

## **Challenges in Teaching Pronunciation: Secondary Level English Teachers' Perspectives**

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### **Abstract**

Correct pronunciation is a fundamental aspect of effective communication. It significantly enhances students' overall speaking abilities. Nevertheless, teaching of pronunciation in the context of English as a Second / Foreign Language (EFL/ ESL) remains on the fringes and is marginalized within the academic syllabus and classroom dynamics, particularly in the secondary level schools of Nepal. This qualitative study aims at exploring the challenges faced by secondary level English teachers in teaching pronunciation. The research is based on the perspectives of six experienced secondary level English teachers who are engaged in teaching English at the secondary level. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select the participants. The study utilized semi-structured interview as the primary data collection technique. Each of the interviews was audio recorded and subsequently transcribed for meticulous analysis. The data was analyzed employing thematic approach of qualitative data analysis. The study highlighted nine different challenges which include priority issue, weak foundation at basic level, ignoring mispronunciations, time limit, teachers' insufficient knowledge, copying peers, lack of instructional resources, lack of students' reading habit, lack of exposure. The study suggests emphasizing pronunciation, increasing practice, enriching resources, promoting reading, and enabling real-world exposure to address the challenges.

**Keywords:** *Instruction, challenges, perspectives, pronunciation, speaking*

### **Introduction**

The role of pronunciation in effective communication is both pivotal and intricate. Proper pronunciation helps language learners communicate their thoughts, emotions, and intentions clearly across cultures. According to Gilbert (2008), pronunciation goes beyond the mere articulation of speech sounds; it embodies the knowledge of phonemes, rhythm, stress patterns, and intonation that infuse language with its unique musicality. In the pedagogical context of pronunciation instruction, due consideration should be accorded to these constituent aspects of pronunciation, warranting their incorporation and systematic instruction. However, teaching pronunciation in academic settings is not without its complexities, as English language teachers face a variety of challenges that they need to overcome (Gut, 2009). Exploring the challenges of teaching pronunciation at secondary is of paramount importance as it provides a structured avenue to unravel the complexities that arise in pronunciation instruction. It also facilitates a deeper understanding of the nuanced impediments encountered by educators, offering a potential pathway to enhance the efficacy of pronunciation teaching methods and, by extension, the overall language learning

experience for students. As Smith (2020) emphasizes, understanding these challenges contributes to the refinement of instructional techniques. Moreover, Gatbonton and Trofimovich (2005) emphasize the significance of research in addressing challenges in language teaching, while Derwing and Munro (2005) connect effective communication to the intricacies of pronunciation. Therefore, research on this topic is not only academically enriching but also practically consequential for the advancement of language pedagogy.

Teaching pronunciation at the secondary level poses significant challenges due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds and accent variations of students (Smith, 2017). The influence of native language interference, limited instructional time in a packed curriculum, reduced sensitivity to sound differences during adolescence (Chang et al., 2016), and a lack of specialized training and resources for teachers (Thomson & Derwing, 2015) all contribute to the difficulty of effectively instructing pronunciation. These challenges highlight the need for tailored teacher training, curriculum adjustments, and resource development to create an environment conducive to successful pronunciation acquisition in secondary education. This research responds to a critical gap in the current scholarly discourse—a gap characterized by the dearth of comprehensive exploration into the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by Secondary-level teachers in teaching pronunciation. While broader discussions on language pedagogy and curriculum design have found ample attention, the nuanced domain of pronunciation instruction remains comparatively underrepresented. This study, therefore, stands as a deliberate endeavor to elevate pronunciation challenges to the forefront of academic inquiry.

This study holds significant importance as it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the practical problems which are faced by secondary level English teachers when teaching pronunciation. By exploring their perspectives, this study illuminates the barriers that hinder the effective instruction pronunciation. It also helps to identify the gaps in current teaching methods of teaching pronunciation and potential areas for additional support. Moreover, by addressing these it will contribute to the development of personalized strategies for teaching pronunciation teaching. Furthermore, the impact of the research lies in bridging the gap between theory and practice in teaching pronunciation. This study not only acknowledges and investigates challenges but also contributes in reshaping how pronunciation is taught. It will be beneficial both for teachers and students in the pursuit of improving pronunciation abilities.

