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Saudi Perspective on Using EFL Resources to Improve Their English Pronunciation in Saudi Public Institutions

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SAUDI PERSPECTIVE ON USING EFL RESOURCES TO IMPROVE THEIR
ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN SAUDI PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In the Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi

By

KHADIJA ALZAHRANI

December 2023
ABSTRACT

Due to the lack of a pronunciation curriculum and materials in Saudi universities, EFL students individually select use different resources to help with their English pronunciation difficulties. Therefore, this study aims to describe (a) Saudi students' perspectives and attitudes toward pronunciation resources that may help with their pronunciation (b) if they use them to help with their weaknesses, and (c) the teachers’ perspectives on their students' pronunciation difficulties, their knowledge of the resources the universities provide, and what they use to help the students' pronunciation learning and development. This study investigates what Saudi students think they need to learn pronunciation, what aspects they see as the most difficult to overcome, and what resources they lack to help with their pronunciation difficulties. The study elicits opinions on the students' pronunciation obstacles based on their perspectives and their teachers' perspectives and what resources the teachers use to assist their students’ learning.

The study was conducted in two public Saudi institutions. The targeted participants are (1) Saudi college students studying English in their third and fourth years and (2) their English language teachers. The data was collected using two questionnaires, one for students and the other for their teachers. Students who participated in the questionnaire were interviewed to get more information once the data was gathered. After receiving the questionnaires and interview data recordings, the researcher transcribed the content of the interviews, noting recurring themes and patterns. The study's results indicated the presence of three primary themes derived from the gathered data: classroom interaction, technological engagement, and personal practice. These
themes comprise a variety of resources, which include, but are not limited to, the course book, interactions with peers, the use of mobile applications and online software, as well as involvement in departmental workshops and speaking clubs. The lack of easily accessible resources for Saudi learners poses significant obstacles to developing effective pronunciation abilities. This challenge is notably attributed to the overarching academic priorities of the university, which tend to allocate relatively more emphasis towards other language skills, inadvertently limiting the attention and allocation of resources directed toward the enhancement of pronunciation proficiency.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Abdullah, whose unwavering support has been a constant source of my strength and motivation throughout my academic journey that began in 2013. His encouragement and belief in my abilities have propelled me forward, inspiring me to overcome obstacles and pursue my dreams relentlessly. I am grateful for his presence by my side, accompanying me on this challenging path until the completion of my doctoral degree. I also dedicate this work to my three beautiful daughters, Rose, Joury, and Tulip, as well as my beloved son, Ahmed. They have brought immense joy and light into my life, especially during moments of homesickness and longing for my home country. Their smiles and presence have served as a reminder of the precious blessings I have in my life, motivating me to continue pushing forward and striving for excellence.

To my parents, Mrs. Fawziah Alzahrani and Mr. Abdullah Alzahrani, I offer my deepest gratitude. Their prayers, love, and endless support have been with me since my arrival in the United States, and I am confident that their encouragement will continue to guide me as I pursue my aspirations. Their belief in my abilities has been a constant source of strength, and I am forever indebted to them for their faith in my potential. Lastly, I extend my heartfelt dedication to all of my cherished sisters and brothers. Their love, encouragement, and camaraderie have been invaluable throughout my academic journey.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SA        Saudi Arabia
TL        Target Language
EFL       English as a Foreign Language
MALL      Mobile Assisted Language Learning
YATI      YouTube and Audio Track Imitation
CALL      Computer Assisted Language Learning
CAPT      Computer-Aided Pronunciation Training
TEAM      Technology Enhanced Accent Modification
ELSA      English Language Speech Assistant
ESL       English as a Second Language
L1        First Language
L2        Second Language
KAU       King Abdul-Aziz University
QU        Qassim University
IRB       Institutional Review Board
IPA       International Phonetic Alphabet
TESOL     Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
QDA       Qualitative Data Analysis
SRL       Self-Regulated Learning
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and balance to my life. Thank you for your understanding during times when my attention was divided and for your continuous support and encouragement. You are my greatest blessings.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is an oral skill that benefits from being "incorporated into ongoing teaching and practicing speaking abilities" (Yates & Zielinski, 2009, p. 11). It comprises various processes, from creating individual sounds and sound clusters to connecting speech with all its prosodic characteristics (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm, etc.). According to Kenworthy (1987), pronunciation skill results from linguistic and non-linguistic elements, including the speaker’s attitude, native language, age, exposure to the target language (TL), and inherent phonetic aptitude. Pranoto and Suprayogi (2020) note that pronunciation is an essential component of speaking and is closely linked to comprehension of the message transmitted during communication. Many second language learners report that pronunciation is the most challenging aspect of speaking English, and they believe that poor pronunciation is the root of their communication issues (Al-Kahtany, 1995; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). Therefore, knowing which techniques to use for learning pronunciation is essential.

