

# ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN EGYPTIAN EFL CLASSROOMS: ATTITUDES, CHALLENGES, AND EXPECTATIONS

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**Abstract:** This paper is an effort to explore issues pertaining to pronunciation instruction in Egypt, from the perspective of Egyptian EFL learners and teachers, with an emphasis placed on: views on pronunciation performances, expectations from their lecturers/students and study programmes, challenges faced in learning/teaching English pronunciation, desired proficiency standards and attitudes towards English and the specific items taught, the influence of mother tongue, as well as views on what participants would like to see applied in textbooks and classrooms (e.g. organised activities, behaviour, approaches, methods, etc.). Recommendations based on questionnaire responses by both learners and teachers can be summarised as follows: (i) ensuring the qualifiedness of teachers, lecturers and educators in general (e.g. by seeking a TEFL-related qualification alongside a relevant university degree as position requirements), (ii) teaching English in English for more exposure to the target language content, (iii) minimising teacher-centered classroom performance and allocating most of the class time for student participation and involvement, (iv) directing efforts towards creating an engaging and motivating environment for both teachers and learners by refraining from employing traditional outdated teaching methods that may lead to eliminating chances of effective communicative interaction, (v) applying assessment methods that prioritise development over scores to enhance students' creativity and critical thinking skills, (vi) integrating the element of pronunciation in the teaching of other language skills, (vii) ensuring the cultural appropriacy and appeal of the study materials to meet the expectations of learners, address the actual teaching/learning objectives and suit the particular EFL context in question.

**Keywords:** Egyptian EFL classrooms, pronunciation learning, pronunciation teaching

## 1. Introduction

While proper EFL pronunciation instruction cannot be detached from possessing speaking proficiency or “raising students’ levels of intelligibility and comprehensibility” (Hucke 2021: 2), pronunciation tends to be overlooked in EFL classrooms among the other elements of the four skills in a language system (Fraser 2000, Macdonald 2002, Gilbert 2008), especially in monolingual exam-oriented classes where mastering written accuracy is prioritised over accuracy in pronunciation, and is considered to be one of the most challenging aspects of ELT by both teachers and learners (Robin 2022: 26). Moreover, as noted by Hucke (2021: 2), “given that pronunciation tends to be overlooked and undervalued as part of a general ESL curriculum, ... there is little incentive for researchers to spend much time exploring it”. For instance, the findings of a study by Foote et al. (2013) depicted that time allotted for pronunciation instruction constituted only 10% of all language classes (cited in Robin 2022: 27). Besides, ESL pronunciation instruction is generally perceived as “lacking in development, quality resources, and emphasis” (Hucke 2021: 8). It is also an aspect where teaching methods/approaches, timing and focus are greatly affected by a number of factors (Hucke 2021: 15). According to Fraser (2006: 80), teachers may choose to avoid pronunciation instruction for a number

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of reasons: (1) it would be pointless to teach pronunciation to adults as the concept of “critical period” (Lenneberg 1967) was generally understood by some as adults being unable to learn pronunciation; (2) assessment and feedback on the learners’ pronunciation were believed to be forms of criticism, which was considered inappropriate; (3) pronunciation instruction needed certain expertise that educators tended to lack. Teachers, as a result, may drift away from the teaching of pronunciation or any instruction beyond the surface level, due to lack of time (Hucke 2021, Gilbert 2008), qualification or preparation (Hucke 2021, Fraser 2000).

According to Robin (2022) and Gilakjani (2017), ESL pronunciation instruction, and other related topics it entails (e.g. attitudes towards ESL pronunciation; the effectiveness of various instructional methods, materials and curricula) is an area that is under-investigated. Despite the notion that exploring the Egyptian EFL learners’ views on pronunciation learning/instruction and the underlying sources of any challenges would aid drawing pedagogical implications that address the problematic aspects with the aim of improving the existing and future teaching and learning practice in Egypt, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, the topic of pronunciation learning in this linguistic context is under-researched compared to other aspects like grammar, vocabulary, and written production, and even to, according to Robin (2022: 33), aspects like pronunciation teaching techniques and teachers’ views on pronunciation instruction.

Besides, despite the empirical research emphasising the significance of pronunciation instruction in EFL/ESL classrooms, and the knowledge of which aspects to prioritise, more research is needed to investigate the most effective methods and materials to apply and to draw conclusions that would act as the basis for relevant pedagogic decisions (Baker & Murphy 2011, Hucke 2021, Fraser 2000). According to Derwing & Rossiter (2002), L2 learners’ needs, perceptions of their own pronunciations and beliefs pertaining to obstacles to effective communication have not received sufficient attention in Second Language research. As stated in Al-Issa et al. (2017: 5), such information has to be taken into consideration when designing syllabi and study materials to achieve more effective EFL programmes that address the learners’ needs and are relevant to their sociolinguistic and sociocultural learning/teaching contexts as a step towards improving the existing practice.

In the researcher’s experience as a teacher in an Egyptian higher education institution, teaching English as a foreign language to Egyptians ranging in their proficiency levels from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate, she has noticed that Egyptian students face problems with some aspects of English pronunciation. Arabic and English are two distinctive languages that differ in terms of: their language families (Semitic and Indo-European, respectively), internal phonological, morphological and syntactic systems (Na’ama, 2011), as well as speech characteristics and the representation of their phonetic systems (Al-Ani 1970, as cited in Abdelaal 2017: 8). Furthermore, many consonants and vowels, Arabic or English encompasses, differ in nature from their counterparts in the other language, rendering the process of Arabic or English language acquisition as challenging for learners with the other as L1 and leading to mispronunciations and issues in respect to intelligibility. Therefore, a significant impact of L1 transfer on the participants’ pronunciation of English was expected to be the main source of errors. Generally speaking, in the researcher’s experience as an EFL teacher, the influence of

Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) on the learning of English in Egypt is too evident to pass unnoticed. Egyptian EFL learners tend to transfer the linguistic norms of ECA (and sometimes literally translate idiomatic expressions) to the system of English as their target language yielding productions that follow ECA patterns (in terms of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, morphology, phonology, etc.), but rendered in a different language (English).

Another factor behind the phonological problems Egyptian EFL learners face could be the inadequacy of some study programmes in the Arab region. Despite the drawbacks underlying English Language Teaching (ELT) policies of the public educational institutions in the Arab world countries and the criticism directed at the graduates of some inadequate study programmes in these institutions, the amount of literature tackling these aspects is still insufficient (Al-Issa et al. 2017).

## 2. First language transfer

An accent (of any degree of foreignness/deviation from the standard) is viewed as a form of transfer from the phonology of a learner's native language to that of the target language where a learner "subconsciously" transfers to L2 the phonological norms and concepts of L1 or any other foreign language (that are not necessarily completely applicable to the target language) rather than its concrete items and/or rules (Fraser 2006: 86). The process of L2 pronunciation acquisition is aided by a change of existing L1 concepts, the application of those concepts and the recognition of their role through the analysis and reproduction of sounds, which are all essential to effective practice of L2 (Fraser 2006: 82, 86 and 87). In this sense, according to the cognitive approach in L2 acquisition/learning, pronunciation learning after the critical period is more complicated than in childhood as changing concepts is more challenging than forming new ones (as in the case of a learner's L1) (Fraser 2006: 87). As stated by Fraser (2000: 20), "if we learn a second language in childhood, we generally learn to speak it fluently and without a 'foreign accent'; if we learn it in adulthood, though we may attain considerable fluency and versatility, it is very unlikely that we will ever attain a native accent". Pronunciation is argued to be "one area in which to find strong support for a critical period: after all, children often seem to have an easier time with the sound system of a new language" (Odlin 2003: 468).

On the other hand, errors that do not originate from the interference of a learner's L1 are referred to in the literature as "developmental errors" or "intralingual errors" as opposed to the "interlingual errors" caused by the transfer of the rules of a learner's L1 to the target language. Developmental errors reflect lacking/inadequate knowledge of the second language rules and can be represented in instances of overgeneralisation (Richards 1971) and simplification (cited in Thao 2020: 106). Fraser (2000: 22) states that:

Though there is some validity to the 'transfer' idea, it is only useful in an elaborated form which requires a good understanding of its limitations and ramifications. A simplistic idea that learners are transferring sounds from their native language to the new language is a hindrance rather than a help. It is

unfortunate that so many teachers, as well as the general public, still hold so strongly to a simple notion of transfer.

Additionally, “language transfer affects all linguistic subsystems including pragmatics and rhetoric, semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, phonetics, and orthography” (Odlin 2003: 437). However, transfer was believed, by many linguists, to be more evident in some subsystems of a language than in others; transfer is less noticed in areas like morphology and syntax than in phonetics and phonology (e.g. Krashen 1982, as cited in Odlin 2003: 439). In addition, as mentioned by Odlin (2003: 445), “the difficulty of noticing cross-linguistic differences may be especially acute in the area of pronunciation”.

### **3. Problems with the current teaching practices, methods, and materials**

As stated in Morley (1991), pronunciation teaching methods being time-consuming, with no adequate gains, made instructors question the worthiness of teaching it and made linguists consider the need to reassess the current traditional methods employed in pronunciation instruction in general. Morley (1991), therefore, called for the necessity of using quality classroom resources (as an unbiased means to assess competence and comprehensibility), as well as more observation-based classroom research that would aid designing/choosing the teaching materials and techniques that are most effective within a given context.

Similarly, the unavailability/lack of teaching/learning resources is one of the leading causes of inadequate pronunciation instruction in the Egyptian EFL context. Evaluating English textbook series used in Egyptian primary schools, Abdallah (2016) states that both textbooks and teachers devote limited to no time to the “elaboration and practice” of the pronunciation activities presented. Besides, the books fail to comprise the necessary phonological and communicative aspects of English. In comparison with literacy skills, teaching pronunciation with its elements (e.g. sound production, rhythm, stress, intonation, etc.) is significantly de-emphasised in the Arab world (Huwari & Mehawesh 2015) and many teachers choose to disregard the aspects of pronunciation in today’s ESL classroom due to the lack of time, qualification or preparation or the belief that students will naturally acquire correct pronunciation on their own through the environment rather than any form of explicit classroom pronunciation instruction (Hucke 2021: 13).

One of the principal criticisms directed at most language courses/materials is that they involve activities and practices that could be employed in numerous foreign language learning/teaching contexts without taking into consideration the uniqueness of each context. Educators, curricula designers, as well as instructors being aware of the linguistic context facilitate the anticipation of problems pertaining to language transfer and, consequently, addressing them beforehand.

