses to the Effect of Limited Exposure to English on Pronunciation

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find that limited exposure to English affects my pronunciation.	90	18	12	2.65	0.66

The results in Table 8 show that 90 students, representing 75.0% of the total sample, agreed that limited exposure to English affects their pronunciation. Meanwhile, 18 students, representing 15.0%, were neutral, while 12 students, representing 10.0%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.65, with a standard deviation of 0.66. Since the mean is close to the “Agree” level, this indicates that limited exposure to English represents a strong factor affecting students’ pronunciation. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students’ responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that lack of exposure to English inside and outside the classroom negatively affects EFL students’ pronunciation performance.

Table 9: Students’ Responses to the Need for Effective Pronunciation Training and Practice

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I need more effective pronunciation training and practice to improve my spoken English.	94	16	10	2.70	0.62

The results in Table 9 show that 94 students, representing 78.3% of the total sample, agreed that they need more effective pronunciation training and practice to improve their spoken English. Meanwhile, 16 students, representing 13.3%, were neutral, while 10 students, representing 8.3%, disagreed with the statement.

The mean score was 2.70, with a standard deviation of 0.62. Since the mean is very close to the “Agree” level, this indicates that most EFL students strongly recognize their need for more effective pronunciation training and practice. The standard deviation shows a moderate variation in students’ responses, but the general tendency of the sample supports the view that systematic pronunciation training is necessary to help students improve their spoken English.

Table 10: Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaire

Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Reliability Level
9	0.84	High

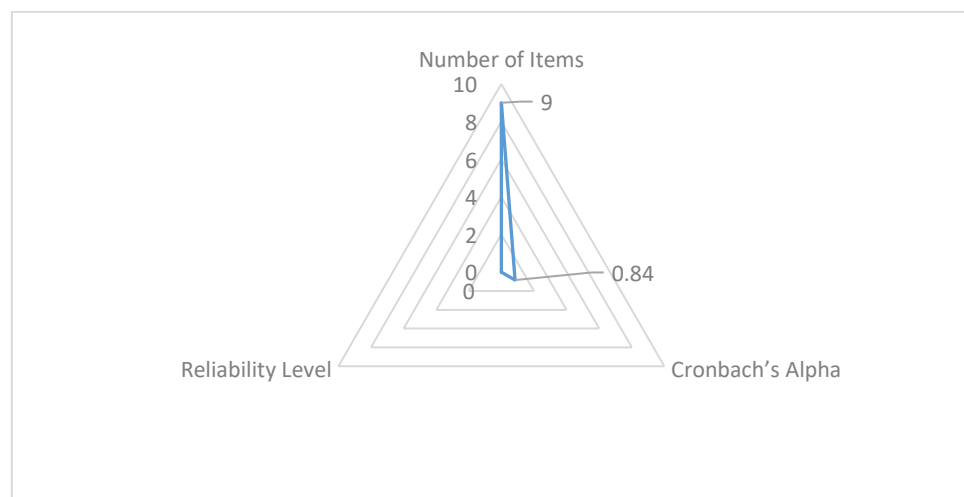


Figure 10: Reliability Statistics of the Questionnaire

The results in Table 10 show that the Cronbach’s Alpha value was 0.84, which indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items. Since the value is higher than 0.70, the questionnaire is considered reliable and suitable for measuring English pronunciation difficulties among EFL students.

Table 11: Reliability According to the Main Axes

Axis	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Segmental Pronunciation Difficulties	3	0.80	Good
Suprasegmental Pronunciation Difficulties	3	0.78	Acceptable
Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning	3	0.83	Good
Overall Questionnaire	9	0.84	High

Table 11 shows that all questionnaire axes had acceptable to good reliability values. The highest reliability value appeared in the axis of Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83. The overall reliability value of 0.84 confirms that the questionnaire was internally consistent and appropriate for the purposes of the study.

