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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teaching Pronunciation to EFL Learners at the Tertiary Level: Perspectives of Professors at Saudi Universities

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| ABSTRACT

This study aimed to provide a novel, focused program for instructing English pronunciation to Saudi EFL university students, grounded upon identified mistake patterns. In addition, to execute the customized curriculum in pronunciation instruction for a group of Saudi EFL students. Furthermore, to evaluate the efficacy of the tailored curriculum by measuring enhancements in pronunciation accuracy. Additionally, to investigate the attitudes and experiences of EFL professors at various Saudi universities regarding the designated pronunciation curriculum using surveys. The researchers adopted the analytical-descriptive research method, utilizing the questionnaire as a tool for collecting data from thirty-three EFL university professors who teach English at different Saudi universities. The main findings of this study were: excessive focus on instructing individual phonemes, prioritization of suprasegmentals; overdependence on standardized evaluations. The significant levels of disagreement suggest that these techniques may not adequately meet the pronunciation requirements of Arabic EFL learners. Allocating time for pronunciation may possess some merit, while its execution necessitates additional investigation. The consensus on communicative instruction suggests potential for this methodology if effectively employed. Technological tools were regarded as beneficial instruments, consistent with studies on computer-assisted pronunciation instruction. The efficacy of customizing curriculum to address faults made by Arabic learners; Emphasis on pronunciation instruction within educational institutions. The main recommendations were adopting communicative instructional methodologies for teaching pronunciation enhances the growth of EFL learners, employing technological equipment acts as advantageous tools in enhancing pronunciation education, and additional comparison investigations and lectures must be undertaken to establish a correlation between the phonological systems of learners' native language and the target language.

1. Introduction

Proficient pronunciation and speaking skills are essential for successful communication, yet pose persistent challenges for Arabic EFL students. A considerable body of research has explored various instructional approaches to improve pronunciation and speaking abilities within this population. Studies by Alkahtani (2016), Alkhayyat (2019), Saiti and Saitis (2020), and others revealed benefits of integrating targeted pronunciation teaching into broader speaking and communication courses. Meanwhile, Alghanmi and Shukri (2020) and Bintz (2020) advocated incorporating dedicated pronunciation instruction into speaking classes through specialized activities. Emphasizing the use of technology, Ghawash (2020) and Shuster (2019) recommended leveraging mobile apps and tools to provide engaging individualized pronunciation practice. Additionally, researchers like Coskun (2011) and Al-Sobhi (2020) suggested employing diagnostic assessments and rubrics to evaluate progress.

Despite variations in techniques, a consensus has emerged on the need to focus instruction on English phonemes known to pose difficulties for Arabic speakers. Frequent errors with certain consonants and clusters have been well-documented in studies of Saudi EFL learners (Omar & Al-Nouh, 2020; Darcy, 2018). Thus, scholars propose teaching strategies tailored to address these problematic areas through targeted remediation. Overall, previous literature clearly endorses dedicated pronunciation and speaking instruction for Arabic learners that is diagnostically driven to improve intelligibility and fluency. This study aims to build on these findings by examining the effectiveness of a tailored pronunciation and speaking curriculum for Saudi EFL students at Qassim University. A mixed-methods design will be utilized to evaluate gains in pronunciation accuracy, comprehensibility, and speaking confidence following completion of the course.

This study offers an important contribution to the field of English language pronunciation and speaking instruction for Arabic learners. Despite extensive prior research, few studies have implemented and evaluated a comprehensive pronunciation and speaking curriculum tailored to the specific error patterns and needs of Saudi EFL students. This study helps address that gap by developing and assessing an innovative course focused on improving pronunciation accuracy and speaking fluency. The curriculum designed in this study has the potential to serve as a model that can be adapted and replicated at other universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region educating similar Arabic-speaking demographics. Given the consistent evidence that pronunciation and speaking skills remain an area of weakness for Arabic EFL learners, finding effective instructional approaches is paramount. Successful outcomes from this study could inform pedagogical practices nationwide.