According to Mandasari and Oktaviani (2018), adopting any approach to learning pronunciation, such as listening to English sounds, memorizing vocabulary, describing imagery, and viewing films, successfully improves learners’ performance. Moreover, listening is vital in acquiring good pronunciation and speaking (Aminatun et al., 2021; Kuswoyo & Wahyudin, 2017; Mandasari & Aminatun, 2020). While the vast majority of research on second language pronunciation has concentrated on naturalistic contexts—how a speaker’s pronunciation changes as a result of being immersed in the target language community—more attention has been paid
over the past two decades to how students acquire pronunciation in settings where an instructor or other outside source actively shapes or intervenes in the learning process (e.g., Flege et al., 1997). Students and educators should pay close attention to pronunciation as an integral part of any language program. All second language classes should include pronunciation instruction using a range of activities (Scarcella & Oxford, 1994). As a result of this attention, the next section of the introduction will emphasize students’ perceptions of learning pronunciation as an essential part of second language acquisition.

1.1. Perception Toward Learning Pronunciation

Perception is obtaining information through sensory receptors and transforming it into thoughts, emotions, tastes, touches, sights, and sounds (Ibrohim, Septianti, & Sadikin, 2019, p. 147). Researchers must pay more attention to second language learners' perspectives on pronunciation requirements, or the strategies learners consider most effective for resolving communication difficulties that contribute to their performances (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). One perspective is that adult learners may improve their pronunciation abilities if highly motivated and educated. The perspective is the learners' attitude toward learning pronunciation: Some students are simply more proficient at improving their pronunciation and learning new words than others.

Several variables lead to second language learners making errors, particularly in pronunciation. The importance of accent, stress, intonation, and rhythm in non-native speakers' speech comprehensibility and the effects of motivation and exposure on the development of native-like pronunciation have been the subject of recent discussions and research on teaching and learning pronunciation. The intelligibility of speech among speakers of various English
varieties has also been examined (Schaetzel & Low, 2009). The variations between the learner's native and target languages undoubtedly contribute to these challenges.

Almqrn and Alshabeb (2017) state that Arabic students utilize pronunciation elements from their first language (Arabic) while speaking English. According to previous studies, vowel and consonant sound acquisition seem particularly difficult for Arab students learning English as a foreign language (Al-Ahdal et al., 2015; Altamimi, 2015; Bin-Hady, 2016b, 2016c; Jalabneh, 2014). Altamimi (2015) argues that Arab English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners mispronounce some consonant phonemes while speaking English. Based on previous studies conducted among Saudi learners, such as Ahmad and Nazim (2014), Alzinaidi and Latif (2019), and Hameed and Aslam (2015), Saudi students face difficulties in pronouncing certain phonological features such as words with the past morpheme -ed; and the four- and three-consonant clusters in English because the phonotactics, phonological process, and/or orthography, for example (cited in Bin-Hady & Hazaea, 2021). According to Alzinaidi and Latif (2019), the consonants in a word's initial and final positions are more likely to be difficult to pronounce than those in the word's medial position. Saudi students need help with vowel sound pronunciation (Ababneh, 2018). However, there is a chance that upcoming non-native English speakers may teach their students how to pronounce words incorrectly. For instance, according to Bin-Hady (2016b), students in several English as a Foreign Language institutions frequently imitate how their instructors pronounce the English language without the aid of simple technology.

Teachers should know that native-like pronunciation may be challenging for specific English language learners (Almusharraf, 2021). Insights into techniques for improving pronunciation may enable instructors to recognize individual variances among EFL students,
create attainable objectives appropriate for their communication requirements, and assist students in gaining confidence and overcoming their pronunciation difficulties (Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016). Teachers need to understand students' attitudes regarding pronunciation to be able to detect learners' challenges, and it may be desirable to investigate their students’ personalities (e.g., introverts vs. extroverts), which affect students in class (Almusharraf & Almusharraf, 2021).

1.2. Resources in Learning Pronunciation

To make up for the students' lack of contact with native speakers, Saudi EFL instructors have long utilized different techniques in the classroom (Mandasari & Oktaviani, 2018). Nowadays, practitioners and educators are encouraged to look for pedagogical tools to present EFL content or develop students' abilities using the most modern technological means. According to Mandasari and Oktaviani (2018), utilizing various language-learning techniques, such as listening to English sounds, remembering vocabulary, describing imagery, and viewing films, are successful ways for students to learn English.

There are many ways to improve learners' pronunciation. The teacher can be the primary source of learning pronunciation, but some teachers may need more training in teaching pronunciation. Due to a lack of abilities, inadequate formal training, and unavailability of adequate resources, instructors of English as a second language (ESL) often refrain from teaching pronunciation (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). Unfortunately, this hesitation to include pronunciation instruction in the curriculum is even more apparent in EFL classrooms since students and instructors seldom have the opportunity to communicate with native speakers of the target language (Tominaga, 2009). Learners who are eager to work on their pronunciation may study independently using technological advancements (Apriyanti & Ayu, 2020). As a
result, students and teachers tend to use different resources to help with English pronunciation, as opposed to broad exposure to target-language speakers.

To better understand the resources that teachers provide and what students are taking advantage of to learn pronunciation, this study will determine what teachers and students believe are the most challenging aspects of speaking English and pronouncing words, which resources they use to address these challenges, and whether they use these resources to meet their needs or only to practice their pronunciation.

1.3. The Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine which resources students use to assist them in learning English pronunciation and whether they use the resources to address a specific difficulty or simply to learn. A questionnaire asks why students think it is not easy to learn the appropriate pronunciation of English. What are the most challenging aspects? How well are they aware of the resources available to assist them in understanding and improving their pronunciation? Is it a common practice for them? Is it a good fit for them? Have they found specific resources to be beneficial in improving their pronunciation? Do they think that they need other resources?