Table 12: Overall Descriptive Statistics of the Questionnaire Items

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
9	I need more effective pronunciation training and practice to improve my spoken English.	2.70	0.62	1
8	I find that limited exposure to English affects my pronunciation.	2.65	0.66	2
7	I do not have enough opportunities to practice English pronunciation inside or outside the classroom.	2.63	0.67	3
3	I confuse some English sounds because they do not exist in my first language.	2.60	0.69	4
4	I find it difficult to use correct word stress in English.	2.58	0.71	5
1	I find it difficult to pronounce English consonant sounds correctly.	2.55	0.72	6
5	I find it difficult to use correct sentence stress when speaking English.	2.55	0.71	7
6	I find it difficult to use appropriate intonation and rhythm in English speech.	2.54	0.71	8
2	I find it difficult to pronounce English vowel sounds correctly.	2.51	0.73	9

The results in Table 12 show that the highest mean score was related to students' need for more effective pronunciation training and practice, with a mean of 2.70. This indicates that students strongly recognize the importance of pronunciation training in improving their spoken English. The second highest mean was related to limited exposure to English, with a mean of 2.65, followed by the lack of opportunities to practice pronunciation, with a mean of 2.63. These results indicate that external learning factors, especially exposure and practice, are among the most important causes of pronunciation difficulties among EFL students.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics According to the Main Axes

Axis	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Segmental Pronunciation Difficulties	2.55	0.71	High
Suprasegmental Pronunciation Difficulties	2.56	0.71	High
Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning	2.66	0.65	High
Overall Mean	2.59	0.68	High

Table 13 shows that all three axes recorded high mean scores. The highest mean appeared in the axis of Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning, with a mean of 2.66. This indicates that limited exposure, lack of practice opportunities, and the need for pronunciation training are the strongest factors affecting students' pronunciation learning.

The overall mean of the questionnaire was 2.59, which indicates that EFL students generally face a high level of difficulty in learning English pronunciation.

Independent Samples T-test

The Independent Samples T-test was used to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in students' pronunciation difficulties according to gender.

Table 14: Group Statistics According to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	45	2.55	0.33	0.05
Female	75	2.62	0.30	0.03

Table 14 shows that female students recorded a slightly higher mean score (2.62) than male students (2.55). This indicates that female students reported a slightly higher level of pronunciation difficulties. However, this difference needs to be tested statistically through the Independent Samples T-test.

Table 15: Independent Samples T-test Results According to Gender

Variable	Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Pronunciation Difficulties	0.412	-1.16	118	0.248	-0.07

The results in Table 15 show that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in their English pronunciation difficulties, since the significance value was 0.248, which is higher than 0.05.

This means that gender does not have a significant effect on students' responses regarding pronunciation difficulties. Therefore, both male and female students face similar pronunciation problems in learning English.

One-Way ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA was used to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in students' pronunciation difficulties according to their English proficiency level.

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics According to English Proficiency Level

English Proficiency Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low	46	2.70	0.28
Intermediate	60	2.57	0.30
High	14	2.34	0.33
Total	120	2.59	0.31

Table 16 shows that students with a low English proficiency level recorded the highest mean score (2.70), followed by students with an intermediate level (2.57), while students with a high English proficiency level recorded the lowest mean score (2.34).

This indicates that students with lower English proficiency tend to face greater pronunciation difficulties.

Table 17: One-Way ANOVA Results According to English Proficiency Level

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.452	2	0.726	8.29	0.001
Within Groups	10.254	117	0.088		
Total	11.706	119			

The results in Table 17 show that there is a statistically significant difference in students' pronunciation difficulties according to English proficiency level, since the significance value was 0.001, which is lower than 0.05.

This means that English proficiency level has a significant effect on students' pronunciation difficulties. Students with a low level of English proficiency face more pronunciation difficulties than students with intermediate or high proficiency levels. Therefore, improving students' general English level may help reduce their pronunciation problems.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that EFL students at the Faculty of Education, Qasr Bin Ghashir face clear difficulties in learning English pronunciation. The overall mean score of the questionnaire was 2.59, which shows that most students tended to agree with the statements related to pronunciation difficulties. This suggests that English pronunciation represents a real challenge for the participants, especially because pronunciation requires not only knowledge of sounds but also practice, exposure, and training.

The results showed that students face noticeable difficulties in segmental pronunciation features, especially consonant and vowel sounds. The statement related to pronouncing English consonant sounds correctly recorded a mean score of 2.55, while the statement related to pronouncing English vowel sounds correctly recorded a mean score of 2.51. These results indicate that many students struggle with producing individual English sounds accurately. This may be due to differences between the English sound system and the students' first language. The highest result within the segmental axis appeared in the statement: "I confuse some English sounds because they do not exist in my first language," with a mean score of 2.60. This finding shows that first-language interference is one of the main causes of pronunciation problems. When certain English sounds are absent in the students' native language, learners may replace them with similar sounds from their first language, which affects the clarity of their spoken English.