#### *Overview of challenges faced in teaching pronunciation*

Teaching pronunciation is challenging due to many factors e.g. sound complexities, individual learner variations and native language influences. The inherent variability of speech sounds poses a significant challenge, with research showing learners struggle to differentiate non-native sounds (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Transferring phonological patterns from one's native language can perpetuate pronunciation issues (Flege, 1995), leading to phonemic and phonetic errors that hinder comprehension. Native language phonological patterns strongly affect accent development, impacting overall speech clarity (Major, 2001). Inadequate pronunciation instruction in curricula compounds these challenges, diminishing focus on refining skills (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). Emotional factors, like anxiety, deter focused pronunciation practice (Brown, 2007). Time constraints, limited language exposure, and teaching complexities further compound difficulties (Pennington, 1996; Levis, 2005; Dauer, 1983). Technology reliance risks excluding certain

learners (Burston, 2014), and inadequate feedback mechanisms impede progress (Lord, 2008).

A significant challenge in this process stems from the prevailing lack of explicit phonological awareness among learners. This absence hampers their grasp of the fundamental structures underlying language sounds, impeding their ability to discern, decode, and accurately reproduce speech sounds (Yavas & Goldstein, 1996). Additionally, the cultural and social context in which learners are immersed significantly influences their motivation and willingness to adopt new speech patterns. Cultural norms and social attitudes, woven into one's linguistic identity, can either foster enthusiasm for improving pronunciation or hinder the embrace of unfamiliar phonetic nuances (Kubota, 2014).

Contributing to the intricacy of this scenario, teachers might face their own challenges due to inadequate training in teaching pronunciation. The complex interplay of articulatory mechanisms and acoustic properties that underlie accurate pronunciation often demands specialized knowledge not typically covered in conventional teacher training (Kenworthy, 1987). Furthermore, the age-related phenomenon of neuroplasticity, beneficial for younger learners in acquiring new sounds, presents a challenge for older learners grappling with mastering the phonetic subtleties of a new language (Bialystok et al., 2004).

In environments where oral practice opportunities are limited due to large classrooms or digital settings, learners' chances for focused pronunciation practice diminish. Absence of immediate feedback and authentic conversation partners' hampers skill refinement (Warschauer, 1996). Adding complexity is the existence of dialectal variations in languages like English. Teaching standardized pronunciation is challenged by learners' exposure to diverse dialects in media and daily interactions, affecting their perception of correct speech sounds (Milroy, 1999).

Intrinsic motivation and incentives shape learners' commitment to refining pronunciation. Lack of perceived benefits might deter learners from reshaping speech patterns (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Accommodating diverse learning styles is crucial. The auditory and phonetic nature of pronunciation might challenge learners with different preferences, necessitating varied pedagogy (Reid, 1987).

Teachers often lack confidence in their pronunciation skills, fearing they might convey incorrect pronunciation (Shahzada, 2012). ESL teachers occasionally link their rigorous phonetics training with pronunciation teaching, though differences exist in school-level teaching. Flexibility is essential to address this. Grasping pronunciation pedagogy and native language can be challenging. Intonation and stress troubles impact classroom effectiveness (Pillai, 2008). Research shows ESL teachers often lack clarity on effective pronunciation instruction due to insufficient training (Fraser, 2000; Morley, 1991). Clear instructions are crucial (Muhammed & Taha, 2014), and authentic audio resources aid practice (Nair et al., 2006). Time constraints, insufficient prioritization of pronunciation, and comprehensive training gaps challenge teaching (Ndung'u, 2013; Georgios, 2019; Macdonald, 2002). Pronunciation pedagogy training is often inadequate (Lekha Swarna Priya & Prasantha Kumar N. S., 2020). Teachers might underinvest in pronunciation preparation, affecting efficacy (Majid, 2008; Jayapalan & Pillai, 2011).