This study also surveys instructors’ viewpoints on their students’ pronunciation difficulties to understand better the needs of English language learners' pronunciation challenges. Moreover, the study questions whether the instructors believe that their students need help mastering the pronunciation of certain aspects of the English language. Do they know the resources accessible to them at their university? Are these resources in use? Is it beneficial for students to use these resources? Does the institution have any additional resources that they rely on? Do the instructors employ any specific resources to deal with pronunciation challenges? The instructors’ responses were compared to their students to determine the final result.
This research investigated students’ attitudes toward pronunciation difficulties, their perceptions of learning resources for developing pronunciation, and which resources they think aid their improvement. It also addresses the available resources to instructors and students for their perceived learning English pronunciation needs, what they want or lack, and whether or not they use the resources available at their universities. This research helps identify gaps where the existing literature may lack sufficient coverage or understanding; it can highlight areas where further investigation is needed, such as the specific challenges Saudi students face in learning English pronunciation and the available resources that may assist their learning. The study provides pedagogical insights by exploring both student and instructor perspectives from two dimensions. This can inform teaching strategies, curriculum development, and teacher training programs in the context of pronunciation instruction.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study’s importance lies in eliciting Saudi students’ opinions and views on the effectiveness of EFL resources that assist in improving their pronunciation difficulties. The research provides insight into English language learning in Saudi Arabia (SA) and identifies areas where improvements can be made. The findings of this research may be helpful for language learners, educators, and policymakers to develop strategies to support learning English language skills, especially pronunciation, in SA. This investigation is essential, as students’ ability to self-regulate their efforts and practice inside and outside class is a significant factor in pronunciation acquisition (Dickerson, 1994). This study aids college students or English language learners in identifying what resources are available and how they may utilize them to face pronunciation challenges. It will help teachers determine what their students need and what
they do not have in terms of pronunciation instruction. Providing students with the tools and resources may help curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia overcome these learning challenges.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Over the last fifty years, pronunciation instruction materials have shifted from emphasizing the articulation of single sounds to the more comprehensive, communicative qualities of linked speech (Jones, 1997, p. 112). Teaching and learning materials may be designed for inside or outside the classroom, such as the teachers themselves, textbooks, visual aids, homework sheets, and technological resources (software, computers, phone applications). Regarding the function of teaching materials in pronunciation learning, research has shown that comparatively few textbooks are dedicated to pronunciation compared to other subjects, such as grammar and writing (Derwing, 2008). What seems even more complicated is that many current textbooks discuss phonetics and phonology without considering pedagogy (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin & Griner, 2010).

According to Derwing and Munro (2015), most existing teaching materials are based on materials developers' intuition, which may conflict with scholars’ presumptions that teaching materials, primarily textbooks, should adhere to current research to achieve efficiency for pronunciation learners. For instance, it is crucial that the ESL instructor tell the students about suprasegmental like stress, tone, or word junctures that go with or are added over consonants and vowels (Derwing, 2008; Field, 2005; Hahn, 2004). English language learners in different contexts of higher education tend to use many resources to improve their pronunciation; the benefit they gain from these resources is varied.
2.1. Teaching English Pronunciation

Goodwin (2001) says that pronunciation education aims to help students comprehend and be understood, build their trust when they are in a communicative situation, and encourage them to monitor their speech based on information from the environment. Instructors must pay attention to every aspect of language use in their classes. However, pronunciation instruction is underutilized and neglected in EFL classrooms (Foote et al., 2016). It is essential to emphasize the relevance of clear pronunciation and the most efficient methods of teaching pronunciation in these talks (Saito, 2011). Research on teaching pronunciation has focused chiefly on examining students’ pronunciation issues (e.g., Ahmad & Muhiburrahman, 2013; Binturki, 2008) and the challenges and concerns of students about their pronunciation (Hameed & Aslam, 2015).

According to Skorvagova et al. (2017), foreign language teachers and curriculum designers should know pronunciation teaching methods and learning resources. It is critical to examine the efficacy of the instructional approaches and the students’ appreciation for them.

Research suggests that prioritizing the teaching of intonation in pronunciation could emphasize its importance and convey the significance of words within a tone unit. In a study conducted by Utami (2020), the problematic features in pronunciation for Chinese learners were examined, with a particular focus on word stress and intonation. The participants indicated that word stress posed a challenge in their EFL learning as they believed that misplaced stress deprived the listener of a crucial decoding clue. Utami (2020) further discovered that intonation was another problematic feature among the participants. Chinese students typically employ intonation at the end of a sentence, resulting in a lack of intelligibility. This made it challenging for the listener to discern the intended meaning. The use of proper intonation is crucial as it
provides consistency within larger discourse structures and aids effective communication of the message, along with expressing one's emotions, personality, and attitude.

Although not all SA universities provide pronunciation classes separately for college students. Speaking lessons and phonetics and phonology courses do incorporate pronunciation practice. However, due to a lack in teachers' abilities, inadequate formal training, and unavailability of sufficient resources, English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors typically avoid teaching pronunciation (e.g., Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). Unfortunately, this hesitation to include pronunciation instruction in the curriculum is even more evident in EFL classrooms since students and instructors seldom have the opportunity to communicate in the target language (Tominaga, 2009).