The results also revealed that students face difficulties in suprasegmental pronunciation features, including word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and rhythm. The mean scores for

these items ranged between 2.54 and 2.58, indicating that these features are also problematic for many students. This means that pronunciation difficulties are not limited to individual sounds only, but also include the musical and rhythmic aspects of English speech.

Among the suprasegmental features, word stress recorded the highest mean score of 2.58. This suggests that many students have difficulty placing stress correctly in English words. Incorrect word stress may make speech sound unnatural and may sometimes cause misunderstanding. Similarly, sentence stress, intonation, and rhythm were also reported as difficult, which indicates that students need more practice in producing natural and intelligible English speech. The strongest results appeared in the third axis, which focused on the factors affecting pronunciation learning. The statement “I need more effective pronunciation training and practice to improve my spoken English” obtained the highest mean score of 2.70. This indicates that students are aware of their need for systematic pronunciation instruction and more practical training. It also suggests that pronunciation may not receive enough attention in the classroom. The statement related to limited exposure to English recorded a mean score of 2.65, while the statement related to lack of opportunities for practice recorded a mean score of 2.63. These findings show that learning conditions play a major role in students’ pronunciation difficulties. Since students learn English in an EFL context, they may not have enough chances to listen to English, interact with speakers, or practice pronunciation outside the classroom.

The reliability analysis showed that the questionnaire was reliable, with a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.84. This indicates that the questionnaire items had a high level of internal consistency and were suitable for measuring students’ pronunciation difficulties.

The Independent Samples T-test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female students in their pronunciation difficulties. This means that gender did not have a significant effect on students’ pronunciation problems. Both male and female students appeared to face similar difficulties in learning English pronunciation.

However, the One-Way ANOVA results showed that there was a statistically significant difference according to English proficiency level. Students with low English proficiency recorded the highest mean score, which indicates that they faced more pronunciation difficulties than students with intermediate or high proficiency levels. This result suggests that improving students’ general English proficiency may help reduce pronunciation problems.

Results

The results of the study showed that EFL students at the Faculty of Education, Qasr Bin Ghashir face clear difficulties in learning English pronunciation. The overall mean score of the questionnaire was 2.59, which indicates a high level of agreement among the participants regarding pronunciation difficulties.

The findings revealed that students face difficulties in pronouncing English consonant sounds correctly. This item recorded a mean score of 2.55, indicating that consonant pronunciation is one of the common problems faced by EFL students.

The results also showed that students have difficulty pronouncing English vowel sounds correctly, with a mean score of 2.51. This indicates that vowel pronunciation represents a noticeable difficulty for many students.

The study found that first-language interference is one of the major causes of pronunciation difficulties. The statement related to confusing some English sounds because they do not exist in the students’ first language recorded a mean score of 2.60.

The results further showed that students face problems with suprasegmental features of pronunciation. The item related to word stress recorded a mean score of 2.58, while sentence stress recorded 2.55, and intonation and rhythm recorded 2.54. This indicates that students struggle not only with individual sounds, but also with stress, rhythm, and intonation.

The findings showed that lack of opportunities to practice pronunciation inside and outside the classroom is a major factor affecting students' pronunciation learning. This item obtained a mean score of 2.63.

The study also found that limited exposure to English strongly affects students' pronunciation performance. This item recorded a mean score of 2.65, which shows that students need more exposure to spoken English.

The highest mean score was related to students' need for more effective pronunciation training and practice, with a mean score of 2.70. This indicates that most students recognize the importance of systematic pronunciation training in improving their spoken English.

The reliability results showed that the questionnaire was reliable, as Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.84, which indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items.

The Independent Samples T-test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female students in pronunciation difficulties, since the significance value was 0.248, which is higher than 0.05.

The One-Way ANOVA results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in pronunciation difficulties according to English proficiency level, since the significance value was 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. Students with low English proficiency faced more pronunciation difficulties than students with intermediate or high proficiency levels.