In an effort to evaluate EFL textbooks used in the Arab region, Fareh (2010: 3603) highlighted a number of key factors that are thought to inhibit effective learning/acquisition. First, despite claims of native English-speaking authors of EFL textbooks and other teaching materials used that their works are designed to suit learners of all EFL

contexts, those textbooks tend to be “culturally inappropriate”, which may cause students to develop a sense of exclusion; hence, take a negative stance on the whole process of learning/acquisition of the target language (Fareh 2010: 3603). Cultural irrelevance of activities students are expected to fulfil to reach the sought-after course objectives, especially when not “encouraged by the educational system of the country”, could be a major cause why such activities are less likely to be selected by teachers and/or to be pursued by learners (Fareh 2010: 3603). When textbooks and other study materials are designed by authors with other language background(s), especially those with no sufficient linguistic, cultural or educational background on some particular EFL context, those materials fail to address the learners’ needs to achieve the desired outcomes. Moreover, irrelevance of the topics, through which the language skills or items are taught/learnt, can lower the level of the students’ motivation and interest in the foreign language classes.

Another crucial factor pointed out by Fareh (2010: 3603) is the gap between the level of the study materials and the level of learners’ proficiency. If the materials utilised are challengingly higher than the learners’ proficiency level, and/or too large to be covered in the time allotted for them by curriculum/lesson planners, it can frustrate the students’ learning efforts, lead to loss of learner interest in the target language, and even discredit teachers by their institutions and/or learners’ parents for failing to reach the desired outcomes.

Fareh (2010: 3603) also directed criticisms in relation to the study materials designed by Arabic native-speaking authors. According to him, teaching is made pointless in some Arab countries where the process of teaching goes with no prior vision of curriculum, set objectives or target learning results being established before textbooks are actually designed, which is the case with books written by “local authors”.

Pronunciation assessment is also an issue raised in the teacher survey of this study. Fareh (2010: 3603) emphasises that assessment policies are one of the major causes of the failure of EFL school programmes in the Arab world:

Emphasis is often on testing explicitly stated information, predicting the meaning of certain lexical items from the context and one or two test items on the cohesive device of reference. The ability to infer implicitly stated information, the ability to evaluate things, the ability to distinguish opinions from facts, the skill of identifying cohesive devices, in addition to problem solving and critical thinking are just examples of the neglected reading skills in both teaching and testing.

Unqualified teachers are found to be another challenge hindering the success of EFL learning in Egypt. In the findings of Fareh (2010: 3602) who investigated EFL practice at Arab schools, he found out that, apart from a university degree in a relevant major (e.g. degree in English Language and/or Literature, Education or Translation), many teachers had no training courses that qualified them for teaching English as a foreign language. Lack of/Insufficient teacher training leads to unnecessarily excess use of Arabic as the medium of language instruction/learning (employing traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation) and classroom interaction; hence, minimal exposure to English and inadequate learning outcomes and domination of the non-communicative

activities (Fareh 2010: 3602). This can lead to students thinking in their native languages when trying to express their thoughts in the target language; thus, producing language items that tend to be L1-like and make no sense in English. This holds for the case of Egyptian EFL learners, as well, especially the less proficient users of English, whose teachers may not be aware of many phonological phenomena or the means of applying the appropriate techniques of pronunciation teaching and evaluation. Those teachers may, as a result, end up ignoring focusing on speaking and pronunciation skills and/or fail to set meaningful goals when teaching pronunciation.

#### **4. Teaching implications**

Pronunciation instructors have been applying various approaches to pronunciation teaching including: the Direct Method, Total Physical Response (Asher 2012), Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell 1988), Intuitive-Imitative Approach, Analytic-Linguistic Approach (Celce-Murcia 1991), Integrative Approach (Fraser 2000), traditional activities (e.g. reading aloud) (Adita et al. 2014), Communicative Language Teaching (Tikkakoski 2015), Audiolingualism, and Oral Approach (cited in Robin 2022: 27). Abdallah (2016) suggests that an efficient way to teach pronunciation features to Egyptian EFL learners could be through presenting subsequent authentic activities as an attempt to simulate the use of English in real communication. Students should be introduced to various activities where they can be exposed to sufficient audio and video input to practice uncommon sounds, unreleased consonants in phrases like *what time* and *big cake*, reduced auxiliaries and other functional words, and consonant clusters to learn how to facilitate their pronunciation in natural speech. This could be achieved by introducing pair or group work following the pure pronunciation tasks aiming to contextualise them and integrate other linguistic and interpersonal skills. Other helpful practice activities for more advanced learners can include training on word stress and stress with compound nouns. Learning about contrastive stress would also help to notice how a change in stress can change the meaning and elicit a different response. Intonation in different types of sentences (questions, simple statements, complex sentences, etc.) may be introduced in later stages when learners are already familiar with the segmental aspects.

Al-Ahdal et al. (2015) listed a set of recommendations that seem adequate for the case of Arabic speakers generally. Curriculum designers and educators are encouraged to employ teaching methods such as: discrimination practice, imitation, concrete rules, giving immediate feedback in form of modification rather than error spotting, and to provide more room for integrating the prosodics in the syllabus: by incorporating activities like role play, poem recitation and voice over, even when dealing with other aspects of the language (e.g. grammar, discourse or lexis). Differences between pronunciation problems that might cause misunderstandings and those that only sound non-English without challenging intelligibility and effective communication also need to be made clear when raised at any point in the teaching process. This can help further motivate the learners including those who are “unintelligible” and/or shy (Al-Ahdal et al. 2015: 104).

Similarly, according to Hucke (2021: 12), the necessity to address certain student mispronunciations (either through recasts or thorough descriptions of the pronunciation element in question) should be determined by the comprehensibility level of the mispronounced item. In case of producing mispronunciations that are challenging to learners being intelligible, negotiation of meaning could be an effective strategy to be employed by teachers to boost the learners' sense of motivation, eliminate chances of incomprehensibility and/or maximise the ability to overcome shyness or embarrassment (Hucke 2021: 13&14).

For effective pronunciation teaching, Derwing et al. (2012) point out the need to distribute focus rather equally between segmentals and suprasegmentals. Other productive elements of pronunciation instruction, according to them, should comprise varied activities beyond drills, explicit delivery of rules governing pronunciation in addition to instructing students to observe their own pronunciation with the purpose of noticing their own pronunciation against the target production aiming for improvement of their own performance beyond classroom (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

Nasr (1997: 67) suggests that in teaching English pronunciation to speakers of other languages, it is significant to teach contrasting segments together to highlight the difference(s) between the one which is phonetically closest to the learner (as it exists in his or her native language) and the other which the learner substitutes for the problem sound. The pronunciation of consonant clusters is problematic for speakers whose first languages do not allow many consonants in a cluster. Therefore, Egyptian learners should be familiar with the possible consonant combinations in an English cluster, with a special focus on initial clusters and on three-segment and four-segment medial and final clusters. Egyptian EFL learners should also be familiar with the different pronunciations of inflectional *-ed* and the rules which govern them.

Special attention should also be given to other unfamiliar segments which do not exist in Arabic as the mother tongue (Ahmad 2011: 34-35) such as the vowels /e/, /ə/, /ɜ:/, /əʊ/, /eɪ/, /eə/, /ɪə/, /ʊə/ and the consonant /r/ as a rhotic retroflex approximant [ɹ]. On word, phrase and sentence levels, teachers should also highlight the concept of "silent letters" and stress the notion that, unlike in Arabic, there is no one to one relationship between the spelling of a word and its pronunciation in English (e.g. *Tom's* [tɒmz], *missed things* [mɪst θɪŋz], etc.). Due to the notion that the language alphabetic knowledge shapes one's pronunciation "metalanguage" (Linell 1988 as cited in Fraser 2006: 85), believing that letters in words have to correspond to the actual sounds is also something that is more likely to occur with individuals with no sufficient background in linguistics (Fraser 2006: 85).

Similarly, Morley (1991: 509-510) proposed the "Modes of Practice" that include: "(1) 'Imitative Speaking Practice' with advanced or intermediate students to focus on 'controlled production of selected pronunciation/speech features' (2) 'Rehearsed Speaking Practice' to promote the 'stabilization of modified pronunciation/speech patterns'. The speaking practice can include activities such as: oral reading scripts selected and/or composed by teachers and/or students, preplanned oral presentations (with self-selected topics and feedback critique sessions either immediately or later), out-of-class self-study rehearsals, paired/small-group rehearsal study sessions (with audio and/or videotaping), one-on-one individual speech (with speaking teachers/speech coaches).

Despite this growing recognition of the importance of pronunciation instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, there remains a notable gap in research focused specifically on Egyptian EFL learners' and teachers' perspectives, particularly in relation to pronunciation challenges and instructional needs. While studies have addressed the broader issue of pronunciation teaching in ESL/EFL contexts (Hucke 2021, Robin 2022), the unique socio-linguistic context of Egypt, marked by the influence of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA), has not been sufficiently explored in relation to pronunciation errors and their impact on intelligibility and communicative effectiveness. Additionally, existing research on pronunciation instruction in the region has largely concentrated on general issues such as teaching methods and materials, leaving a gap in understanding the specific pronunciation-related obstacles faced by Egyptian learners and how these can be effectively mitigated in the classroom. Furthermore, while there is considerable literature on the need for more practical, communicative approaches to teaching pronunciation (Derwing & Rossiter 2002, Baker & Murphy 2011), there is no sufficient research that directly investigates the effectiveness of these approaches in the Egyptian EFL context, particularly in terms of teacher qualifications, curriculum design, and student attitudes. This research gap highlights the necessity for more context-specific studies that consider not only the linguistic challenges posed by L1 transfer but also the pedagogical implications of these challenges in improving pronunciation teaching and learning outcomes in Egyptian classrooms.

### **5. Methodology: Sampling, data collection and participants**

The data are a collection of online questionnaire responses provided by 74 Egyptian male and female university students (two of whom said they are EFL teachers as well). 73% of the participating students had their basic education in Arabic-medium schools while 27% went to English-medium schools (or what is known in Egypt as English language schools), in addition to the teachers of the participating students (5 Egyptian male and female teachers, two of whom said they are also EFL learners). Four teachers reported they received their school education in Arabic-medium schools while only one received their basic education in an English-medium school; none of either students or teachers were graduates of other foreign-language-based schools. Students varied in their English proficiency levels (pre-intermediate to advanced, with a range of test scores of 20–50/50 on the Cambridge English Placement Test on reading, writing & listening, taken as a prerequisite for joining their study programmes). Questionnaire data were collected within a time span of one semester (fall semester of the academic year 2022–2023) using convenience sampling; participants are students of the researcher's colleague teachers. Instructions to answer the survey questions were given in English alongside Modern Standard Arabic to enable respondents (especially students with lower proficiency levels) to select the language through which they would be able to fully understand the survey questions and/or clearly express themselves.

The students participating in the study belonged to four different faculties: Engineering, Logistics, Computer Science, and Business, where English was the language of the study programmes, i.e. instruction, examination, textbooks and study materials. In their programmes, students were required to take English for Specific Purposes as well as



English as a Foreign Language classes for three semesters (consecutive or separate) during their study years at the university. The study involved student participants from different educational backgrounds (foreign-language medium schools and Arabic-medium schools), as well as social/geographical backgrounds to ensure that members of as many sectors of the target population (Egyptian EFL learners) as possible are represented in the sample.