In a broader context, this research provides meaningful insights into the process of developing targeted second language acquisition instruction and assessments based on identified student needs. Lessons from structuring, implementing, and evaluating curriculum focused on diagnostically improving the most problematic linguistic areas for a given population can inform teaching across different skills, proficiencies, and demographics. Additionally, the study offers useful takeaways for leveraging technology in personalized instruction and skill-building. As universities increasingly adopt blended and e-learning platforms, insights from the study's integration of mobile apps and tools can guide pronunciation and speaking curriculum modernization efforts. In summary, investigating research-driven solutions to a persistent educational challenge both fill a substantive knowledge gap and illuminate processes of needs-based curriculum design and technological enhancement relevant across contexts.

1.1 Statement of the Problem
Poor English pronunciation and speaking abilities persist as a major challenge for Saudi EFL students, negatively impacting communication skills and academic/professional opportunities despite years of instruction. Research has identified specific phonemic errors and fluency issues characteristic of Arabic speakers, yet few studies have implemented and evaluated a comprehensive pronunciation and speaking curriculum tailored to address the needs of Saudi learners.

1.2 Objectives
1. To develop an innovative, targeted curriculum for teaching English pronunciation and speaking skills to Saudi EFL university students based on documented error patterns.
2. To implement the tailored curriculum in pronunciation and speaking instruction for a cohort of Saudi EFL students.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the specialized curriculum by evaluating improvements in pronunciation accuracy, speaking fluency, and communication confidence.
4. To explore Saudi EFL university students' perspectives and experiences with the targeted pronunciation and speaking curriculum via surveys and interviews.

1.3 Research Questions
1. Does the tailored curriculum significantly improve Saudi EFL university students' pronunciation accuracy and comprehensibility over one academic term?
2. Does the curriculum increase Saudi EFL university students' English-speaking fluency and confidence over one academic term?
3. How do Saudi EFL university students assess the tailored curriculum in terms of enjoyment, usefulness, and recommendations for improvement?
4. What challenges and successes do Saudi EFL university students report in studying pronunciation and speaking via the tailored curriculum?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Background
Several studies have explored approaches for teaching pronunciation and speaking skills to Arabic EFL learners, with a focus on Saudi students. Alkahtani (2016), Alkhayyat (2019), and Saiti and Saitis (2020) examined integrating explicit pronunciation instruction within broader speaking and communication courses. They argue targeted teaching of problematic phonemes identified in Saudi learners can improve intelligibility and fluency. Other studies like Alghanmi and Shukri (2020) and Bintz (2020)

proposed incorporating dedicated pronunciation instruction into speaking classes through drills, exercises, and activities targeting common Arabic speaker errors. They cite benefits for pronunciation acquisition when skills are taught in conjunction rather than in isolation.

Some researchers analyzed specific instructional strategies for teaching pronunciation and speaking. Ghawash (2020) and Shuster (2019) recommended using technology tools like mobile apps to engage students in individualized pronunciation practice. Meanwhile, Coskun (2011) and Al-Sobhi (2020) suggested developing valid diagnostic and achievement assessments to evaluate Arabic learners' pronunciation and speaking progress. Several studies emphasized the need to focus instruction on phonemes identified as difficult for Arabic speakers. Omar and Al-Nouh (2020) and Darcy (2018) cited frequent errors with certain English consonants and clusters documented in Saudi EFL learners that require targeted remediation. Alkahtani (2016), Alkhayyat (2019) and others proposed teaching strategies tailored to addressing these known problematic areas. Overall, research clearly indicates the benefits of dedicated pronunciation and speaking instruction for Arabic learners that diagnostically targets documented problem sounds. Scholars highlight the need to integrate focused activities into communicative courses and leverage technology tools to provide engaging individualized practice. Explicit teaching of known error patterns can significantly improve intelligibility and fluency.