Wahid and Sulong (2013) delve into the disparity between the teaching of pronunciation and its practical application, identifying the factors influencing teachers' attitudes and practices. Through a case study involving ESL instructors at a university, they shed light on this issue and provide valuable insights. The findings of the study reveal that teachers often refrain from teaching pronunciation due to the need for enhanced instructional skills. A closer examination indicates that teachers require a deeper technical understanding of both the subject matter and pedagogical approaches to pronunciation. Furthermore, their limited research literacy further complicates the situation. Wahid and Sulong (2013) emphasize the significance of aligning future pronunciation research with the specific needs of instructors in the classroom, highlighting the importance of addressing these challenges.

Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) conducted a study to explore the factors contributing to EFL teachers' neglect of English pronunciation instruction in their classrooms. The findings suggest that teachers' inability to teach pronunciation stems from various challenges, including
limited time, lack of motivation, as well as insufficient resources, materials, and educational facilities such as computer technologies. In order for teachers to integrate pronunciation effectively into their classes, they need to be equipped with these essential components. These factors play a crucial role in shaping students' perception of their pronunciation difficulties both inside and outside the classroom, as well as the challenges they face during language learning and the lack of practice opportunities. Gilakjani and Sabouri’s results also reveal that teachers lack sufficient pronunciation practice in their classes or expect students to make additional efforts to improve their pronunciation skills.

Proper pronunciation is critical for efficient communication, and current research shows that pronunciation teaching is practical. However, pronunciation instruction receives a minor focus in English language schools (e.g., Darcy et al., 2021; Foote et al., 2016). According to Brown's (1992) research on teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation, teachers suggested that there were insufficient resources to teach pronunciation effectively. New resources have emerged since that research, but subsequent investigations have revealed that there is still a demand for more material. Fraser (2000, p. 19) claimed that oral communication and speaking skills are absent for ESL learners because instructors need more strategies and tools. Also, Yates (2001) discovered the need for materials that linked pronunciation with its teaching objectives and provided materials that focused on suprasegmental, intonation, and voice quality. Several teachers said that while they had access to a wide range of resources for other subject areas, they needed more resources to teach pronunciation (Macdonald, 2002).

Alghazo (2015) examined Saudi college students' attitudes toward pronunciation in the teaching materials presented by English language teachers. The researcher attempted to discover the views of 71 third- and fourth-year EFL students majoring in English at a Saudi university. It
concluded after interviewing and discussing with participants their needs for suitable pronunciation materials, that the curriculum of the English bachelor program in SA colleges should be reconsidered because it did not meet students’ needs. According to the findings, curriculum improvement is urgently required, and students' viewpoints on curriculum design should be included.

The primary objective of this study is to obtain the perspectives of students regarding the learning of pronunciation skills and the educational materials they employ to enhance their learning experience. Furthermore, to enhance our comprehension of the challenge associated with locating resources for student pronunciation improvement, the following section will delve into the resources employed in literature for enhancing English language skills, both in a broader context as a foreign language and, more specifically, among Saudi English language learners.

2.2. Pronunciation Learning Resources

One of the critical competencies in learning a language is pronunciation. O'Sullivan (2012) asserts that assessing speaking abilities should consider pronunciation as an essential factor. According to O'Sullivan's analytic rubric scale, high linguistic competency language learners do not intentionally mispronounce words. However, poor linguistic competency language learners consistently have unintelligible pronunciation with a heavy non-native pronunciation that may obscure meaning. Even though pronunciation is covered in many EFL education programs' curricula, there needs to be explicit instruction (Levis, 2005; Nagle, 2018; Saito et al., 2020). Few studies have focused on teaching accurate pronunciation to EFL students, and several scholars have called for more studies (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Burgess & Spencer, 2000; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Huensch & Nagle, 2021; Murphy, 2014; Saito et al., 2020).

Baran-Ucarz (2014) observed that "despite the efforts of Foreign language (FL) teachers to
establish the correct settings, some learners show a strong desire to withdraw from opportunities for oral communication” (p. 446). Therefore, language teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers benefit from more knowledge of learners' perspectives.

According to Baker (2014), pronunciation teachers employ three main methods. First, where teachers play a crucial part in their education, regulated approaches are employed, such as repetition exercises, listening discrimination, and minimal pair activities. Second, teachers employ free approaches, in which the focus shifts to students working together in open-ended activities like role-playing, theater, or presentations. Lastly, guided approaches that include elements of controlled and free techniques, known as semi-controlled techniques, including information gap exercises, interviews, and group discussions. Baker (2014) discovered that, of these three techniques, teachers mostly employ controlled strategies. Similarly, Buss (2015) discovered that teachers frequently employ tried-and-true pronunciation training techniques like repetition.

Lambacher (2001) asserts that teachers should gain a fundamental understanding of the various aspects involved in teaching and learning pronunciation. It can take time to address each of these issues. Pronunciation must be addressed in the classroom, as it affects practically every element of language learning. The teacher's role in providing examples and learning opportunities is essential: "…every word, every syllable, and every sound uttered by the teacher may contribute to the learning of pronunciation, not only when the teacher is deliberately and overtly concentrating on teaching pronunciation, but equally when he believes that he is putting the weight of the teaching onto questions of grammar or vocabulary” (Strevens, 1991, p. 96).