Teacher questionnaire comprised more items than student questionnaire (thirty/six compared to twenty-seven items, respectively). Teachers had to answer the same items designed for students alongside nine additional items. Items of both questionnaires can be found in Appendix 1 (students') and Appendix 2 (teachers'). Questionnaires were constructed in the forms of Likert-scale-based questions, multiple choice questions (some of which allowed selecting as many options as applicable), in addition to open-ended questions. The questionnaires were designed by the researcher as Google forms (where all question fields were required, not allowing respondents to skip any of the questionnaire sections as they answered the questions). Before sent out to the respective respondents, the questionnaires were forwarded to the research advisor of the researcher for review, suggestions for improvement, and approval of the questionnaire final versions.

To overcome any problems that might have been encountered during the research project, and to avoid the absence of any safety or ethical issues in such a study the data were stored and used only for the purposes of this research anonymously, with no indicative details of a person, a place, etc. The questionnaires were forwarded for completion as Google form links via email and Whatsapp study groups to the participating students and teachers by the Head of the English Department, who was himself one of the teacher participants assigned to one of the student groups. He was also the programme coordinator in charge of the selection of classroom activities and compiling classroom materials. Both teachers and students were also thoroughly informed about this research and its objectives, and were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to refuse participation for any reason(s). Such procedures were thought to help avoid threats to internal validity and other threats including face threats and trust issues to the study participants and pave the way for the research objectives and outcomes to tap into the participants' needs.

The following are the research hypotheses:

Hypothesis (i): Egyptian EFL learners face significant pronunciation challenges due to the influence of their mother tongue (ECA) on their English pronunciation, which negatively impacts their intelligibility and comprehensibility.

Hypothesis (ii): There is a gap between the learners' expectations and the actual pronunciation instruction they receive in Egyptian EFL classrooms, particularly in terms of teaching methods, materials, and teacher qualifications.

The research questions are listed below:

Research question (i): How do Egyptian EFL learners and teachers perceive the role of pronunciation in language learning?

Research question (ii): What are the main pronunciation challenges faced by Egyptian EFL learners, and how do these challenges relate to mother tongue influence on their English pronunciation?

Research question (iii): How do Egyptian EFL learners perceive the effectiveness of the current pronunciation instruction in terms of teaching methods, materials, and teacher qualifications?

Research question (iv): What are the expectations of Egyptian EFL learners and teachers regarding pronunciation instruction, and how do these expectations align with the actual pronunciation teaching practices in Egyptian classrooms?

Research question (v): What improvements in pronunciation instruction do Egyptian EFL learners and teachers suggest for textbooks, teaching materials, and classroom practices to enhance pronunciation teaching and learning outcomes?

## 6. Results and discussion

This section displays a thorough description of both students' and teachers' responses to the pronunciation issues raised in the questionnaires. Responses to the question asking the learners to determine the level of importance of learning English highlighted their view of English as a must-have skill for a successful present and future, not just a mere advantage. There was no great difference in the degree to which the learners viewed learning English (75.7% of the respondents regarded studying English as "very important", 18.9% reported it was "important"; see Figure 1).

3- How important do you think studying English is? ما أهمية دراسة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟  
74 responses

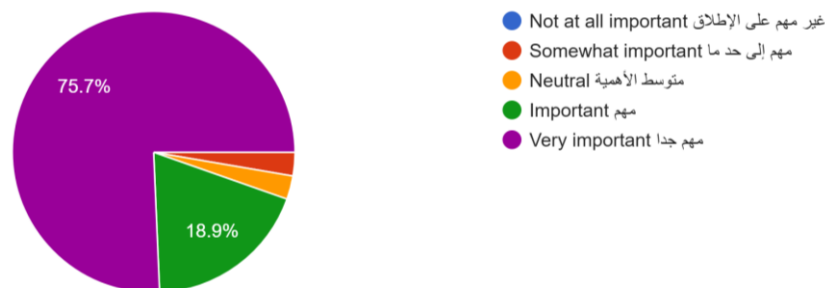


Figure 1: The importance of studying English (learners)

Elaborations on the importance of learning English as a foreign language included:

(i) Students mentioned that English is the international language of communication among people from various nations and geographical areas. For some learners, such communication requires knowledge of good English, higher competence or fluency levels, and mastering a "correct" accent.

(ii) According to some respondents, one's view of the world is shaped by the number of languages they know; one's world is as vast as their dictionary. English was regarded as the common-ground tongue that facilitates relocation, builds relationships, and opens a window to different cultures. Additionally, taking into consideration the number of resources available in English to global citizens, knowing English offers one many sources of learning.

(iii) English was described as the language of present and future business. It is viewed as a skill needed for the labor market, especially in international/multinational environments.

Even national workplaces in Egypt hold interviews in English, focusing on English skills (including pronunciation, fluency, and listening skills). Hence, there are no sufficient employability skills without appropriate knowledge of English. English may also expand career horizons, and more attention should be directed at including TOEFL and IELTS skills in the Egyptian study curricula.

(iv) Some students added that English is the language of today’s science (introduced and studied in English) and the medium language of most study majors taught at Egyptian universities and other higher education institutions. English is seen as essential to keep track of the progress of modern scientific research.

(v) Other learners argued that studying English facilitates the learning of several typologically similar languages, while others believed English serves a social function in addition to academic and practical purposes, particularly for young people due to its extensive use in many aspects of Egyptian daily life.

Teachers’ reactions on the importance of English learning aligned with those of the students. All five teachers believed learning English is crucial for a better future (e.g. travel, immigration opportunities, labor market needs, career development), knowledge of skills and international sciences available in English (e.g. computer skills), global communication, and a deeper understanding of other cultures. It is also vital as the language of the web and modern technologies.

Students deemed listening and speaking to be the most problematic skills in English (44.6% and 43.2%, respectively), compared to writing (21.6%), reading (10.8%), and none, of the skills mentioned, (24.3%) (see Figure 2). Teachers also identified pronunciation/speaking as the most problematic (60%), followed by listening (40%) and writing (20%) (see Figure 4). No votes were recorded for reading, comprehension, or “none.” These results reflect the written-oriented study programs in Egypt, which overlook conversation skills. Despite being overlooked in Egyptian EFL classrooms, English pronunciation was viewed as highly required by both learners and teachers. Commenting on the importance of studying English pronunciation, 58.1% of the respondents voted “very important,” 28.4% reported it was important, 9.5% voted “somewhat important,” and 4.1% were neutral (Figure 3). None voted for “not at all important”. Regarding teachers, four of them voted “very important,” while one voted “important” (Figure 5).

5- What do you find most problematic among the skills of English? Mark all that are relevant. ما هي

أصعب مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟ يمكنك اختيار أكثر من مهارة

74 responses

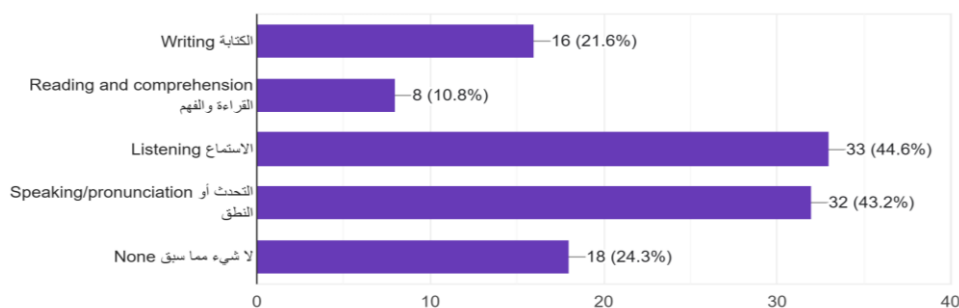


Figure 2: The most problematic among the skills of English (learners)

6- How important do you think studying English pronunciation is? ما أهمية دراسة نطق أو صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟  
74 responses

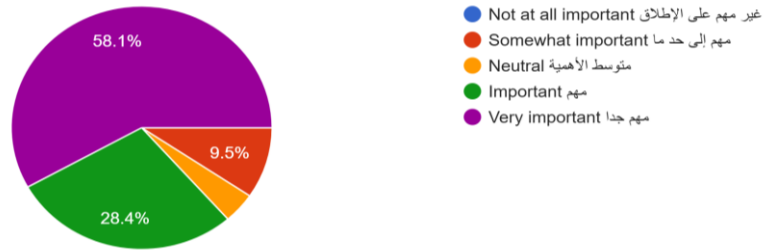


Figure 3: The importance of studying English pronunciation (learners)

5- What do you find most problematic among the skills of English? Mark all that are relevant. ما هي أصعب مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟ يمكنك اختيار أكثر من مهارة  
5 responses

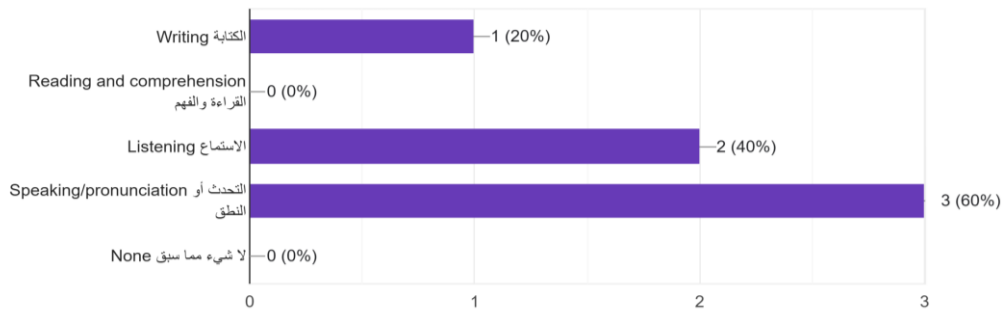


Figure 4: The most problematic among the skills of English (teachers)

6- How important do you think studying English pronunciation is? ما أهمية دراسة نطق أو صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟  
5 responses

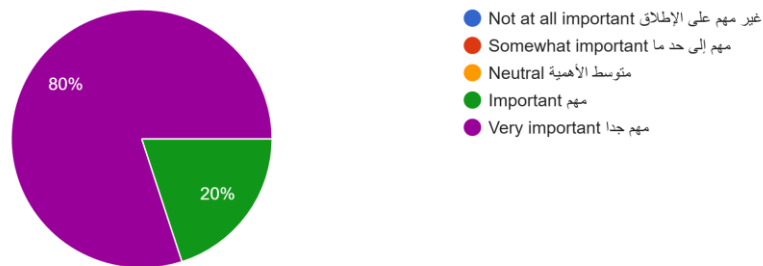


Figure 5: The importance of studying English pronunciation (teachers)

Despite their view of English pronunciation as moderately difficult (51.4% of students and 60% of teachers), 31.1% of students and one teacher reported they had not learned any pronunciation skills in school (Figure 6). When asked to specify the pronunciation aspects learned in school, 50% of student respondents voted for “pronunciation of individual sounds”, followed by “word and/or sentence stress” (25.7%) and “rhythm” (20.3%), with considerable weight given to the teaching of these skills (41.9% and 40.5%, respectively) (Figure 7). Teacher ratings highlighted inconsistencies in the time and effort dedicated to these elements (ranging from much focus by three raters, to moderate focus by one rater and no focus by one rater; Figure 9). Teachers prioritised “pronunciation of individual sounds” (60%), followed by “word and/or sentence stress” and “features of connected speech” (40% each). Other options (rhythm, intonation, and other) were rated equally by teachers (one vote/20% each) (Figure 8). This aligns with the survey by Burns (2006), where segmental instruction was emphasised over suprasegmental instruction (cited in Robin 2022: 27).