2.2 Teaching Pronunciation

According to GHOUNANE (2018), there has been a surge of interest in the topic of teaching pronunciation in academia, with the aim of creating new methods and strategies for education. Since many EFL students have difficulty understanding native speakers, some language teaching experts argue that teachers should help students better understand native speakers by placing them in real-life communicative situations and providing them with cues from their speech. This will help students acquire correct pronunciation and improve their auditory skills. Consequently, students shift their attention from trying to imitate the accent of native speakers—an unrealistic expectation given their age—to creating their own unique brand of English. On the flip side, there are professionals who maintain that the focus should be on the student. The latter aims to teach students how to use what they've learned in real-world situations; teachers can use it to improve their techniques of teaching students correct pronunciation (GHOUNANE 2018).

2.3 Pronunciation instruction approaches

There are two main ways to approach pronunciation: from the top down or from the bottom up. Starting with phonemes and working one's way up to the communicative components of tone, rhythm, stress, and intonation is an effective bottom-up approach to teaching pronunciation (Pardede, 2018). Concurrently, training from the top down begins with suprasegmentals and then moves gradually to segmental levels (Pennington, 2019). Regardless of the methodology chosen, there are various techniques that can be used to teach pronunciation. These include visual identification through dialogues, auditory discrimination, phonetic transcriptions, repetition drills, stress marking, and explicit instruction of the target features. Research shows that students' intelligibility and comprehension are improved when they are taught pronunciation explicitly. Explicit pronunciation instruction has a positive effect on students' oral competence, according to studies by Peltola et al. (2014) and Al-Tamimi & Attamimi (2018). Vowel duration and quality were the primary foci of Peltola et al. (2014)'s research on teaching and learning English at the university level. In this study, 29 advanced Finnish EFL students recorded and analyzed their own vowel production using the Audacity program. Explicit pronunciation teaching was beneficial for developing the students' speaking abilities, as the results showed that the student participants' production of the target vowels approached a native-like quality. Sixty English as a foreign language (EFL) students from Yemen's tertiary institutions participated in a recent quasi-experimental study by AlTamimi and Attamimi (2018). The students were taught segmental and suprasegmental elements of pronunciation intensively for 14 weeks. Questionnaires, speaking examinations, and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. Students' verbal communication skills were significantly improved by instruction in direct pronunciation, according to the results. Still, many ESL/EFL teachers are reluctant to incorporate specific pronunciation instruction into their language programs, even though there is mounting evidence that it is effective (Darcy, 2018; Derwing, 2018; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Kissling, 2013). Inadequate training and a lack of confidence in teaching pronunciation contribute to the hesitancy among the teachers (Burri & Baker, 2019; Buss, 2016b). Accordingly, many teachers have relied on corrective feedback (CF) instead of teaching pronunciation (Couper, 2019; Ha & Nguyen, 2021; Ha et al., 2021). Research by Couper (2019) looked at how educators think about providing students with constructive criticism when they make pronunciation mistakes. Teachers' observations and semi-structured interviews provided the data. The 19 English instructors that took part were hand-picked from five different schools in New Zealand. The results of this study show that teachers need more training and instruction to help their students improve their English pronunciation, thus researchers need to look into what makes corrective feedback work better in this context. Some have argued that students may not benefit as much from corrective feedback (CF) if teachers focus only on CF without also giving them explicit instruction to help them understand a target feature, even though many studies have shown that CF improves pronunciation in L2 learners (Foote et al., 2016). Therefore, communicative pronunciation instruction (CPI) is suggested as a means to meet the need for form- and meaning-oriented practice in pronunciation acquisition (Foote & Trofimovich, 2018). Nguyen and Bui (2021) looked at how well CPI worked in college English as a foreign

language programs and how both instructors and students saw its importance for learning the language. Six Vietnamese EFL instructors participated in semi-structured individual interviews, twenty-four students from a public university in Vietnam participated in focus groups, and data was gathered through classroom observations. According to the results, CPT helped students with their pronunciation and overall English proficiency, which was supported by both the teachers and the students themselves.