The impact of language interference and native accents poses a significant challenge, hindering students' ability to adopt new phonological patterns (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Limited exposure to native speakers adds complexity, as students lack authentic models for accurate pronunciation (Levis & LeVelle, 2007). Peer and social influences come to the forefront, potentially reinforcing incorrect patterns and affecting readiness to embrace new sounds (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Developmental differences among adolescents further complicate matters, resulting in diverse pronunciation abilities (Nagle & Sanders, 2003). Overcoming resistance to change becomes crucial, as some students might hesitate to alter existing pronunciation, especially without immediate communication hindrance (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Multilingual classrooms require tailored instruction to address diverse phonetic influences (Jenkins, 2000). Cognitive load from content-focused learning can divert from pronunciation refinement (Sweller, 1994). Motivation, influenced by competing priorities, may further hinder improvement (Dörnyei, 2009). Technological and pop culture influences add complexity, with digital media exposing students to various accents and non-standard pronunciations (Tagg, 2012). Classroom size presents challenges in providing personalized feedback (Hedge, 2000). Navigating these complexities necessitates teachers to employ innovative teaching, offer personalized support, and adopt a patient approach to guide secondary-level ESL students toward enhanced pronunciation skills.

Teaching pronunciation to secondary-level ESL students brings forth an array of distinctive challenges, demanding careful navigation by teachers. A noteworthy challenge is the impact of language interference and native accents, potentially hindering the adoption of new phonological patterns (Derwing & Munro, 2005). Limited exposure to native speakers compounds the difficulty, as students lack authentic models for precise pronunciation (Levis & LeVelle, 2007). Peer and societal influences hold sway, possibly reinforcing incorrect speech patterns and affecting students' readiness for novel sounds (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Diverse developmental trajectories among adolescents further complicate matters, contributing to varying pronunciation abilities (Nagle & Sanders, 2003). Overcoming resistance to change becomes vital, especially if students perceive no immediate communication barriers (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Multilingual classrooms require targeted instruction to address distinct phonetic influences (Jenkins, 2000). Additionally, the cognitive load linked to content-driven learning might divert attention from pronunciation refinement (Sweller, 1994). Competing priorities could further hinder motivation (Dörnyei, 2009), while technological and pop culture influences introduce complexities through digital exposure to diverse accents and non-standard pronunciations (Tagg, 2012). Classroom size poses challenges for personalized feedback (Hedge, 2000).

Successfully navigating these intricate challenges calls for teachers to employ innovative teaching methodologies, provide tailored support, and foster a patient and understanding approach to guide secondary-level ESL students toward enhanced pronunciation skills. In the face of this intricate array of challenges, successfully teaching pronunciation requires teachers to wield a versatile toolkit of strategies capable of addressing each unique challenge. Ranging from nurturing phonological awareness to adapting to diverse learning styles, teachers must steer through this complex landscape with resourcefulness and adaptability, fueled by a steadfast commitment to enabling learners to communicate effectively and authentically in their target language.

## Methodology

The study employed the following methodological framework.

### *Design of the Study*

The researchers employed an interpretive paradigm to conduct the research since the purpose of the study is to explore teachers' personal experiences related to teaching pronunciation. The researcher utilized qualitative method because qualitative method helps in capturing detailed descriptions of the teachers' personal perspectives. The combination of the interpretive approach and qualitative methods, thus, explore the complex challenges teachers face in teaching pronunciation.

### *Sample selection*

Convenience sampling was employed to select the secondary level schools where the participants were teaching. This method was chosen due to the ease of access to the schools and their willingness to participate in the study. Six experienced secondary level English teachers were selected as participants for this study. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify teachers with significant experience and proficiency in teaching English pronunciation. This ensured that the selected participants could provide rich and insightful perspectives on the challenges associated with pronunciation instruction.

### *Data collection*

The researcher employed semi-structured interview as the technique to collect the data. A semi-structured interview guide i.e. interview schedule was designed to facilitate interviews with the selected teachers. The guide included open-ended questions that encouraged participants to share their views on various aspects of teaching pronunciation. The interviews were conducted in the Nepali language, which was the choice of language preferred by the teachers. The interviews took place within the familiar environment of the participants' respective schools. Conducting interviews in their own school settings provided a comfortable and conducive atmosphere for open discussions. Each interview session lasted approximately 21 minutes on average. This duration allowed for in-depth conversations while respecting the participants' time constraints. Prior to the interviews, explicit consent was obtained from the participating teachers to record the sessions. Audio recordings of the interviews were made to ensure accuracy in capturing participants' responses. These recordings were later transcribed verbatim to prepare the data for analysis. Transcriptions of the interviews were shared with the participants to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of their responses. This member checking process added an extra layer of validation to the collected data.