The following section focuses on the most accessible resources to students, 'In-Person Resources', that have significant use in the field of English language acquisition. These resources...
cover instructional tools and support systems that are typically given in physical settings, such as classrooms, language labs, and tutoring sessions, allowing for direct interaction between individuals. Gaining insight into the significance of in-person resources is crucial as it clarifies the fundamental elements of language education and their relevance in broader English as a foreign language setting, especially among Saudi English language learners. In this analysis, I will explore the benefits, obstacles, and crucial factors related to these resources, offering unique perspectives on resources efficacy in mitigating obstacles in pronunciation.

2.2.1. In-Person Resources

Pronunciation teaching resources such as textbooks, instructors' guides, computer software, mobile applications, and the internet have grown (Buss, 2016). The most available in-person resources to college students in SA are the teacher, the textbook, the language laboratory, and the library. First, I will briefly overview the essential part of these learning resources, then discuss the studies covering pronunciation learning resources and development.

2.2.1.1. Textbook and Learning Pronunciation

In many schools, textbooks serve as the primary source of instruction (Richards, 1993). Many types of schoolbooks and their components are available to assist English instructors across the globe in their efforts to teach the language (Tomlinson, 2003). However, the question remains: do textbooks deliver enough information to the students, especially if they need to be proficient in the target language? As an alternative to handing out printed pronunciation materials, instructors may use alternative media to provide students with L2-specific phonological practices (Hismanoglu, 2010).

A study conducted by Pradana (2020) investigated how the Pathway to English textbook facilitates students' learning to speak and, more specifically, pronunciation and word stress. The
researcher investigated if the textbook contained enough material to help students learn pronunciation. The result shows that only one activity was found for practicing pronunciation: repetition. Training consisted of just eleven repetition-based exercises for stress and pronunciation (Pradana, 2020). Derwing et al. (2012) examined 48 textbooks from 12 different ESL general-skills textbook series, together with six teacher's guides, assessing the consistency of the texts in each series and the amount to which they offer pronunciation tasks. The researchers identified a wide range of concentrations of pronunciation activities across the series in various task categories, although some textbooks rely on a small number of them.

Jianbin and Fang (2013) evaluated and analyzed two pronunciation textbooks for their effectiveness in teaching students and meeting their learning demands. Two questionnaires and a textbook evaluation were conducted to answer the study's research question. A detailed overview of the strengths and drawbacks of the two pronunciation textbooks is provided with the data gathered from questionnaires. The learners indicated that the book was satisfying and acceptable and met their needs. Derghal and Chaira (2019) considered a series of three English books to investigate how their objectives met the students’ needs. Their study shows that the books did not meet the syllabus objectives in pronunciation and needed more supplemented audio materials for pronunciation activities. It is possible that many L2 students rely on general-skills textbooks for pronunciation education since many instructors of English lack formal training in teaching pronunciation (Foote et al., 2011) and because the instructors have reported difficulties teaching pronunciation (Burns, 2006). Therefore, if a textbook is insufficient for students to provide all the necessary materials, a teacher qualified to teach pronunciation and deliver the information to the learners, particularly in the EFL context, is very helpful.
Many EFL departments use textbooks such as Roach (2005) and Gimson (1989) to teach pronunciation to EFL learners. Previously mentioned studies about textbook effectiveness (Derghal & Chaira, 2019; Derwing et al., 2012; Pradana, 2020) show that while the textbook can address some pronunciation problems of the students, more is required to meet the learners' needs. Also, a textbook is the primary teaching tool in most situations, especially when the target language is not the instructors' native language, as mentioned in the previous section by Bai and Yuan (2019), Wei (2006), and Dalton (2002).

**2.2.1.2. Teachers as a primary source**

Bai and Yuan (2019) assert that non-native English teachers and insufficient training influenced the teachers' beliefs and practices regarding their pronunciation teaching. The researchers in this study interview 16 volunteered non-native English teachers in Hong Kong who were asked to write their reflections on their perspectives and practices in their pronunciation teaching, followed by an individual interview where they were asked to share their teaching stories and experiences. The results show that those teachers needed more self-confidence in their classrooms and more professional training and knowledge in teaching pronunciation.

Wei (2006) asserts that most language instructors need more effective strategies for teaching pronunciation and are unsure of which techniques to apply when confronted with a particular difficulty. In addition, instructors feel humiliated because they lack effective teaching methods, also mentioning that "We are comfortable teaching reading, writing, listening, and, to some extent, general oral skills, but when it comes to pronunciation, we frequently lack the basic knowledge of articulatory phonetics which is not to offer our students anything more than basic advice such as, 'it sounds like this: uuuuh'" (Dalton, 2002).
According to Buss (2016), instructors prefer to emphasize teaching the pronunciation of word-level elements, notably individual sounds and depend extensively on activities requiring repetition and the phonetic alphabet in their teaching approaches. Many participants desired additional professional development in the field, and training courses that expose them to various teaching methods and technologies are likely to be welcomed. Additional instruction in suprasegmental, especially in rhythm and intonation, may also benefit them.