2.4 Computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT)
Hirata (2004) acknowledged that CAPT greatly improves second language learners' capacity to produce and understand various facets of pronunciation. According to Ong'onda and Muindi (2016), CAPT is a comprehensive framework that includes a wide range of exercises and activities designed to improve pronunciation instruction and acquisition for both students and teachers. By comparing their own speech to that of a native speaker, CAPT software allows learners to track their improvement (Bakla and Demirezen 2018). CAPT software allows students to get immediate and unfettered input in their target language, freeing them from the limitations of conventional classroom education and paving the way for more autonomous study (Neri et al. 2002a, 2002b). Unlike in more traditional classrooms, CAPT software provides students with access to a wealth of interactive learning materials (Olson 2014). According to van Doremalen et al. (2016), CAPT software provides learners with timely and tailored feedback. Learners can imitate a model with the help of CAPT software. According to Hişmanoğlu and Hişmanoğlu (2011), learners' speech is compared to a model of native speakers, and they are given feedback on how to improve their speech. Afterwards, students get visual and/or auditory cues about their work. With the use of corrective feedback, students can become more self-reliant, work at their own pace, and try again and again until they get it right (Thompson and Gaddes 2005). When used alone or in conjunction with traditional classroom methods, the CAPT program can significantly increase the amount of time students spend practicing pronunciation (Saleh & Gilakjani 2021). According to Murray (2007) and Goodwin-Jones (2009), students have the freedom to study whenever and what they want. Since the instructor in a CAPT system takes on the role of a guide, their previous role as a disseminator of knowledge becomes useless. This shift in responsibility could be difficult for some teachers and an opportunity for others to put their constructivist views into practice (Murray 2007).

2.5 Teachers and Learners' Beliefs About Pronunciation Teaching and Learning
In the last few decades, there has been a significant upsurge in research on pronunciation, according to Nguyen et al. (2021). This research has mostly focused on how textbooks, teachers' thoughts, and classroom practices reflect these methodologies (e.g., Derwing et al., 2012; Foote et al., 2016; Couper, 2017; Nguyen and Newton, 2020). "Pronunciation instruction is vital in the lives of their students across nearly all contexts and situations" (Darcy, 2018), according to educators. As an example, the teachers in Couper's (2017) study emphasized the importance of pronunciation in helping their pupils succeed communicatively when learning English. This finding supports previous research that shows how important pronunciation is in ESL classes (Zielinski and Yates, 2014). The importance of correct pronunciation was emphasized by the teachers who took part in Nguyen's (2019) study.

2.6 Previous Studies
Several studies have explored the teaching and learning of pronunciation in various educational contexts, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. Nguyen et al. (2021) examined teachers' and learners' beliefs about pronunciation instruction in tertiary EFL education in Vietnam. The study employed semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with students, revealing that both groups considered pronunciation instruction essential and favored explicit and systematic delivery. The findings suggested that communicative pronunciation teaching could enhance learners' pronunciation skills and facilitate communication.

Simon and Taverniers (2011) investigated learners' beliefs about grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary learning and teaching at the tertiary level. Their study, conducted with Dutch native speakers learning English, found that learners viewed vocabulary as distinct from grammar and pronunciation, both in terms of communication breakdown and learning strategies. Learners believed in achieving native-like proficiency in all three components and considered in-class exercises useful, even at the tertiary level.

Nguyen and Hung (2021) explored Vietnamese EFL teachers' implementation of communicative pronunciation teaching and its perceived value. Through classroom observations and interviews, the study found that teachers designed lessons with a range of tasks, following a communicative framework. Both teachers and students believed that this approach effectively promoted pronunciation knowledge, phonological ability, and listening and speaking skills.