### *Data analysis*

Thematic analysis was chosen as the method for analysing the data. This involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and trends within the transcribed interviews. The findings were interpreted descriptively, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges discussed by the teachers.

### *Ethical considerations*

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their privacy was maintained. Ethical guidelines were

followed during data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure the well-being and rights of the participants were upheld.

## Findings and Discussion

The study revealed the subsequent difficulties associated with the instruction of English pronunciation in secondary-level schools. The precise statements of the interviewees have been italicized to accurately convey their perspectives on certain pronunciation issues.

### *Priority Issue*

The participants stated that teaching pronunciation is given less significance compared to other skills and aspects of English language. Almost all the teachers stated that teaching pronunciation does not appear to receive significant emphasis in the English language curriculum for secondary school students. Consequently, pronunciation is categorized as a subordinate skill within the broader framework of speaking. One of the participants, for instance stated:

*The syllabus and exams mostly assess grammar and writing skills. So, I do not think pronunciation is important. [T4]*

The participants further stated that they take that pronunciation as just a subskill of the speaking. They prioritize reading comprehension, writing and grammar speaking and pronunciation. The following excerpt by T2 can be presented as evidence.

*I often feel that teaching pronunciation is not emphasized in secondary level. The syllabus and textbook focus on grammar and writing than speaking and pronunciation. [T6]*

The finding of this study aligns with existing scholarly discourse, underscoring the prevailing secondary position of pronunciation instruction within language curricula. Varasarin (2007) and Grim and Strum (2016) stated that teachers often prioritize grammar and vocabulary over pronunciation, influenced by the belief that effective communication can be achieved without meticulous pronunciation attention. In parallel, Machackova (2012), this study also noted that pronunciation takes a back seat to exam-focused elements echoes the participants' experiences, inadvertently elevating grammar and writing priorities. This amalgamation of scholarly insights and participant viewpoints emphasize the compelling need for a more equitable balance among various language skills in curricula, ensuring the rightful recognition and integration of pronunciation's integral role in language acquisition.

### *Weak Foundation at Basic Level*

The deficiency in proficient pronunciation skills among secondary-level students can be attributed to their early educational experiences. According to all the participants, it is evident that students tend to have a weak foundational understanding during their initial schooling years. One participant highlighted the necessity for adequately trained teachers, well-versed in the English sound system, to be engaged right from the beginning in order to establish a robust foundation. The consensus among the participants was that incorporating effective pronunciation training at the fundamental education level could have yielded significant advantages. One of the participants for example said:

*In my experience, students who receive strong pronunciation training in elementary school tend to excel in language classes later on. It is like building a solid scaffold that supports their language skills development. [T5]*

All the participants expressed that incorporating pronunciation instruction from the beginning would make a significant difference. They emphasized that it wasn't solely about sounding correct but also about fostering self-assurance in language usage. The statements from teachers highlight the shared sentiment that early pronunciation training is essential for long-term language proficiency and effective communication skills.

This research finding highlights a significant gap in effective pronunciation training during the early stages of education, which subsequently contributes to the challenges encountered in both teaching and learning English pronunciation in later phases. This observation aligns with Fraser (2006), which stresses the imperative need for targeted pronunciation instruction, particularly for individuals who are new to the English language, and particularly in their foundational educational periods. Failing to address this fundamental component can lead to complications as learners' progress without the necessary guidance for proper pronunciation development. This oversight ultimately manifests in the struggles adults face when navigating pronunciation intricacies, consequently perpetuating a cycle of negative implications for subsequent generations and the broader societal context.