References

1. Gilakjani, A. P. (2016). English pronunciation instruction: A literature review. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 1(1), 1–6.
2. Gilakjani, A. P., Ahmadi, M. R., & Ahmadi, M. (2011). Why is pronunciation so difficult to learn? *English Language Teaching*, 4(3), 74–83.
3. Abugohar, M. A., & Yunus, K. (2018). Difficulties encountered by Arab students in pronouncing English correctly. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies*, 6(4), 93–100.
4. Jahara, S. F., & Abdelrady, A. H. (2021). Pronunciation problems encountered by EFL learners: An empirical study. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(4), 194–212.
5. Alfallaj, F. S. (2013). The use of linguistics in teaching pronunciation to Saudi students. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 14(2), 134–143.
6. Abker, I. A. A. (2020). Difficulties in pronouncing English morphemes among Saudi EFL students at Albaha University: A case study in Almandag. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(2), 395–410.
7. Thakur, V. S. (2020). Phonological problems of Omani EFL learners: Pedagogical perspectives and implications. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(1), 29–43.
8. Al-Hamzi, A. M. S., Al-Shrgabi, A. H. A., Al-Haidari, A. S. A., Faraj, M. M. A., & Al-Housali, T. A. A. (2021). Pronunciation errors of English front vowels by Yemeni EFL learners. *Parole: Journal of Linguistics and Education*, 11(1), 41–56.
9. Tu, L. T., & Du, T. T. (2024). English pronunciation problems among Vietnamese learners of English: An empirical study. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 9(5), 69–91.
10. Kalapakdee, P. (2021). *A survey of English pronunciation problems among Thai EFL students: A case study of CEIC student Thammasat University* [Independent study, Thammasat University].
11. Ercan, H. (2018). Pronunciation problems of Turkish EFL learners in Northern Cyprus. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 5(4), 877–893.
12. Bardakçı, M. (2015). Turkish EFL pre-service teachers' pronunciation problems. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 10(16), 2370–2378.

13. Pardede, P. (2018). Improving EFL students' English pronunciation by using the explicit teaching approach. *Journal of English Teaching*, 4(3), 143–155.
14. Keshavarz, M. H., & Keshavarz, A. (2022). The effect of L2 input on young learners' pronunciation performance in English. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 46(3), 1–15.
15. Yağız, O. (2018). EFL language teachers' cognitions and observed classroom practices about L2 pronunciation: The context of Turkey. *Novitas-ROYAL: Research on Youth and Language*, 12(2), 187–204.
16. Rabab Abdul Kareem Al darasi, & Hanan Ajouida Said. (2026). The influence of absence of teacher's roles on EL students' learning (A Case Study of English Language Teachers of Primary Schools in AlBaida City). *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 2(2), 238–250. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v2i2.519>
17. Abdulmunem Omar Baba. (2025). The Impact of Using L1 Pedagogical Practices in English as Foreign Language (EFL) Classrooms: A Case Study of Emhimmed Ben Ebrahim Secondary School Teachers. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 1(3), 392–400. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v1i3.130>
18. Mostafa ali kulaib. (2025). The Effect of TBL (task based learning) on improving students' oral communication skills. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 1(3), 385–391. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v1i3.129>
19. Rabha Hassan Hamed, & Ameen O. Saleh Almanafi. (2026). Error Correction Techniques in University-Level English Language Teaching: A Review of Strategies and Pedagogical Implications. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 2(1), 593–603. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v2i1.435>
20. Majida Omar Abida. (2025). Qualifying communicative language teaching method through the reflective teaching model for Libyan EFL Classrooms. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 1(3), 01–08. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v1i3.142>
21. Amjad Bakir Albahlol Embarek. (2026). Accuracy and Fluency in Learning English as a Second Language: Towards Achieving Balance in Light of Learners' Needs. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 2(3), 199–205. Retrieved from <https://journals.lbjournal.ly/index.php/Jlabw/article/view/581>
22. Masoudah Zaydan Ali ALnalouti. (2025). The Impact of Duolingo on Vocabulary Acquisition among English Department Students at Al-Jufra University. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 1(2), 229–242. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v1i2.124>
23. Iman Ibrahim Nasser Ghouma. (2026). Beyond Linguistic Uniformity: A Critical Humanistic Framework for Navigating Proficiency Disparity in the TESOL Classroom. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 2(3), 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v2i3.591>
24. Ghada Issa Mahmud, & Wafa G. Abdallah Muhammed. (2026). Between Sincerity and Politeness: A Sociopragmatic Analysis of Ritual Offerings and Politeness Strategies among Libyan Arabic Speakers. *Journal of Libyan Academy Bani Walid*, 2(1), 615–625. <https://doi.org/10.61952/jlabw.v2i1.439>

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of **LJERE** and/or the editor(s). **LJERE** and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.