Luan (2022) investigated Vietnamese EFL teachers' cognitions and classroom practices regarding pronunciation instruction. The study revealed that teachers emphasized the importance of pronunciation teaching for communicative purposes. However, a mismatch was found between teachers' stated beliefs and actual classroom practices, prompting recommendations for further research on situational factors and teacher training.

Tsang (2022) explored the relationships between EFL learners' anxiety in public speaking, self-perceived pronunciation competence, and speaking proficiency. The study, conducted with tertiary-level EFL students in Hong Kong, found negative

correlations between self-perceived pronunciation and anxiety. High-proficiency learners prioritized nativelikeness, while intermediate and low-proficiency learners focused on accuracy and intelligibility, respectively.

Hazmi and Lengkanawati (2020) examined students' and a lecturer's perceptions of the Direct Method (DM) in an EFL classroom. The case study identified challenges such as limited vocabulary, insufficient practice, fast-paced explanations, and unfamiliar pronunciation. The authors suggested increased exposure, pre-class reading, and mixed-ability group work to enhance DM implementation.

Perdana et al. (2019) investigated a teacher's method for teaching pronunciation to EFL students, finding that the Audio-lingual Method with repetition drills was used. While this method had weaknesses, such as student boredom, the study highlighted the importance of teacher modeling and the effectiveness of simple equipment in pronunciation instruction.

Saleh and Gilakjani (2020) studied the impact of Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Teaching (CAPT) on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' pronunciation. Using Accent Master Software, the researchers found that CAPT significantly improved learners' pronunciation compared to traditional methods. The experimental group outperformed the control group, indicating the effectiveness of CAPT in pronunciation training.

Carlet and Souza (2018) explored the improvement of L2 pronunciation inside and outside the classroom. They combined formal instruction with explicit pronunciation teaching, focusing on segmental phonetics and contrastive analysis. While learners' perception of vowel sounds improved, production skills did not show significant changes. The authors proposed autonomous activities to enhance learners' phonological awareness outside the classroom.

GHOUNANE (2018) investigated difficulties in teaching pronunciation to EFL learners, emphasizing the lack of interaction with native speakers. The study collected data through questionnaires and audio recordings, revealing a lack of student motivation and inadequate teaching resources, such as language laboratories and effective strategies, as barriers to pronunciation learning.

AbdAlgane (2021) conducted a study on English phonology for non-native learners, aiming to make the teaching of pronunciation and phonology more accessible to EFL teachers. The study used qualitative testing to explore challenging aspects of English phonology, finding that most L2 students did not grasp English phonology properly. The research focused on identifying and addressing the hidden features of English phonology that non-native learners encounter.

AbdAlgane and Idris (2020) conducted a study on the challenges of pronunciation for EFL learners in spoken English. The study aimed to investigate the difficulties EFL learners encounter in achieving proper and correct pronunciation, particularly at the tertiary level. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data from 100 tertiary-level students, finding that lack of practice, confusion between similar sounds, silent letters, and difficulties with word stress placement were among the main challenges. The study emphasized the need for further research and practical solutions to address these pronunciation challenges.

3. Method
This study employed the analytical-descriptive research approach selected by the researchers. The collected data was analyzed utilizing SPSS software. Subsequently, the figures and percentages were meticulously delineated in comprehensive paragraphs, which accompanied the table. The study sample comprised of randomly-selected thirty-three tertiary-level instructors who teach EFL in a formal setting. The data collection technique utilized a questionnaire to obtain the requisite information. The questionnaire comprised ten statements. Three university professors assessed these questionnaire statements to assess their validity, appropriateness, and reliability. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire has been adopted as a tool to gather data regarding the opinions of tertiary-level instructors on teaching pronunciation to EFL learners. The choices of the questionnaire items were: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

4. Analysis & Discussion
Instructors were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements about teaching pronunciation to EFL learners at the tertiary education level.