Nearly all postsecondary EFL curricula in the Middle East have classes designed to help students improve their pronunciation: English Phonology, English Phonetics, Phonetics and Phonology. Many Saudi universities' curricula include pronunciation as a separate course, which is not to say that pronunciation is irrelevant, but the reality is that curriculum designers have overlooked its significance (Wei, 2006). Some factors, such as lack of resources, number of available courses, and outside classroom practice, may prevent Saudi EFL students from using different techniques to acquire proper pronunciation. Al-Ahdal (2020) found that teachers were incredibly anxious about selecting the appropriate pronunciation materials. Language instructors are hesitant to embrace modern tools like computers, instructional software, and the internet in their classroom, so they prefer to teach pronunciation to their learners using conventional classroom procedures such as dictation, reading aloud, and dialogues (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010).

English teachers' perceptions of their pronunciation and use of teaching practices for pronunciation skills were examined by Altoeriqi (2020). The finding indicates that instructors recognize the need to teach pronunciation and integrate resources besides textbooks into their teaching approaches. In contrast, Alsofyani and Algethami (2017) examined EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching pronunciation at Taif University in the EFL Saudi context. The researchers
distributed a survey to 55 English language teachers asking about their teaching pronunciation practices, how they teach it, and what pronunciation training they have. The survey reveals that the teachers asserted the importance of teaching pronunciation and including traditional materials in their classes. Teachers were obliged to use conventional methods of teaching pronunciation due to a lack of easily accessible pronunciation materials and technology resources.

### 2.2.1.3. Laboratory and Learning Pronunciation

Mohammed's (2017) study determined the relationship between language laboratories (labs) and language performance in general. The research focused on two subject groups that reflect various contexts. All English components were tested using the test instruments to make meaningful conclusions. The results demonstrate the importance of employing efficient language labs in English instruction for teaching listening and acquiring superior speaking skills. The study suggests that language labs are crucial for the instruction of English in colleges and that there should be more speech labs in SA institutions. Students can hear speeches delivered by native English speakers in a lab setting, simulating the experience of living in an English-speaking country. Due to this result, students need help communicating and acquiring correct pronunciation.

Some studies focus on using labs generally but not on learning pronunciation. For instance, a study by Jamal (2020) aimed to investigate Saudi EFL students' perspectives on including a computer-assisted language laboratory in their English curriculum. It sought to demonstrate the advantages of creating a digital language lab and how it affected the English proficiency of the target students. The participants were female English department students from Wadi Addawasir College of Arts and Sciences for Girls. After participant interviews, the data revealed that a digital language laboratory gave students immediate feedback on their tests,
helped them practice independently to learn the language, and supervised the students as they completed their language assignments.

In contrast, Altoeriqi (2020) examined whether a lack of available labs affected how teachers taught pronunciation. This research was done at two public universities in SA: Qassim University's Department of English and Translation and Majmmah University's Zulfi College of Education. Results show that 67.1% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the lack of available labs affected how teachers taught pronunciation. Alsofyani and Algethami (2017) found similar results in two other public universities: Shaqra University and Taif University, as well as the same result was found in Pourhosein & Rahimy (2019).

Research in pronunciation learning strategies has emerged as a pivotal focus within the realm of second language acquisition (SLA) research. In their comprehensive overview and critical analysis, Pawlak and Szyszka (2018) explore various strategies employed in the pursuit of acquiring accurate pronunciation. The authors delve into the intricate nuances of pronunciation acquisition, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of this endeavor. They underscore the importance of a systematic approach, emphasizing explicit instruction, corrective feedback, and deliberate practice in refining learners' phonological competence. Additionally, Pawlak and Szyszka (2018) address the evolving landscape of technology-driven resources, investigating how computer-assisted tools and digital platforms can enhance pronunciation learning. Their study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of different strategies and underscores the significance of a learner-centered approach that considers individual variations and preferences. Within the framework of my study, I examine the function and influence of online resources on learning pronunciation in the following section.
2.2.2. Online Resources

Researchers, including Sasmita (2012), Amri and Gusrina (2013), and Erniwati et al. (2013), have discovered that using specific technologies to aid students in clear pronunciation is useful. This section will cover different online resources and how they contribute to learners’ mastery of pronunciation.

Nowadays, online resources are seen as technological and pedagogical tools for improving pronunciation instruction and learning. Instead of relying on printed materials, many pronunciation instructors turn to online tools instead of those more commonly seen in classrooms (Hismanoglu, 2010). Students should get L2-specific phonological feedback electronically rather than through paper handouts where instructors provide pronunciation materials in the language classroom. For pronunciation practice, the internet is a treasure trove of information (Hismanoglu, 2010).

The software’s ability for interactive learning has increased because of new technologies like real-time audio and video presentations (Brinton & La Belle, 1997, p. 54). Through email conversations, chatting, electronic journals, and professional organizations, the internet provides chances for professional growth through discussion with other professionals. Over the years, computer-assisted learning software has expanded dramatically and is helpful for teaching pronunciation. The software packages available on the market include classic minimal-pair listening discrimination exercises, interactive CD-ROMs that introduce the sound systems and prosodic characteristics of many languages, and other supervised and independent study tools (Lambacher, 2001).