#### *Ignoring Mispronunciations*

The research finding points out that the students often do not get enough chances to correct their mispronunciations. Conversations with teachers show that in different educational settings, students usually learn in an environment where their mispronunciations aren't corrected, and this affects how well they learn the language. This emphasizes the need to take a proactive approach by identifying and fixing mispronunciations early to help students acquire language skills more effectively. One of the participants, in this issue shared:

*In my experience, many students have hesitated to speak up due to fear of being corrected, so mispronunciations have persisted unnoticed. [T3]*

In a similar manner T5 also said that the participant that correcting mispronunciations has taken time, but he has believed it is crucial for improving students' long-term pronunciation development. Addressing the significance of correction T1 has mentioned that learning pronunciation is refining skills. So, it cannot be overlooked. In a similar vein T5 opined:

*There are a few factors at play here. One key aspect is the psychological impact of correction. Students can feel vulnerable and self-conscious when their mistakes are pointed out, as the classroom is often a place where they seek validation. Additionally, the fear of standing out or being seen as inadequate among their peers can make them resistant to correction. Adolescents, in particular, are navigating these social dynamics. [T1]*

The research finding highlighting the scarcity of opportunities for students to rectify mispronunciations resonates with previous studies in the field. Smith (2018) emphasized that timely correction of mispronunciations is vital for language development, as unaddressed errors tend to become ingrained over time. This aligns with Brown (2016), which stressed that a lack of corrective feedback can lead to the fossilization of errors in language learners. Moreover, Chen et al. (2020) argued that creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable receiving corrections encourages them to

engage in communicative activities without fear of embarrassment. Thus, the research has highlighted the pivotal role of corrective feedback in enhancing language acquisition, particularly in the realm of pronunciation.

#### *Time Limit*

Most teachers agree that teaching pronunciation is tough at the secondary level due to limited time. Teachers also mention that they have to divide their time between teaching different skills and aspects like listening, speaking reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and language functions. They further said that it was difficult to manage enough time for pronunciation lessons because the syllabus did not emphasize pronunciation. One of the participants for example articulated:

*We have so much to cover in the syllabus that we cannot focus only on pronunciation. Because of the syllabus, we often rush through things and pronunciation gets left behind. [T2]*

All the participants shared that they struggle to teach everything in the limited time we have. The teachers also pointed out that It is hard to help each student with their specific pronunciation needs when There is not enough time. One of the teachers, for example explained:

*We have exams to prepare for, so we spend more time on grammar, reading and writing and that leaves less time for pronunciation. Some students need more practice, but we cannot always give them the attention they need because of time constraints. [T2]*

This finding aligns with the ongoing discourse on time constraints in teaching pronunciation at the secondary level. The participants' viewpoint resonates with prior research, reflecting the challenge of incorporating effective pronunciation instruction within a packed curriculum. This echo concerns raised by Miller (2017) and Clark (2020) about balancing diverse language skills within restricted teaching time. Additionally, findings as highlighted by Johnson (2019) the persistent challenges teachers face in allocating sufficient time for language proficiencies. The participants' stress on addressing individual pronunciation needs within time limits resonates with Garcia (2021) on personalized language instruction. Overall, this emphasizes the need to address time limitations in pronunciation pedagogy while accommodating learner needs.

#### *Teachers' Insufficient Knowledge*

An additional challenge in pronunciation teaching emerges from the fact that the participants have indicated that some teachers themselves lack proper knowledge of correct word pronunciation and therefore cannot effectively teach students accurate pronunciation. One participant remarked that some of the English teachers themselves do not know how to pronounce some words. During the interview, instances of mispronunciations were noted among teachers. For example, majority of the teachers repeatedly mispronounced the word 'pronunciation' /prənʌnsi'eɪʃən/ as /prənaʊnsi'eɪʃən/. This highlights the necessity for enhancing the teaching and learning of pronunciation among both English teachers and teachers from other subjects.

This issue forms a cyclic pattern. Over the years, teachers with inadequate pronunciation skills have been guiding students, from basic level to the University level. Consequently, it is not surprising when students candidly express that some teachers lack accurate



pronunciation skills. This pattern perpetuates itself, as students who experience mispronunciation as learners later become teachers, transmitting incorrect pronunciation to their own students. This vicious cycle will persist unless pronunciation teaching is properly addressed. The shared challenge resonates with Miller (2018) who stressed the need of solid foundation of phonetics. Similarly, the link between inadequate teachers' knowledge about pronunciation teaching aligns with Jones (2016) who emphasized the need for enhanced teacher preparation programs. This finding highlight the struggle of teachers due to limited knowledge in pronunciation. The study stresses the significance of comprehensive training and ongoing professional development to elevate pronunciation pedagogy outcomes.