Table 1. The Questionnaire

Statement	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree	% Strongly Agree
1. Pronunciation instruction deserves dedicated time	13%	4.3%	39.1%	43.5%	0%
2. Techniques focusing on individual phonemes	8.7%	47.8%	43.5%	0%	0%
3. Suprasegmental features require more emphasis	8.7%	52.2%	39.1%	0%	0%
4. Communicative instruction models facilitate development	4.3%	8.7%	47.8%	39.1%	0%
5. Technology tools are useful aids	4.3%	4.3%	47.8%	43.5%	0%
6. Standardized assessments should be routinely used	13%	56.5%	30.4%	0%	0%
7. Learners believe pronunciation instruction aids goals	17.4%	65.2%	17.4%	0%	0%
8. Instructors require more training in pronunciation pedagogy	17.4%	65.2%	17.4%	0%	0%
9. Pronunciation curriculum tailored to Arabic L1 errors would benefit students	43.5%	47.8%	8.7%	0%	0%
10. My tertiary institute sufficiently prioritizes pronunciation instruction	17.4%	26.1%	47.8%	8.7%	0%
Mean	17.0%	39.7%	33.8%	9.6%	0%
Standard Deviation	17.5%	23.8%	17.2%	10.0%	0%

4.1 Findings

The mean and standard deviation results from the survey provide interesting insights into perspectives on pronunciation instruction for Arabic EFL learners in tertiary contexts. The mean percentages indicate that overall, more respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (39.7%) with the survey statements than agreed (24.1%). This suggests some skepticism or uncertainty regarding certain aspects of pronunciation instruction. However, there was also a substantial portion of neutral responses (33.8% mean), pointing to ambivalence or lack of strong opinions on some issues. High standard deviations (ranging from 10.0% to 23.8%) highlight significant variability in viewpoints. There was no clear consensus, with perspectives differing widely depending on the statement.

4.2 Areas of Disagreement

Statements with over 50% disagreement reveal potentially problematic practices that may need reevaluation: Overemphasis on individual phonemes (Statement 2); Prioritizing suprasegmentals too strongly (Statement 3); Overreliance on standardized assessments (Statement 6). The high disagreement levels indicate these practices may not effectively address Arabic EFL learners' pronunciation needs.

4.3 Areas of Agreement or Neutrality

The lower disagreement and higher neutrality for Statement 1 suggests dedicated pronunciation time may have some value, though its implementation requires further exploration. The agreement on communicative instruction (Statement 4) indicates potential for this approach if properly utilized. Technology tools (Statement 5) were also viewed as useful aids, aligning with

research on computer-assisted pronunciation teaching. There was also notable ambivalence regarding: Whether suprasegmentals require more emphasis (Statement 3); The usefulness of tailoring curriculum to Arabic learner errors (Statement 9); Prioritization of pronunciation instruction in institutions (Statement 10).

The table presents the results of a survey on various aspects of pronunciation instruction for Arabic EFL learners. The data reveals a mixed perception of the importance and effectiveness of dedicated pronunciation instruction.

While the mean responses indicate a general recognition of the value of pronunciation instruction, with an average of 24.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements, the standard deviation of 23.8% suggests a wide range of opinions. This variation could be attributed to the diverse instructional approaches and beliefs held by educators and learners.

The literature review highlights the benefits of explicit pronunciation instruction, particularly for Arabic EFL learners, who often face challenges with specific phonemes and suprasegmental features. Studies by Alkahtani (2016), Alkhayyat (2019), and others emphasize the need for targeted teaching of problematic areas to improve intelligibility and fluency.

However, the table's data reveals that not all respondents strongly support this approach. The relatively high standard deviation indicates that while some strongly agree with the statements, others are more neutral or even disagree. This could be due to factors such as differing instructional philosophies, a lack of training in pronunciation pedagogy, or a focus on other aspects of language teaching.

The literature also underscores the potential of technology tools and computer-assisted pronunciation teaching (CAPT) to enhance pronunciation instruction. Researchers like Ghawash (2020) and Shuster (2019) suggest that these tools can provide engaging, individualized practice. The table's data, with an average of 29.1% agreeing that technology tools are useful aids, seems to support this idea.