Electronic visual feedback displays for pronunciation instruction are one electronic technological development that has drawn much interest. With tools for visualizing and
measuring intonation, length, and frequency range, visual feedback systems allow users to record their utterances and undertake an acoustic analysis of their speech (Anderson-Hsieh, 1992; Molholt, 1990). Many applications include a split display, which enables students to analyze and visually compare their pronunciation to that of a native speaker to assess their speech mistakes and improve objectively, according to Anderson-Hsieh, (1998). There is a wide range of technological tools based on literature that play an important role in EFL students’ pronunciation learning process; the following sections will explain each tool in a thorough manner.

2.2.2.1. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL)

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has become an effective tool for language learners. Abduh (2019) investigated how students' pronunciation skills were affected by their use of mobile phones. Forty-eight native Arabic speakers from Najran University in SA who were enrolled in the English Department participated in this study. The findings supported the considerable contribution of MALL technology in enhancing EFL learners' pronunciation. Second language (L2) learners may improve their proficiency using mobile learning tools and social media, including messaging services, multimedia communication, and information sharing (Akkara et al., 2020). Participants went through a training program that included daily listening assignments at home, demonstrating after native speakers while reading aloud in the lab, listening to their recordings for self-reflection and evaluation, and rerecording the conversation until they felt they had reached a satisfactory level.

Mobile technology for language learning has been extensively studied worldwide (Akkara et al., 2020). However, using smartphones for language learning and teaching is still in its infancy, and there needs to be more study on MALL. Abdul Ameer (2021) studied the impact of MALL as an instruction tool in improving learners' pronunciation for 60 college students at
Iraqi University in Iraq. He investigated the effectiveness of MALL devices as instructional tools and learning resources within and outside of the classroom to develop language skills, particularly word stress pronunciation. The participants were tested using a questionnaire as a pre and post-test of word stress during the pronunciation coursework. Statistical analysis demonstrates that the experimental group (students who used MALL to learn word stress pronunciation) performed better than the control group (the students who learned traditionally).

Aratusa et al. (2022) aimed to assess students' attitudes towards the utilization of MALL for improving pronunciation skills and to examine challenges encountered by students when employing MALL for pronunciation enhancement. The research data were gathered from a cohort of 15 students enrolled in the English Education program at Tadulako University. Data collection was conducted through the administration of questionnaires and student interviews. The questionnaire comprised statements with five response gradations, while the semi-structured interviews featured ten items. Upon thorough examination of the collected data, it was deduced that students generally possess a positive outlook on MALL as a tool for improving pronunciation abilities. The consensus among students is that MALL is efficacious and advantageous for refining their pronunciation. However, students articulated that a primary predicament they confront when using MALL pertains to the reliability of internet connectivity.

Many different subjects have significantly benefited from animation's use in the educational process during the last few decades. Concerning pronunciation, using a 3D talking head was adequate for non-native speakers (Segaran et al., 2014). This study focused on building 3D talking-head MALL software for pronunciation learning among non-native target language speakers. Multimedia components, especially animation, are included in the study and literature
review of the current system and application. They emphasized the importance of MALL and specifically 3D talking head for pronunciation word skills among non-native speakers.

On the other hand, the Herlambang et al. (2022) investigation utilized a case study research framework to examine teachers’ comprehension of the implementation of MALL in teaching pronunciation to college-level students. The study involved MALL-proficient instructors as participants. Data collection was comprised of open-ended interviews, and the subsequent analysis followed inductive phases. The findings underscored that instructors possess a sufficient and competent understanding of MALL’s integration into pronunciation instruction, enabling the adoption of accurate methodologies within the teaching-learning context. Furthermore, the outcomes highlighted both the advantageous attributes and drawbacks inherent in MALL’s integration for educational purposes. Additionally, the results emphasized the necessity for educators to establish a definitive parameter for learning media prior to initiating the MALL approach in pronunciation teaching. These findings are projected to enhance the efficacy of the pronunciation learning process, aiding both educators and learners in the proficient incorporation of MALL within the classroom setting to optimize learning outcomes.

In comparison to traditional teacher-led training in pronunciation, consequently the primary objective of Sufi and Shalmani (2018) was to investigate if the utilization of mobile applications for teaching second language (L2) pronunciation yields a statistically significant impact on the development of pronunciation skills among intermediate EFL learners in Iran. A group of 30 intermediate EFL learners was chosen using a selection process that relied on their performance on the Quantitative Proficiency Test (QPT). Both groups were administered a six-session treatment consisting of the use of TFlat as a mobile courseware and teacher-fronted instruction on pronunciation. The experimental group focused on units that covered short vowels,
long vowels, double vowel sounds, voiced consonants, and voiceless consonants, while the control group received instruction on the same units. The findings of the study revealed a significant enhancement in the students' pronunciation skills when utilizing the TFlat courseware, as compared to the control group's performance throughout the same study period. The results of this study can be explicitly applied by EFL instructors who have a keen interest in enhancing their students' proficiency in pronunciation.

To conclude, the MALL approach has been adopted by students to facilitate language acquisition. English language learners might use it to learn based on two modalities: auditory (which includes the use of podcasts and immersive audio interactions) and visual (including videos on YouTube and active participation in social networking). Learners have the ability to utilize various technological tools within each mindset to enhance their educational endeavors.