7- Which of the following English pronunciation aspects did you study at school? Please mark all that are relevant. أي من فروع الصوتيات الآتية درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟ فضلاً قم بتظليل جميع ما تراه مناسباً  
74 responses

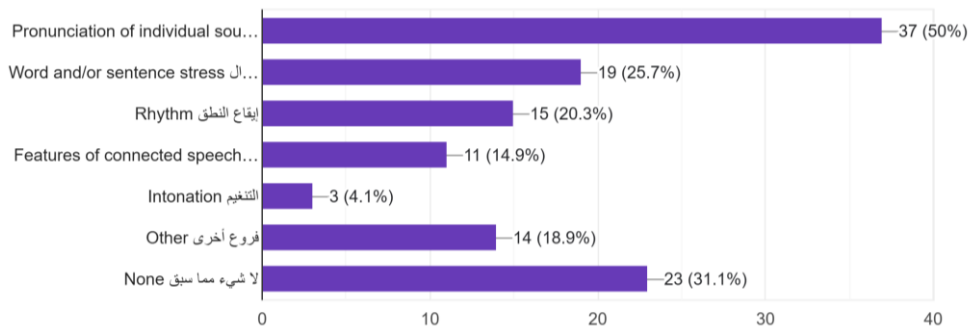


Figure 6: English pronunciation aspects studied at school (learners)

8- In case you learned about any of those listed in the previous question, then how would you rate the weight given to the teaching of it/them? في حالة دراستك لأي أو كل ما سبق، كم من أهمية أعطيت لتدريس هذه الفروع؟  
74 responses

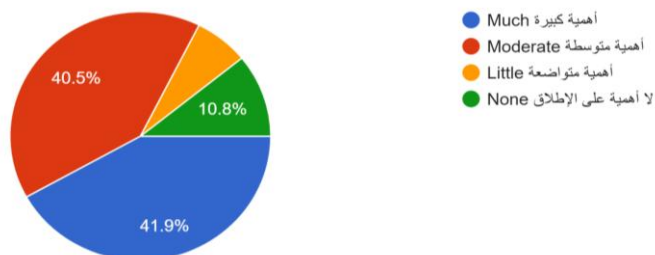


Figure 7: Weight given to the teaching of the pronunciation skills (learners)

7- Which of the following English pronunciation aspects did you study at school? Please mark all that are relevant. أي من فروع الصوتيات الآتية درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟ فضلاً قم بتظليل جميع ما تراه مناسباً

5 responses

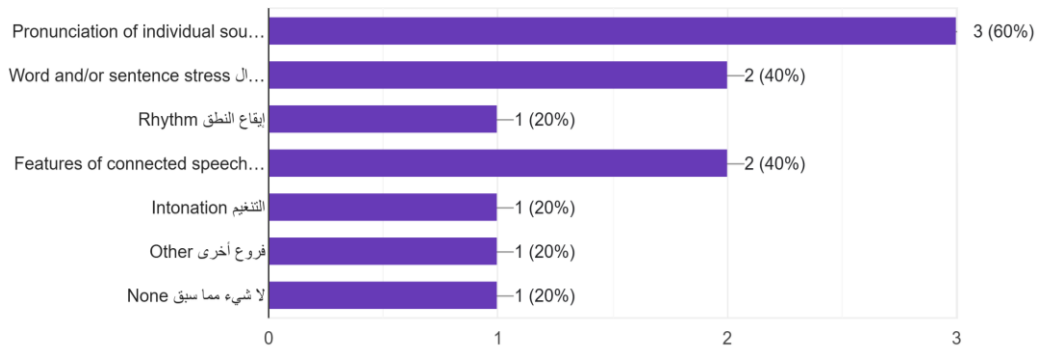


Figure 8: English pronunciation aspects studied at school (teachers)

8- In case you learned about any of those listed in the previous question, then how would you rate the weight given to the teaching of it/them? في حالة دراستك لأي أو كل ما سبق، كم من أهمية أعطيت لتدريس هذه الفروع؟

5 responses

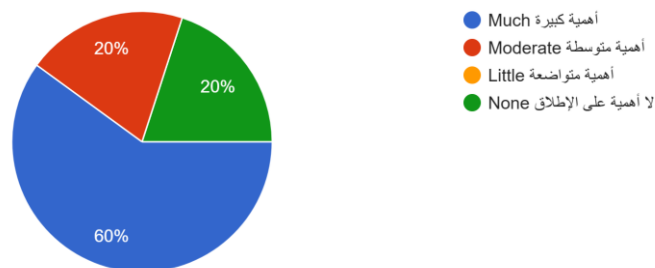


Figure 9: Weight given to the teaching of the pronunciation skills (teachers)

Since the pronunciation of individual sounds as well as word and/or sentence stress are the main aspects tackled in Egyptian EFL classrooms, they were reported to be less problematic (13.5%, 20.3% respectively) compared to features of connected speech, rhythm, and intonation that were considered the most problematic (47.3%, 37.8%, 28.4% respectively) (Figure 10). Responses suggest a need to prioritise teaching suprasegmentals such as tone, rhythm, and features of connected speech in Egyptian EFL classrooms. Suprasegmental instruction aids in increasing oral fluency levels and is crucial to speech comprehensibility (Derwing et al. 1998, as cited in Robin 2022: 27). However, teacher participants viewed segmentals and suprasegmentals as equally challenging (two votes each for pronunciation of individual sounds, word and/or sentence stress, and intonation), highlighting the need to integrate both in the Egyptian EFL classrooms (Figure 11).

10- What do you find most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation? Mark all that are relevant. ما هي فروع الصوتيات الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ اختر جميع ما تراه مناسباً.  
74 responses

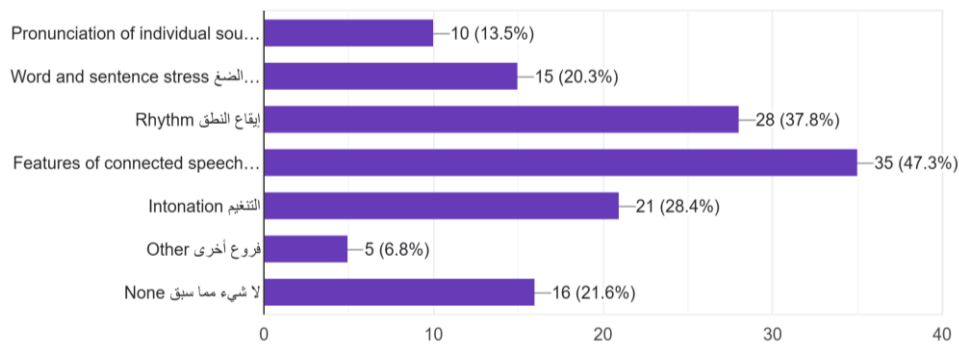


Figure 10: The most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation (learners)

10- What do you find most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation? Mark all that are relevant. ما هي فروع الصوتيات الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ اختر جميع ما تراه مناسباً.  
5 responses

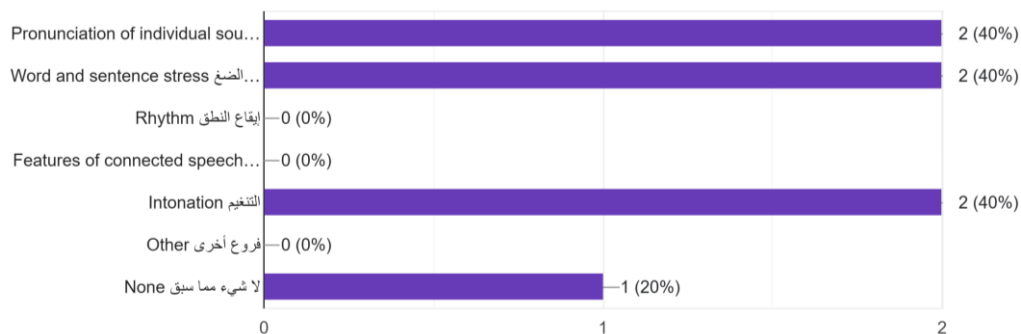


Figure 11: The most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation (teachers)

Learners and teachers were asked to determine the most and least favourable accent(s) of English (native and/or non-native, regardless of the variety: English as a native language, English as a second language, and English as a foreign language) (Figure 12), and clearly state their attitudes towards the accents they would be referring to in their responses to the relevant questions. British and American accents were both found to be favoured by students, each for its own reasons. 37.8% reported they prefer the American accent while 31.1% voted for the preference of the British accent. Both accents were found to be equally favoured by 23% of participants, with a tendency to practise both accents and a desire to master them. On the other hand, 8.1% had no specific preferences. The British accent was viewed as the more familiar accent learnt since childhood and taught in schools, being favoured for its clarity; it was commented that the British accent is not as “fast” or “complicated” as other accents, making it easy to produce and understand, especially among speakers of other languages, with sound starts and pauses and words “less

swallowed”. Some reported the British accent was admired for aesthetic reasons, described as purely “pleasant”, “attractive”, “luxurious” and “catchy”. The American accent was prioritised by some participants for pragmatic reasons. Due to the dominance of American movies and music, the American accent was regarded to be the “popular”/“common” choice, even to some who went to British schools. It was also seen to be the “easier” accent compared with the “classic”, “emphatic”, “more professional” and “more formal” ones.

11- Which accent of English do you prefer? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية تفضل؟

74 responses

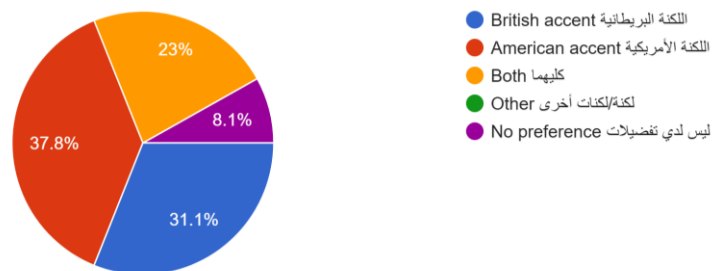


Figure 12: The most favoured English accent(s) (learners)

Teachers’ views were inconsistent (Figure 13). Two teachers (40%) preferred the British accent for its aesthetics and clarity. One reported equal preference for both British and American accents as the two well-known accents used interchangeably in Egyptian EFL curricula. Another suggested “a more neutral accent” would be a better option for global communication. The last response marked no preference for any specific accents over others.