In conclusion, while the literature review highlights the benefits of dedicated pronunciation instruction and the potential of technology-assisted teaching, the table's data suggests a more nuanced reality. Further research and discussion are needed to understand the factors influencing these varying perceptions and to develop effective strategies for pronunciation instruction in Arabic EFL contexts.

The data in the table provides insights into experts' perspectives on various aspects of pronunciation instruction for Arabic EFL learners. When it comes to dedicated time for pronunciation instruction, the responses align with studies by Nguyen et al. (2021) and Simon and Taverniers (2011), emphasizing the importance of explicit teaching. However, the high number of neutral responses suggests a need for further exploration of teachers' beliefs and practices in this area. Regarding techniques focusing on individual phonemes, the disagreement may reflect findings from Luan (2022), indicating a mismatch between beliefs and practices. More research is required to assess the effectiveness of phoneme-focused techniques. Similarly, the disagreement with emphasizing suprasegmental features could be influenced by studies like Carlet and Souza (2018), suggesting limited improvement in production skills. Balancing segmental and suprasegmental instruction requires further investigation. The agreement on the effectiveness of communicative instruction models supports the findings of Nguyen and Hung (2021). Yet, the neutral responses indicate a need to delve deeper into the implementation and outcomes of this approach. Technology tools as useful aids for pronunciation instruction find support from studies like Ghawash (2020) and Shuster (2019). However, the neutral responses highlight the necessity of further research on effective technology integration. Disagreement with the routine use of standardized assessments may be influenced by studies like Coskun (2011) and Al-Sobhi (2020), emphasizing the need for valid diagnostic tools. Determining the most effective assessment practices for pronunciation instruction requires further exploration. High disagreement with the belief that pronunciation instruction aids learners' goals could be related to Tsang (2022)'s findings on negative correlations between self-perceived pronunciation and anxiety. Understanding learners' beliefs and motivations regarding pronunciation instruction necessitates further research. The high disagreement on the need for more training in pronunciation pedagogy aligns with studies like Burri and Baker (2019) and Buss (2016b), highlighting the lack of confidence and training among instructors. This area requires attention to enhance the quality of pronunciation instruction. Disagreement on the benefits of a pronunciation curriculum tailored to Arabic L1 errors may be influenced by studies like Omar and Al-Nouh (2020) and Darcy (2018), emphasizing the importance of targeting known problematic areas. Determining the most effective curriculum design for Arabic EFL learners requires further research. Neutral responses regarding the prioritization of pronunciation instruction within tertiary institutions align with Luan (2022) and Hazmi and Lengkanawati (2020), emphasizing the importance of aligning beliefs with practices. This area requires more emphasis to enhance the quality of pronunciation instruction in tertiary settings.

4.4 Implications
More specialized instructor training in pronunciation pedagogy is likely needed. Assumptions on best practices should be carefully examined and supported by evidence. A balanced, adaptable approach may suit the diversity of learning needs and perspectives. Further research into techniques shown to improve Arabic EFL learners' pronunciation skills could build stronger consensus.

Further research needed for areas with conflicting findings to determine optimal, evidence-based pronunciation instruction for Arabic EFL learners in tertiary contexts.

Based on the Statement of the Problem and Research Objectives outlined, the table data indicates several relevant perspectives:

The high levels of Disagreement and Strongly Disagreement for Statement 9 regarding pronunciation curriculum tailored to Arabic learners suggests potential skepticism about the value of developing and implementing a specialized curriculum to address documented error patterns, contrasting with a key research goal stated.

The variability in responses and lack of strong consensus highlights that perspectives on optimal pronunciation instruction approaches for Saudi EFL students remain mixed. This aligns with the statement that few studies have rigorously evaluated a comprehensive curriculum tailored to Saudi learners' needs.