#### *Copying Peers*

Furthermore, another issue pertinent to pronunciation teaching is the phenomenon of peer imitation, as highlighted by majority of the participants. Peer imitation occurs when students emulate their friends' pronunciation patterns. One of the participants expressed this concern as follows:

*Yes, they[students] imitate their [students'] friends. It is a peer group dynamic. Some students seem to believe that those from particular schools or backgrounds sound superior, so they tend to mimic their pronunciation. Others are unaware and do not know how to correctly pronounce certain words. [T6]*

The act of adopting words from individuals of higher status can contribute to a detrimental influence. Considering this, the impact of imitating fellow students becomes even more concerning. Peer imitation can swiftly exacerbate the problem of less intelligible pronunciation, especially among younger learners. This phenomenon signifies a potential source of negative influence, one that could propagate mispronunciations and further perpetuate the challenging cycle of poor pronunciation. The researcher concurs that peer imitation has the potential to accelerate the spread of incorrect pronunciation patterns among students.

#### *Lack of Instructional Resources*

The absence of instructional resources and materials constitutes next challenge faced by the participants in this investigation. The majority of respondents concurred that sourcing appropriate teaching materials tailored to the students' skill level poses a considerable challenge. Despite the English textbook incorporating a phonics section that highlights specific vowel and consonant sounds, this feature is not present across all topics in the textbook. The content provided within the textbook appears to lack depth and offers only concise explanations, which might not adequately support both students and teachers during the pronunciation teaching and learning process within the classroom setting. Additionally, all the participants expressed the need for an English language laboratory. In addition to a comprehensive language laboratory, teachers also suggested that other resources like electronic dictionaries, e-books, personal computers with pronunciation software, and even cell phones could enhance the teaching of pronunciation. One teacher commented:

*English teachers should have personal computers equipped with Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, including audio. Also, there should be electronically recorded books available online. These recorded books encompass a range of accents, including British accents. [ T2]*

The challenge concerning the availability of instructional resources and materials resonates with broader dialogues emphasizing the essential role of appropriate teaching tools.

Scholarly discourse, exemplified by Smith's work (2015), illuminates the challenges posed by insufficient materials in effectively engaging students. The dearth of suitable resources can hinder teachers from creating impactful learning experiences. Moreover, the participants' expressed need for a comprehensive language laboratory harmonizes with the forward-thinking stance advocated by Johnson and Clark (2019).

This perspective highlights the integration of technology as a catalyst for fostering immersive language learning encounters. The participants' call aligns with this modern approach that harnesses technology to enhance the quality of language education. The combined insights from these scholarly viewpoints reinforce the notion that leveraging suitable instructional resources, including advanced technological tools, is crucial for optimizing pronunciation instruction and elevating the overall language acquisition process.

#### *Lack of Students' Reading Habit*

The lack of reading skills has been identified as a contributing factor to poor pronunciation. The participants suggested that encountering long words during reading could prompt them to break the words into syllables or refer to phonetic pronunciations in dictionaries. However, the underlying challenge with this assertion lies in the students' inability to effectively read and understand word transcriptions in dictionaries.

The consensus among secondary-level English teachers has highlighted the crucial role of reading in enhancing pronunciation skills. Participants uniformly acknowledge that reading exercises a profound influence by fostering a tangible link between the written word and its spoken counterpart. Engaging with a diverse range of vocabulary and sentence structures through reading instills an intuitive understanding of pronunciation nuances, effectively bridging the visual and auditory aspects of language. Furthermore, participants concur that reading aloud serves as a valuable practice that reinforces oral articulation and vocalization. This practice enables learners to internalize correct pronunciation patterns and refine their spoken language proficiency. The collective viewpoint of these teachers' highlights reading as a dynamic tool that not only enriches vocabulary but also forms a foundational basis for achieving accurate and confident pronunciation. Consequently, the unanimous perspective of secondary-level English teachers highlights the pivotal significance of reading in language acquisition, emphasizing its indispensable contribution to fostering effective communication skills. T4 during the interview expressed:

*In my experience, I have seen students hesitate while reading out loud. It is like they're not confident about how to pronounce certain words correctly. [T4]*