11- Which accent of English do you prefer? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية تفضل؟

5 responses

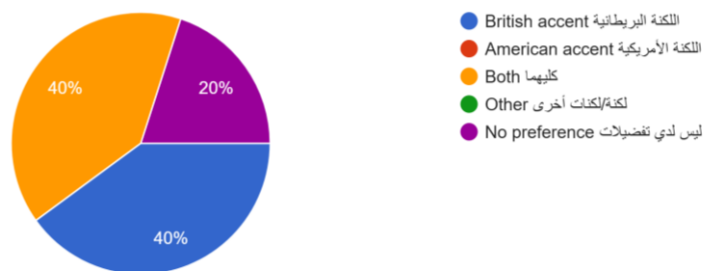


Figure 13: The most favoured English accent(s) (teachers)

Regarding the least favourite accent(s) for students (Figure 14), 37.8% selected the British accent, followed by the American (25.7%). 23% reported having no least favourite accent(s), with some commenting that all accents are “fun to learn and speak” and “equally unique”. Students who voted against the British accent found it “fake”/“unreal”,



“unfamiliar”, “less popular” or “hard to understand and/or pronounce” if not a native speaker of the British English tongue. Others regarded the American accent as “complicated” and “difficult to follow” due to its speed and sound alterations. Native and non-native accents were among the least favoured by 13.5% of respondents. For example, the Irish, Scottish, Indian and Japanese accents were referred to as less approved of for the unclarity and/or the confusion listening to them could cause. The Indian accent is thought to be less “musical”/“harmonious” while the Japanese one is characterised by mispronunciations that would hinder communication (e.g. adding paragogic vowels to consonant-ending English words). The Australian accent was also less favoured, but for aesthetic reasons (unpleasantness to the ears). A student added East Asian accents to the list of the least intelligible accents.

13- What is the least favourite accent of English? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية هي الأقل تفضيلاً بالنسبة لك؟  
74 responses

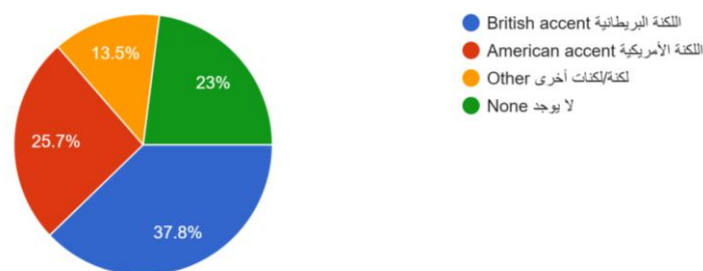


Figure 14: The least favoured English accent(s) (learners)

Concerning teachers’ least favoured accent(s) (Figure 15), the American accent was selected by one teacher for its pace, lack of clarity and aesthetics. Another teacher pointed out there is no single “British accent”; the range of traditional and modern British accents reflects differences in speakers’ backgrounds. One teacher believed any accent not commonly used (e.g. Irish and Australian) should be less favoured. Another suggested shifting the focus from “accents” to “correct English” in L2 oral communication.

13- What is the least favourite accent of English? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية هي الأقل تفضيلاً بالنسبة لك؟  
5 responses

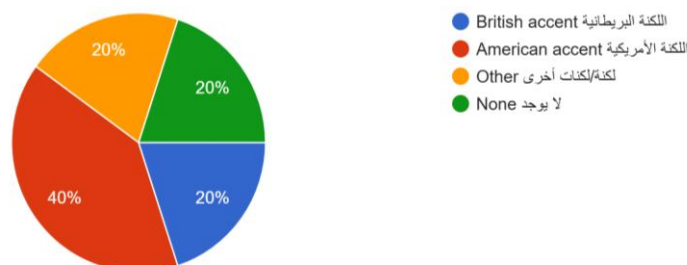


Figure 15: The least favoured English accent(s) (teachers)

Students were asked which accents should be adopted in Egyptian curricula (Figure 16). 50% voted for the American accent for its popularity and ease of acquisition, while 39.2% voted for the British accent, thought to be the “standard”, “elegant”, “more formal/official”, and “clearer” accent of English. Participants who voted “not sure” commented they lacked sufficient expertise to determine which accents should be adopted. Most teachers (three out of five) believed the British accent should be adopted for its clarity and relatively slower pace facilitating EFL pronunciation acquisition. Another teacher believed both accents should be adopted; being familiarised with them both is thought to foster communication and reduce misunderstandings. The fifth teacher preferred a “neutral” accent that is not restricted to geographical or cultural influences. Figure 17 below shows teachers’ votes for the accent(s) to be adopted:

15- Which accent of English do you think should be adopted in the Egyptian curricula? أي لكانت اللغة  
الإنجليزية يجب أن تتبناها المناهج المصرية في رأيك؟  
74 responses

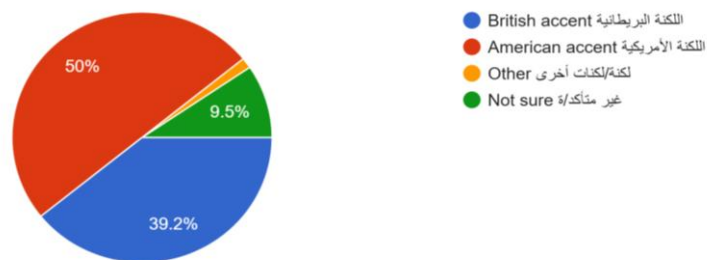


Figure 16: English accent(s) to be adopted in the Egyptian curricula (learners)

15- Which accent of English do you think should be adopted in the Egyptian curricula? أي لكانت اللغة  
الإنجليزية يجب أن تتبناها المناهج المصرية في رأيك؟  
5 responses

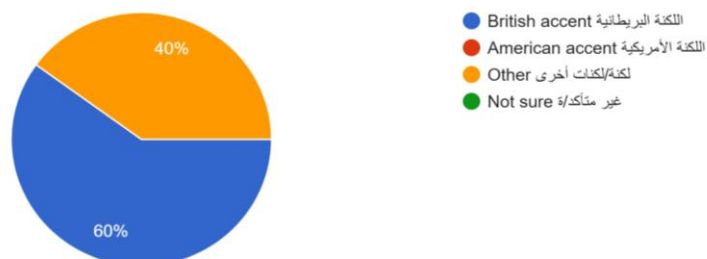


Figure 17: English accent(s) to be adopted in the Egyptian curricula (teachers)

Attitudes towards the Egyptian pronunciation of English varied across respondents. Many students labelled it as “not unsatisfactory”, “tolerable”, “passable” or “generally good”, noting that: (1) no better could be expected since English is not the Egyptians’ mother tongue, (2) having an accent is acceptable for speakers of other languages, and (3)

it is at least intelligible (for them, Egyptian speakers of English) compared to other non-native accents. Two teachers commented that the Egyptian pronunciation is “good in general”, but with some mispronunciations pertaining, particularly, to the production of individual sounds. They noted a tendency to approximate the “American accent” and characterised the speech as “enthusiastic” and “cheering”. Other participants disapproved of the Egyptian pronunciation, describing it as “not good enough”, “incorrect”, “one of the most disturbing/irritating”, not adhering to any standard accent of English, “needs improvement”, “mediocre for ESL learners” or even “funny” due to overadaptation/oversimplification. A teacher commented, with some efforts directed towards mastering the production of unfamiliar sounds, an improved practice (especially of the pronunciation of segmentals) should not be a challenge for a speaker whose mother tongue is ECA since it encompasses most of the individual sounds in the system of English, and other students believed accurate pronunciation would depend on proficiency level regardless of the learner’s mother tongue.

When students were asked about the Egyptian pronunciation of English, interpretations varied. Some believed it reflects identity construction in EFL, indicating it is influenced by the mother tongue, making it unique and recognisable. Similar to the findings by Rubdy & Saraceni (2006: 11, cited in Jenkins 2009: 205), many learners viewed the Egyptian accent as an ELF variant to embrace as part of L2 acquisition process, and a representation of the Egyptian non-native identity. Others felt that, if practiced well, the Egyptian accent is comprehensible compared to those of other native languages. Conversely, some respondents criticised the Egyptian accent for overlapping phonemes (e.g. /p/ and /b/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/) and rhythm issues. Others found that the Egyptian accent is one that evokes laughter or embarrassment, sometimes causing miscommunication, while many presented neutral stands on the Egyptian pronunciation of English.

Students evaluated their pronunciation of English, with many expressing general satisfaction through various ratings like “passable,” “good,” or “amazing.” Some felt their pronunciation needed improvement, while a few rated their accent as native-like. Negative descriptions included “weak” and “not (very) good,” with some finding the question irrelevant being addressed to members of an Arabic-speaking community. Regarding teachers, two expressed confidence in their accents, rating them highly, while another believed that an intelligible accent is satisfactory. However, two teachers felt they needed more practice despite rating their accents positively.

Seventy percent of student respondents believed their English pronunciation reflects characteristics of Egyptian Arabic. They considered having an L1-based accent common among EFL speakers, noting that L1 affects L2 acquisition, particularly in a linguistically homogeneous environment. In contrast, 30% of students who had a solid foreign language background or viewed Arabic and English as two separate constructions (thus, non-interactive) reported no mother language influence on their English pronunciation.

In an educational system that does not prioritise oral accuracy, the distinction between intelligibility and nativeness in teaching English pronunciation to speakers of other languages is crucial. Intelligibility refers to a learner’s ability to effectively communicate with both native and non-native speakers despite the influence of their L1, while nativeness is the traditional goal of pronunciation instruction aimed at approximating a standard model of pronunciation within the learner’s linguistic context

(Jindapitak 2015: 260). In the nativeness concept, native speakers are viewed as the standard bearers of the language and the definers of “pedagogic norms” (Jindapitak 2015: 260). Conversely, intelligibility is context-dependent and more aligned with the contemporary global status of English (Jenkins 2000: 5). Therefore, the primary focus of pronunciation instruction should be on improving learners’ comprehensibility, self-correction, and confidence while communicating in L2 (Morley 1991).

In regard to whether or not students think a foreign language learner should aim for native pronunciation of English, participants varied in their interpretations of the concept, revealing irregular patterns (votes are in Figure 18 below). Many respondents voted “not necessarily”, giving a variety of reasons such as: (i) English is a tool for communication after all; (ii) one does not have to attain native proficiency of pronunciation as long as English serves its purpose (study, living in an English-speaking country, mutual intelligibility); (iii) it requires years of hard work and dedicated practice, which may further complicate the process of learning; (iv) in line with Kenworthy (1987), Munro (2008), and Munro & Derwing (1995), there is no harm in a certain degree of accentedness or, in Fraser’s (2000: 20) terms “noticeability of an accent”, as long as a learner speaks generally correct English without inhibiting mutual comprehensibility; (v) it would depend on who one speaks to; communicating in any level of English proficiency with a fellow Egyptian, sharing their L1 and/or belonging to the same linguistic community, would not require native speaking proficiency and would suggest relatively lower threats to mutual intelligibility. On the contrary, non-native pronunciation is more likely to pose threats to comprehension of native listeners (Derwing & Rossiter 2002). Responses by this group of students support McKay’s (2002) argument that not all non-native learners/users of English would aspire to the acquisition of native-like proficiency in pronunciation (as cited in Jindapitak 2015: 261); instead, they would rather focus on communicating their messages and establishing linguistic identities marked by the varieties used in the context of ELF (Widdowson 1994, cited in Jindapitak 2015: 261).