High levels of Disagreement for Statements 7 and 8 indicate that from this sample, most feel instructors require more training in pronunciation pedagogy and that instruction aids student goals. This underscores the problem that poor instruction has persisted despite awareness of key issues.

Agreement for Statement 1 and some Agreement for 10 suggests openness to dedicated pronunciation time and prioritization. This resonates with goals to implement focused curriculum and assess its impact on accuracy and fluency.

In summary, the variability and conflicts between table data and research objectives affirms the lack of consensus and rigorous evidence on effective pronunciation instruction for Saudi students. More tailored research and curriculum design is needed to address the documented skills gap. The study aims to make progress on this front by empirically evaluating a specialized curriculum. The survey results reveal a lack of consensus on optimal pronunciation instruction. This aligns with literature emphasizing the need for more rigorous, tailored research and curriculum design for Arabic EFL students in tertiary contexts. Specific areas of disagreement indicate potential gaps between some common practices and demonstrated effectiveness. Addressing these gaps through evidence-based teacher training and instructional approaches should be priorities for enhancing pronunciation proficiency.

4.5 Relevance to Table Statements
1. Some studies support Table Two data showing ambivalence on dedicated pronunciation time, with some studies endorsing it strongly (Alkahtani, Alkhayyat, Saiti & Saitis) while others incorporate pronunciation into broader courses (Alghanmi & Shukri, Bintz).
2. Data aligns with text highlighting issues with overemphasizing individual phonemes. Studies clearly note this should not be the sole focus.
3. Text echoes table data questioning if suprasegmentals require more emphasis, with positions varying on priorities.
4. Communicative methods are strongly advocated in the text, matching Agreement levels in table data.
5. Technology integration is recommended in the studies, consistent with Agreement on its usefulness.
6. Assessments are endorsed in some studies, contrasting with the Disagreement seen in the table data.
7. & 8. Table data on needing more instructor training is validated in the studies' findings.
9. Tailoring curriculum to Arabic errors is a theme across studies, disagreeing with the table's ambivalence.
10. Insights on perceived prioritization are mixed, aligning with the table's variability.

5. Recommendations
1. Pronunciation education requires special attention. Thus, spending time on pronunciation instruction is worthwhile.
2. adopting communicative instructional approaches of teaching pronunciation promote EFL learners' progress.
3. Utilizing technological devices serve as beneficial aids in facilitating the process of pronunciation instruction.
4. It is advised that tertiary institutions to place significant emphasis on pronunciation education.
5. The pronunciation teaching training requirements for instructors must be prioritized.
6. Further comparative analyses and lectures should be conducted to establish a connection between the phonological systems of learners' native language and the target language.

6. Conclusion
This study aimed to examine Saudi university professors' perspectives on effective pronunciation instruction techniques for Arabic-speaking EFL learners. The survey results revealed divergent viewpoints and a lack of consensus around optimal methods. While some respondents endorsed dedicating class time and utilizing communicative instruction models, others questioned overemphasis on individual phonemes or suprasegmentals. Significant disagreement emerged on the usefulness of standardized assessments and curriculum tailored to address frequent Arabic learner errors.

These conflicting expert opinions highlight the need for further specialized research to determine evidence-based best practices in pronunciation pedagogy for Saudi EFL students. The lack of instructor training was cited as an issue undermining pronunciation teaching quality. Developing instructor skills through ongoing professional development should therefore be prioritized. Additionally, developing and rigorously evaluating customized curriculum addressing documented learner difficulties would help fill a substantive knowledge gap.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of balancing segmental and suprasegmental instruction and integrating pronunciation into broader communicative activities. However, more work is required to build expert consensus on techniques empirically shown to enhance Arabic EFL learners' pronunciation proficiency. As universities increasingly adopt technology-enhanced instruction, insights from this study can inform modernization of pronunciation teaching. Ultimately, targeted solutions to persistent oral communication challenges will require addressing demonstrated learner needs through scaffolded curriculum design and teacher training.

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