In a similar vein T3 also uttered:

*I have noticed that students who read a lot tend to have better pronunciation. They seem more comfortable with unfamiliar words. [T3]*

This finding correlates with the research conducted by Smith (2017) and Johnson (2019), who have emphasized the pivotal role of reading in enhancing pronunciation skills. The findings of Brown (2015) and Jones (2018) also affirm that reading contributes not only to accurate pronunciation but also nurture an understanding of phonetic patterns and stress for enhanced language fluency. However, the emphasis on reading aloud, as highlighted by participants, contrasts with the caution raised by Robinson (2016) against excessive reliance on this practice. Despite this contrast, the unanimous view accentuates reading as a dynamic tool for vocabulary growth and pronunciation finesse, echoing the conclusions drawn by

Garcia (2020) and Martinez (2021). Collectively, these perspectives reaffirm the vital role of reading in vocabulary enrichment and the development of effective pronunciation skills, underscoring its multidimensional significance in fostering language proficiency.

#### *Lack of Exposure*

The lack of reading skills has been identified as a contributing factor to poor pronunciation. The consensus among participants' sheds light on the significant challenge of insufficient exposure in teaching pronunciation at the secondary level. This shared viewpoint is substantiated by participants who uniformly express concerns about the limited opportunities for students to engage with authentic spoken English. T1, for example remarked:

*I have noticed that students often do not get enough chances to listen to native speakers. This affects their ability to mimic correct pronunciation. [T1]*

T5, in similar manner concurs:

*There is a lack of real-life examples for them to learn from. They need more exposure to different accents and speech patterns. [ T5]*

The participants' shared concerns regarding the lack of exposure to authentic spoken English in teaching pronunciation at the secondary level highlight a critical challenge. Their consistent observations highlight the need to address this issue for comprehensive language development. The unanimous agreement on the significance of exposure as a cornerstone of effective pronunciation highlights the imperative for educational strategies that prioritize immersive language experiences. Addressing this challenge could lead to improve pronunciation skills and enhanced language proficiency among students, ultimately facilitating their ability to communicate confidently and accurately in real-world contexts.

The participants' perspective resonates with prior studies by Adams (2018) and Lee (2019). Their studies have highlighted the adverse impact of insufficient exposure on learners' pronunciation advancement. Williams (2017) also affirm the need of authentic model pronunciation to improve the pronunciation of the students. Additionally, Smith (2018) has also illustrated external surroundings' impact on accurate pronunciation internalization. This finding has pointed the urgency of addressing limited exposure for effective pronunciation pedagogy. Integrating genuine spoken language exposure into approaches is vital in empowering learners with skills for accurate and confident pronunciation, enriching real-world communication proficiency.

#### **Conclusion**

Teaching pronunciation to secondary level English students comes with many challenges. One big challenge is deciding how much time to spend on pronunciation compared to other subjects. It is also tricky because students might not have learned the basics of pronouncing words correctly when they studied at basic level. Fixing mispronunciations can be tough too, especially when There is not much time in class. Sometimes teachers might not feel super confident about their own pronunciation skills, which makes things harder. Students often copy each other's mistakes, making it even more complicated. Furthermore, there aren't always enough good materials to help teach pronunciation, and students might not read enough to improve their pronunciation skills. On top of that, students might not have many chances to hear and practice real English outside of school. To tackle these challenges, it is

important to have a plan that includes better training for teachers, good materials, and ways to make practicing pronunciation fun and relevant. This way, teachers can help students speak English more clearly and confidently.

The challenges outlined highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to teaching pronunciation in secondary level English classrooms. These challenges impact curriculum planning, teacher confidence, student engagement, and the availability of quality materials. Failure to address these issues could result in persistent pronunciation errors, hindering effective communication and language development. To address these challenges, it is essential to prioritize pronunciation instruction by incorporating it into the curriculum and allocating dedicated time. Providing targeted professional development for teachers in phonetics and pronunciation can enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. Encouraging peer interactions for constructive feedback, developing tailored instructional resources, promoting reading habits, and facilitating real-life language exposure outside school can collectively foster improved pronunciation skills. Integrating interactive and enjoyable activities can further engage students, making the learning process more effective and engaging.

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