A group of students expressed a desire to attain a native or near-native accent in English, citing reasons such as preventing miscommunication and avoiding embarrassment due to mispronunciations. This aligns with Hucke (2021: 5), who highlights that many English learners prioritise native-like pronunciation even outside English-speaking communities. Meanwhile, 51.4% of respondents felt that mutual intelligibility is sufficient for effective communication in Egyptian EFL classes, emphasising speech comprehensibility and fluency as main aims. They believed that while a foreign accent is inevitable, a near-native accent requires early exposure to the target language (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991: 158). On the other hand, 39.2% supported the idea that both native-like pronunciation and mutual intelligibility are essential for communication.

Students identified several factors hindering proper English pronunciation, including ignoring language details, inadequate training, and the influence of Arabic phonological rules (negative transfer). Others added the educational systems that place the heaviest orientation towards content knowledge and accuracy for reading and writing. In this respect, speaking is different from writing where there is room for error/mistake correction without affecting the accuracy or effectiveness of the final product.

22- Which do you think is crucial in communication? ما هو أساس التواصل اللغوي من وجهة نظرك؟

74 responses

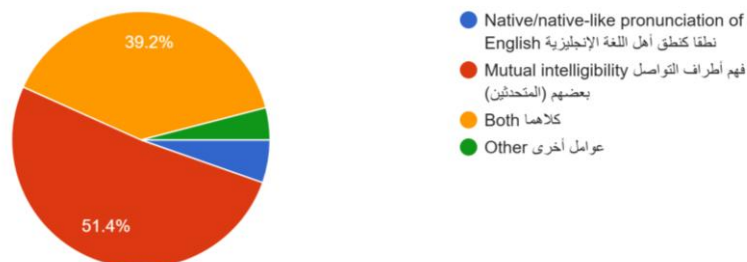


Figure 18: Nateness versus intelligibility (learners)

A significant 95.9% reported that pronunciation instruction in Egypt tends to be unsatisfactory and needs improvement (Figure 19), advocating for English to be taught in English rather than through Arabic. According to one of the respondents, “if students grew up pronouncing English incorrectly, it would be hard for them to learn the correct L2 patterns when they are older”. Students emphasised the importance of the availability of more room for sufficient practice inside and outside the classroom on a daily basis. Practice activities could include surrounding oneself with an English-speaking community, native or non-native, virtually (via online media/platforms) or in real life, so that the only choice the learners would have left is interacting and expressing oneself in English. Some students added that without independent self-learning, they would not have been good in speaking English.

25- Do you think the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt needs to be improved? هل تعتقد أن

تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر بحاجة إلى تطوير؟

74 responses

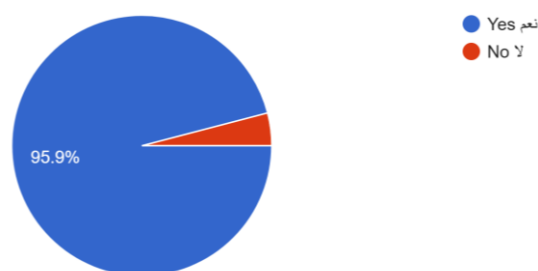


Figure 19: Adequacy of the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt (learners)

Qualified language teachers are viewed as crucial for EFL learning, with a need for more creative teaching techniques that motivate students to pursue higher pronunciation proficiency. Many students feel they struggle with pronunciation due to lack of efficient training. The participants of the current study called for enhanced professional development for teachers, particularly those whose accents are influenced by Egyptian

Arabic. This recommendation is in line with the findings of many previous surveys on pronunciation instruction attributing the inadequate training to the lack of recommended-pedagogy-based quality resources available to both teachers and learners (often with a minor focus on production activities) alongside the limited teacher professional development programmes (Derwing et al. 2012, Hucke 2021: 6). These are two major reasons why many teachers may solely rely on their own intuition in pronunciation instruction (Morley 1991). This also aligns with Robin's (2022: 33) suggestion that effective teacher training is essential for successful language instruction. Students believe that attracting qualified individuals to teaching will improve pronunciation instruction, as confident teachers can better facilitate learning and address students' needs (Fraser 2006: 81-82). The role of a well-trained language teacher is believed to be vital for effective L2 acquisition, as they are responsible for creating a supportive and meaningful learning environment (Fareh 2010: 3601).

Students concluded their survey answers providing suggestions for efficient methods/styles of learning and teaching pronunciation in Egyptian EFL classrooms and textbooks. Understanding learners' preferred styles would help educators design and review programmes to meet students' needs (Robin 2022: 33). Generally, students expressed a desire for increased emphasis on pronunciation teaching, as current approaches are seen as superficial. Many supported the use of communicative tasks, such as presentations and group conversations, and advocated for shifting focus from grades to genuine learning. This aligns with Morley's (1991) recommendations for controlled practice guided by interactive instructional methods. This, according to the learners, would add fun to the process of learning and make it more entertaining as well as beneficial. Communicative tasks could be carried over to outside the classroom by the students alternatively being given a common problem (e.g. population increase) and being asked to conduct some sort of off-classroom research on aspects related to the problem (e.g. the nature of the problem, causes, proposed solutions, etc.), then present it orally in a following class session, and completely in English. This way, students, for a more effective learning experience, can develop research skills (e.g. data gathering), presentation, communication, brainstorming, discussion and problem solving skills (e.g. presenting information and related views in English, receiving comments and questions from their peers on the topic and feedback on their performance), as well as improve their spoken English by being provided with individual constructive feedback from their teachers. This recommendation appears to be in line with Ur's (2009: 55) view that "deliberate correction and training does improve pronunciation and if this is so it seems a pity to neglect it". Some student participants also suggested inviting native English-speaking educators for workshops so that students can have the opportunity to listen to native English speakers and interact with them more often and, consequently, improve their own pronunciation and gain more confidence, knowing that they are not only able to communicate with fellow Egyptians who are already familiar with their accent. This supports Arcaya's (2020: 33) view of native English teachers as the most valued in non-native communities and "the most reliable English language source ... for their accent-free pronunciation".

Students also emphasised the importance of teacher-student interaction and a student-centric approach to learning. Activities outside the classroom the learners

mentioned included listening to English music, watching English films, reading aloud, and practicing in front of a mirror to improve pronunciation and communication (by increasing the learners' level of self-confidence speaking in English, helping them pay attention to how the language comes out of their mouths and giving them a chance of self-review). This student-focused approach is backed by Fareh (2010: 3602), who advocates for learner-centered activities that cater to individual needs. Fareh notes that a successful educational process must prioritise each learner, allowing more opportunities for the participation of learners below or above "the level of the average student" on which teaching is often based, so that the less proficient learners can keep pace and the more proficient can find something novel/beneficial to learn. Teacher-centered classes often create "less motivated" learners and changes their role as active participants in the learning process to becoming "passive listeners". Nevertheless, it is not an easy task for a public school teacher in Egypt to involve every single learner in classroom interactions due to the larger class size.

Regarding effective pronunciation instruction methods, teachers suggested three approaches: the Intuitive-imitative Approach, the Analytic-linguistic Approach, and the Integrative Approach. (1) The intuitive-imitative approach posits that ESL learners can acquire pronunciation naturally by listening and imitating models without prior formal instruction (Kacem & Sayah 2020: 18). (2) The Analytic-linguistic Approach, viewed by Kelly (1969) as an extension of the Intuitive-imitative Approach, emphasises explicit teaching and the use of tools like phonemic charts and phonetic symbols to enhance learners' analytical skills (Kacem & Sayah 2020: 18). (3) The Integrative Approach combines both methods, emphasising communication skills and speaking proficiency through "meaningful task-based activities" (Kacem & Sayah 2020: 19). The participating teachers stressed the importance of exposing learners to different English accents through audio and video content. This aligns with Ur's (2009: 55) findings that were in support of the availability of various accents, even if a certain accent is chosen over others for its relevance to the teaching/learning context: "In any case, even assuming that you are teaching one 'standard' variety as a model, it is a good idea to give learners at least some exposure to others, through the use of 'live' speakers or recordings, in order to raise awareness of other possible accents – and, of course, for listening practice". This recommendation also reflects Wandel's (2003:72) view that "taking the reality of English as a 'world language' seriously, EFL-teaching must enhance its geographical scope and include non-mainstream cultures". In addition, according to Wandel (2003: 72), raising learners' awareness of the importance of using English as a lingua franca "also means to accustom them to being interculturally sensitive".

As evident in the teacher responses, the Communicative Approach to the teaching/learning of English pronunciation was regarded as a central approach to pronunciation instruction, focusing on communicative competence, both fluency and accuracy, as essential for language learning and the integration of other language skills (Richards 2003: 21). Teachers noted the need for professional training and regular evaluations to improve their spoken English and enhance the level of reliability of educators involved in the Egyptian scene of teaching practice. Teachers also highlighted the necessity for affordable language resources and early exposure to pronunciation in school curricula.

25- Do you think the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt needs to be improved? هل تعتقد أن  
تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر بحاجة إلى تطوير؟  
5 responses

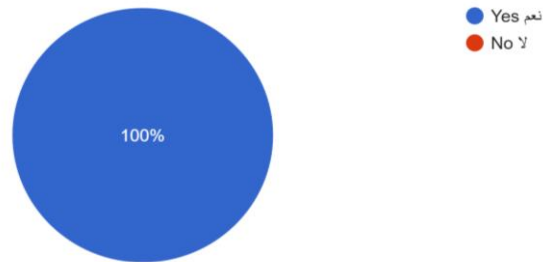


Figure 20: Adequacy of the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt (teachers)

The following set of questions were addressed to the teacher respondents only. The first two questions aimed to explore classroom techniques and activities employed while teaching the pronunciation component and the frequency of teaching it. Three of the five teachers reported they teach pronunciation in class through varied pronunciation activities such as: interactive phonemic chart, gamification, imitative exercises (e.g. listen and repeat), playing audio and video content (e.g. English songs, short movies, videos for educational and entertainment purposes) three to four times a month. Aligning with Fareh (2010), teachers of the current research stressed the necessity of integrating the element of pronunciation with the other skills of English. Teaching/learning the language components separably, the concept referred to by Fareh (2010: 3603) as “compartmentalization” or “fragmented approach”, as opposed to “the whole language /approach” (where skills of the language are taught/learnt together and interrelate), is believed to pose threats to the learners’ “communicative competence”. Where teaching is built upon the mastery of EFL literacy skills independently while both the oral and aural skills are excluded/neglected, it becomes challenging for the learners to contextualise their knowledge of the learnt elements (for instance, new vocabulary items or grammatical rules) in real-life situations that require communication in the target language.

28- Do you teach pronunciation in class? هل تقوم بتدريس مهارات النطق في محاضراتك؟  
5 responses

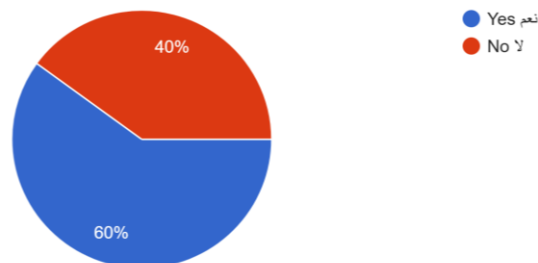


Figure 21: Teachers’ focus on the teaching of English pronunciation



As far as the assessment and correction of student pronunciation are concerned, all teachers noted they assess their students' pronunciation (Figure 22) during the speaking activities and correct their pronunciation inaccuracies (Figure 23) through immediate corrective feedback (during activities) or delayed corrective feedback (after a completed task). Those teachers who reported they favoured immediate feedback mentioned they give the correct item(s)/form(s), repeat them before students then ask students to repeat the correct form(s). For error correction, other teachers stated they could highlight the mispronounced content for students explicitly by pointing out the problematic item(s), or implicitly by indicating the presence of an error through some gesture or by implying the mispronounced content in a context with the purpose of making errors observable to the learners, after which students are expected to notice the errors on their own and produce the correct form(s) upon realising the problems. A teacher mentioned they would prioritise delayed corrective feedback to avoid interrupting the fluency/the task or the flow of ideas and any situations that would pose face threats to the students.

30- Do you assess your students' pronunciation? هل تقوم باختبار أو تصحيح نطق الطلاب أثناء المحاضرات؟  
5 responses

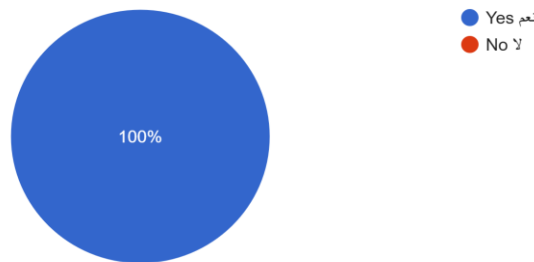


Figure 22: Teachers' assessment of their students' pronunciation

32- Do you attempt to correct students' pronunciation inaccuracies? هل تحاول تصحيح أخطاء النطق لدى الطلاب؟  
5 responses

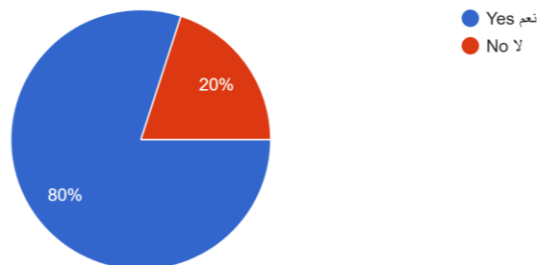


Figure 23: Teachers' correction of their students' pronunciation inaccuracies

As detailed above, all teachers reported they correct students' mispronunciations through direct and indirect feedback presenting some audio and video resources for the students to learn and practice the target form(s) or element(s). However, teachers varied in their responses pertaining to the pronunciation aspects they tend to focus on. Two of the teachers mentioned they give priority to the instruction of individual sounds, two other teachers reported focusing on suprasegmental elements such as stress, intonation, and/or features of connected speech, while only one teacher stated they believed it was essential to correct all inaccuracies regarding every element of pronunciation (both segmentals and suprasegmentals).

Teachers believed positive personalities of both learners and educators, along with motivation and up-to-date resources, play a vital role in improving pronunciation. They identified several drawbacks in available pronunciation resources, including a lack of authentic materials, insufficient practice activities, and outdated courses that fail to engage students. This is in line with the recommendations by Brown (2001) who proposes the use of attractive study materials and strategies that meet the learners' needs and expectations. This recommendation, by both students and teachers, is a call for ensuring the learners are thoroughly educated about the teachers' and/or educational institutions' expectations from them in terms of practice and learning outcomes. Students of the present study also asserted that teachers need to exhibit enthusiasm towards their students, classroom environment and the whole process of teaching.

Teachers reported several challenges while teaching English pronunciation. Three teachers identified mother tongue interference as a significant issue, noting that learners often rely on their L1, which hinders their ability to learn "the correct pronunciation" of English. This interference complicates the teaching process, requires teachers to spend additional time and effort on foundational pronunciation skills, regardless of the proficiency level(s) of their students. Additionally, teachers mentioned students' lack of learning readiness and aptitude as obstacles in the EFL context in study. According to Fareh (2010: 3602), these complaints do not fall in place when teachers overlook their role in creating motivating learning environments. Teachers cannot expect sufficient student motivation when they do not actively foster a positive classroom atmosphere or, as emphasised by Race (1998), do not participate in "creating a thirst for learning" that could be fulfilled through some techniques such as: raising awareness of learning outcomes, ensuring purposeful teaching, using diverse materials, involving students in planning, and considering their feedback when setting curricula, planning sessions and making modifications to the existing learning resources, activities and teaching approaches (Race 1998: 47-57, as cited in Fareh 2010: 3602). Even when it comes to learners with poor ethics and/or learning performances, teachers can seek collaboration with the parents of the learners, relevant educational institutions and ministries of education in a series of strategic attempts to improve the levels of learner motivation (Brown 2001). Similar to the recommendation by Race (1998), Brown (2001) emphasises the role of the learner as a decision maker in the learning process rather than a receiver of decisions passed by their programme/curricula designers, educators, institutions, and/or teachers. Fareh (2010: 3603) notes that instances where students express their thoughts and concerns, or even complain in an effort to make changes pertaining to their educational situations, do exist and are not unusual in the ELT context of the Arab region.

However, they are overlooked and taken lightly by their teachers and/or educational institutions.

Teachers also highlighted the educational system's focus on memorisation over critical thinking and problem-solving skills as one of the obstacles encountered in their Egyptian EFL teaching experience. In this EFL context, students often prioritise exam scores over genuine learning due to a system that assesses knowledge of memorised language rules instead of the ability to apply them in real-life situations. The Egyptian assessment methods are predominantly end-of-term examinations that train students on the exam format, exam-answering skills, and types of questions included (which can occur in relatively short training sessions) rather than on their actual knowledge and ability to use acquired skills. These exams are not designed to assess speaking or listening competence, indicating a need to shift the focus from grades to real learning. According to Fareh (2010: 3603), this situation "may explain the poor quality of the students' oral and aural skills", which is a common issue in Arab educational practices.

## 7. Conclusions, significance, and recommendations for future research

This paper aimed to contribute to the initiatives of prior scholars on ESL pronunciation, providing insights into the views on pronunciation learning and teaching practice in the Egyptian EFL context and allowed room for the analysis of the variation pertaining to the perspectives on existing and desired practices.

Future research could consider the study of variables such as: gender, age, educational backgrounds, teaching/learning contexts, dialectal regions, study majors, English proficiency levels, and formality of context. In addition, further research attempts may seek wider-scale surveys, especially from teachers, (for more comprehensive conclusions and implications) supported by feedback from focus groups of both learners and teachers (e.g. through administering interviews) to gain insights to the participants' perceptions of the interpretations of the research results (e.g. the extent to which they agree or disagree with what the research endeavours will have yielded).

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## Appendix 1

### For Students: English Pronunciation Teaching and Learning in Egypt صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر

يمكنك الإجابة على الأسئلة ذات الإجابات المفتوحة Answer the open-ended questions in English or Arabic بالإنجليزية أو العربية

1- Mark one of the following: \*اختر واحدا من الآتي

I am a learner of English أقوم بدراسة اللغة الإنجليزية

I am both a learner and a teacher of English أقوم بدراسة اللغة الإنجليزية وتدريسها أيضا

2- What school did you go to? \*بأي لغة درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟

Arabic-medium درست باللغة العربية

English-medium درست باللغة الإنجليزية

Other foreign-language-medium (French, German, etc.) درست بلغة أخرى (كالفرنسية، الألمانية، إلخ)

3- How important do you think studying English is? \*ما أهمية دراسة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟

Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق

Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما

Neutral منوسط الأهمية

Important مهم

Very important مهم جدا

4- Why or why not? Please answer in detail. \*فضلا اذكر بعض أسباب وتفاصيل ذلك من وجهة نظرك

Your answer

5- What do you find most problematic among the skills of English? Mark all that are relevant.

ما هي أصعب مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟ يمكنك اختيار أكثر من مهارة

\*

Writing الكتابة

Reading and comprehension القراءة والفهم

Listening الاستماع

Speaking/pronunciation التحدث أو النطق

None لا شيء مما سبق

6- How important do you think studying English pronunciation is? ما أهمية دراسة نطق أو صوتيات

اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟

\*

Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق

Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما

Neutral متوسط الأهمية

Important مهم

Very important مهم جدا

7- Which of the following English pronunciation aspects did you study at school? Please mark all that are relevant. أي من فروع الصوتيات الآتية درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟ فضلا قم بتظليل جميع ما تراه مناسباً

\*

Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة

Word and/or sentence stress (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة) الضغظ الصوتي

Rhythm إيقاع النطق

Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل

Intonation التنغيم

Other أخرى

None لا شيء مما سبق

8- In case you learned about any of those listed in the previous question, then how would you rate the weight given to the teaching of it/them? في حالة دراستك لأي أو كل ما سبق، كم من أهمية أعطيت لتدريس هذه الفروع؟

\*

Much أهمية كبيرة

Moderate أهمية متوسطة

Little أهمية متواضعة

None لا أهمية على الإطلاق

9- How difficult do you think English pronunciation is? ما هو تقييمك لمدى صعوبة نطق/صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Very easy جدا سهل

Easy سهل

Moderate متوسط الصعوبة

Difficult صعب

Very difficult جدا صعب

10- What do you find most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation? Mark all that are relevant.

ما هي فروع الصوتيات الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ اختر جميع ما تراه مناسباً

\*

Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة

Word and sentence stress (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة) الضغط الصوتي

Rhythm إيقاع النطق

Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل

Intonation التنغيم

Other أخرى

None لا شيء مما سبق

11- Which accent of English do you prefer? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية تفضل؟

\*

British accent اللكنة البريطانية

American accent اللكنة الأمريكية

Both كليهما

Other لكنة/لكانات أخرى

No preference ليس لدي تفضيلات

12- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

13- What is the least favourite accent of English? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية هي الأقل تفضيلاً بالنسبة لك؟

\*

British accent اللكنة البريطانية

American accent اللكنة الأمريكية

Other لكنة/لكانات أخرى

None لا يوجد

14- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

15- Which accent of English do you think should be adopted in the Egyptian curricula? أي لكانات  
اللغة الإنجليزية يجب أن تتبناها المناهج المصرية في رأيك؟

\*

British accent اللكنة البريطانية

American accent اللكنة الأمريكية

Other لكنة/لكانات أخرى

Not sure غير متأكد/ة

16- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

17- How do you feel about the Egyptian pronunciation/accent of English? ما هو انطباعك عن نطق  
المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer

18- What do you think is remarkable in the Egyptian pronunciation of English? ما الذي تراه مميذا  
في نطق المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer



19- What do you think about your own pronunciation of English?

Do you like your own pronunciation of English?

How would you rate your own pronunciation of English?

ما هو انطباعك عن نطقك الشخصي للغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer

20- Do you think your native tongue (Egyptian Arabic) has an influence on your pronunciation of English? هل تعتقد أن لغتك الأم (العامية المصرية) تأثيرا على نطقك للإنجليزية؟

Please give a detailed answer. فضلا أجب تفصيلا

\*

Your answer

21- Do you think a foreign language learner should aim for native pronunciation of English? في رأيك، هل تعتقد بأنه ينبغي على الدارسين اتقان نطق اللغة الإنجليزية درجة اتقان أهل اللغة؟

Why/Why not? \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

\*

Your answer

22- Which do you think is crucial in communication? ما هو أساس التواصل اللغوي من وجهة نظرك؟

\*

Native/native-like pronunciation of English نطقا كناطق أهل اللغة الإنجليزية

Mutual intelligibility فهم أطراف التواصل (المتحدثين) بعضهم

Both كلاهما

Other عوامل أخرى

23- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

24- What do you think can hinder the acquisition of proper English pronunciation? من وجهة نظرک، ما الذي يمكن أن يعيق الاکتساب السليم لقواعد نطق اللغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer

25- Do you think the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt needs to be improved? هل تعتقد أن تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر بحاجة إلى تطوير؟

\*

Yes نعم

No لا

26- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذکر أسباب لاختیارک السابق

Your answer

27- In your viewpoint, what is/are the most efficient method(s)/style(s)/technique(s) of learning/teaching pronunciation? ما هي أكثر أساليب/استراتيجيات تعلم/تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية الأكثر فاعلية من وجهة نظرک؟

What approaches/activities would you like to see applied in classrooms and textbooks? ما هي المداخل والأنشطة التي تتمنى تطبيقها في المحاضرات والمناهج؟

\*

Your answer

## Appendix 2

**For Teachers: English Pronunciation Teaching and Learning in Egypt** صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر

1- Mark one of the following: \*اختر واحدا من الآتي

I am a teacher of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية

I am both a teacher and a learner of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ودراستها أيضا

1- Mark one of the following: \*اختر واحدا من الآتي

I am a teacher of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية

I am both a teacher and a learner of English أقوم بتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ودراستها أيضا

2- What school did you go to? \*بأي لغة درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟

Arabic-medium درست باللغة العربية

English-medium درست باللغة الإنجليزية

Other foreign-language-medium (French, German, etc.) درست بلغة أخرى (كالفرنسية، الألمانية، إلخ)

3- How important do you think studying English is? \*ما أهمية دراسة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟

Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق

Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما

Neutral متوسط الأهمية

Important مهم

Very important مهم جدا

4- Why or why not? Please answer in detail. \*فضلا اذكر بعض أسباب وتفاصيل ذلك من وجهة نظرك.

Your answer

5- What do you find most problematic among the skills of English? Mark all that are relevant.

ما هي أصعب مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟ يمكنك اختيار أكثر من مهارة

\*

Writing الكتابة

Reading and comprehension القراءة والفهم

Listening الاستماع

Speaking/pronunciation التحدث أو النطق

None لا شيء مما سبق

6- How important do you think studying English pronunciation is? \*ما أهمية دراسة نطق أو صوتيات

اللغة الإنجليزية في رأيك؟

\*

Not at all important غير مهم على الإطلاق

Somewhat important مهم إلى حد ما

Neutral متوسط الأهمية

Important مهم

Very important مهم جدا

7- Which of the following English pronunciation aspects did you study at school? Please mark all that are relevant. \*أي من فروع الصوتيات الآتية درست في المرحلة المدرسية؟ فضلا قم بتظليل جميع ما تراه مناسباً

Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة

Word and/or sentence stress (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة) الضغط الصوتي

Rhythm إيقاع النطق

Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل

Intonation التنغيم

Other أخرى

None لا شيء مما سبق

8- In case you learned about any of those listed in the previous question, then how would you rate the weight given to the teaching of it/them? \*في حالة دراستك لأي أو كل ما سبق، كم من أهمية أعطيت لتدريس هذه الفروع؟

\*

Much أهمية كبيرة

Moderate أهمية متوسطة

Little أهمية متواضعة

None لا أهمية على الإطلاق

9- How difficult do you think English pronunciation is? ما هو تقييمك لمدى صعوبة نطق/صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Very easy سهل جدا

Easy سهل

Moderate متوسط الصعوبة

Difficult صعب

Very difficult صعب جدا

10- What do you find most problematic among the aspects of English pronunciation? Mark all that are relevant.

ما هي فروع الصوتيات الأكثر صعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ اختر جميع ما تراه مناسباً

\*

Pronunciation of individual sounds نطق الأصوات منفردة

Word and sentence stress (على مقطع في كلمة أو كلمة في جملة) الضغط الصوتي

Rhythm إيقاع النطق

Features of connected speech خصائص وسمات الحديث المتصل

Intonation التنغيم

Other فروع أخرى

None لا شيء مما سبق

11- Which accent of English do you prefer? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية تفضل؟

\*

British accent اللكنة البريطانية

American accent اللكنة الأمريكية

Both كليهما

Other لكنة/لكانات أخرى

No preference ليس لدي تفضيلات

12- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

13- What is the least favourite accent of English? أي من لكانات الإنجليزية التالية هي الأقل تفضيلاً بالنسبة لك؟

\*

British accent اللكنة البريطانية

American accent اللكنة الأمريكية

Other لكنة/لكانات أخرى

None لا يوجد

14- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

15- Which accent of English do you think should be adopted in the Egyptian curricula? أي لكانات  
اللغة الإنجليزية يجب أن تتبناها المناهج المصرية في رأيك؟

\*

British accent اللكنة البريطانية

American accent اللكنة الأمريكية

Other لكنة/لكانات أخرى

Not sure غير متأكد/ة

16- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

17- How do you feel about the Egyptian pronunciation/accent of English? ما هو انطباعك عن نطق  
المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer

18- What do you think is remarkable in the Egyptian pronunciation of English? ما الذي تراه مميذا  
في نطق المصريين للغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer

19- What do you think about your own pronunciation of English?

Do you like your own pronunciation of English?

How would you rate your own pronunciation of English?

ما هو انطباعك عن نطقك الشخصي للغة الإنجليزية؟

\*

Your answer

20- Do you think your native tongue (Egyptian Arabic) has an influence on your pronunciation of English? هل تعتقد أن للغتك الأم (العامية المصرية) تأثيرا على نطقك للإنجليزية؟

Please give a detailed answer. فضلا أجب تفصيلا

\*

Your answer

21- Do you think a foreign language learner should aim for native pronunciation of English? في رأيك، هل تعتقد بأنه ينبغي على الدارسين اتقان نطق اللغة الإنجليزية درجة اتقان أهل اللغة؟

Why/Why not? لماذا/لماذا لا؟

\*

Your answer

22- Which do you think is crucial in communication? ما هو أساس التواصل اللغوي من وجهة نظرك؟

\*

Native/native-like pronunciation of English نطقا كناطق أهل اللغة الإنجليزية

Mutual intelligibility فهم أطراف التواصل (المتحدثين) بعضهم

Both كلاهما

Other عوامل أخرى

23- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذكر أسباب لاختيارك السابق

Your answer

24- What do you think can hinder the acquisition of proper English pronunciation? من وجهة نظرک، ما الذي يمكن أن يعيق الاکتساب السليم لقواعد نطق اللغة الإنجليزية؟  
\*

Your answer

25- Do you think the teaching of English pronunciation in Egypt needs to be improved? هل تعتقد أن تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية في مصر بحاجة إلى تطوير؟  
\*

Yes نعم

No لا

26- Please elaborate on your choice. \*اذکر أسباب لا اختيارک السابق

Your answer

27- In your viewpoint, what is/are the most efficient method(s)/style(s)/technique(s) of learning/teaching pronunciation? ما هي أكثر أساليب/استراتيجيات تعلم/تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية الأكثر فاعلية من وجهة نظرک؟

What approaches/activities would you like to see applied in classrooms and textbooks? ما هي المداخل والأنشطة التي تتمنى تطبيقها في المحاضرات والمناهج؟  
\*

Your answer

28- Do you teach pronunciation in class? هل تقوم بتدريس مهارات النطق في محاضراتک؟  
\*

Yes نعم

No لا

29- If yes, what aspects, how do you teach them, which materials do you use and how often do you teach them? Please answer in detail. إذا كنت قد أجبت عن السؤال السابق بنعم، ما هي الأساليب والمادة العلمية التي تستخدمها؟ كم مرة بالأسبوع/الشهر/الفصل الدراسي/السنة الدراسية؟ فضلاً أجب تفصيلاً  
\*

Your answer

30- Do you assess your students' pronunciation? هل تقوم باختبار أو تصحيح نطق الطلاب أثناء المحاضرات؟ \*

Yes نعم

No لا

31- If yes, how? إذا كانت إجابتك السابقة "نعم"، كيف يتم ذلك؟ \*

Your answer

32- Do you attempt to correct students' pronunciation inaccuracies? هل تحاول تصحيح أخطاء النطق لدى الطلاب؟ \*

Yes نعم

No لا

33- If yes, what aspects do you tend to focus on and how do you correct them? إذا كانت إجابتك السابقة "نعم"، ما هي فروع النطق التي تفضل التركيز عليها؟ وكيف تقوم بتصحيحها؟ \*

Your answer

34- Do you think there is a relationship between teacher and learner personalities and L2 pronunciation teaching and acquisition? Please answer in detail. هل تعتقد بأن شخصيات المعلم والمتعلم تلعب دورا في تدريس واكتساب النطق السليم للغة الأجنبية الثانية؟ فضلا اعط إجابة مفصلة بقدر الإمكان \*

Your answer



35- What do you think are the drawbacks of the pronunciation courses/materials provided for your students (if there are any)? من وجهة نظرك، ما هي عيوب/مساوىء المناهج/المواد التعليمية الخاصة بالنطق (إن وجدت) والمتاحة لطلابك؟

\*

Your answer

36- Do you face any challenges while teaching English pronunciation? Please give a detailed answer. هل تواجه أية تحديات بالنسبة لتدريس أيا من قواعد صوتيات اللغة الإنجليزية؟ فضلا أجب بالتفصيل.

\*

Your answer