2.2.2.2. Podcasts and Pronunciation Learning

Podcasts are a MALL tool that allows learners to access practically unlimited material, especially in EFL situations, where exposure is often confined to the classroom environment (Fouz-González, 2019). Podcasts enable learners to find recordings by many male and female speakers with target features in different phonetic settings, all of which aid in their comprehension of the target language. Fouz-González’s study on podcast-based pronunciation training had been conducted on two groups of participants, which were divided into control and experimental groups. One group received training on the /s z/ contrast and the other on pronouncing English /b d g/ as intervocalic stops. According to the experiment results, participants' perception and production of the target sound improved due to using different podcast training.
Technology has proven to be a considerable assistance in EFL programs, and podcasts, particularly, have shown to be very beneficial for teachers and students. Podcasts have enhanced Saudi Arabian learners' listening, speaking, and pronunciation abilities (Al-Ahdal, 2020). Al-Ahdal's (2020) study aimed to determine whether the audio-visual MP3 or podcast selection that students carry on their cellphones may improve their pronunciation by combining it with creative, challenging, fun exercises. According to the study, Saudi EFL learners find podcasts helpful learning resources that should be used to their advantage. Campbell (2005) stated that podcasting has the potential to significantly contribute to language acquisition by facilitating communication. Podcasting is called “m-learning” by Tynan and Colbarn (2006) because it enables learners to interact with educational resources even when they are not physically present in a classroom.

Knight (2010) investigated the usefulness of podcasts as a phonetics resource, in which 26 and 30 students, respectively, participated in surveys. Student respondents indicated that they would use a computer at home to listen to podcasts rather than an MP3 device. Numerous students listen to podcasts with their families and friends as well. Students claimed that workout podcasts aided their learning significantly. Knight’s (2010) research found that podcasts are a powerful tool for improving phonetic accuracy. The use of podcasts in EFL programs has been investigated and stressed by Tryanti et al. (2018) because podcasts increase students' enthusiasm to study English.

According to Ducate and Lomicka's (2009) research, podcasts can help EFL learners' pronunciation and may help students improve their accent, comprehensibility, and attitudes regarding pronunciation. Lebron-Lozada (2012) undertook a case study on using student-produced podcasts. This study demonstrated that listening to such podcasts helped students
become more fluent speakers and better pronounce words, improving their general communication ability.

To determine the impact of podcasts on ESL students' language proficiency and attitude levels, Hasan and Hoon (2013) evaluated twenty academic papers. They discovered that podcasts significantly help L2 speakers with pronunciation and other language abilities. Mbah et al. (2014) analyze how Nigeria (Igbonland) students perceive using podcasts to teach English pronunciation. The study's findings showed that the participants thought podcasts helped them pronounce English more clearly. It was then determined that this technique was suitable for learning a second language. Lord (2008) describes a group podcasting endeavor for college students in a Spanish phonetics course. Students created and maintained their podcast channel in small groups, uploading recordings for group member comments. Each recording included tongue twisters, quick readings, and insightful reflection on the student's pronunciation to focus on specific components of Spanish pronunciation. In sum, participants were asked if participating in weekly podcast projects over a semester helped them pronounce foreign languages more clearly. Although some individuals had lower or comparable scores from the examiners after the semester, overall, there was an improvement in the ratings they obtained, showing an improvement in better pronunciation.

Almaqrn and Alshabeb (2017) studied 23 Saudi EFL students from the English department at Imam University. Five podcasts relating to the student's speaking and listening textbook were used for eight days, and a questionnaire was used to collect data. The researchers discovered the podcast's implications for students' perceptions, as the participants had positive attitudes toward specific podcasts related to their speaking and listening books. Al-Harbi (2019) also evaluated podcasts as a technological application and new strategies for enhancing Saudi
learners’ pronunciation. The researcher conducted the study by examining 23 English college students at Qassim University. The participants were tested by listening to five podcasts related to the textbook activities. This test was followed by a questionnaire about their attitudes toward the experiment. The study shows that the podcasts were well-liked and well-accepted by the participants, who found the program beneficial for learning new pronunciation and brushing up on skills they had already mastered. The result of Al-Harbi (2019) matches those studies mentioned earlier by Knight (2010) and Ducate and Lomicka (2009).

Another study by Kafes and Caner (2020) examined the perceptions of EFL freshmen concerning the influence of producing pronunciation podcasts on their pronunciation skills. The research was carried out with the engagement of 80 freshmen who were enrolled in a teacher education program focused on Teaching English as a Foreign Language at a Turkish state university. The data collection process encompassed semi-structured interviews, notes taken by the investigator, records of dashboard activities, analytics, performance tracking records from the Learning Management System (LMS), podcasts generated by the participants, and recordings of peer feedback posted on the discussion board. The findings indicate that the participants hold favorable perspectives on the creation of pronunciation podcasts. Furthermore, the podcasting approach liberated them considerably from the spatial and temporal constraints of the classroom, enabling them to engage in pronunciation practice and study according to their personal convenience.

2.2.2.3. Listening to Audios and Songs for Learning Pronunciation

Music is a trend among learners to learn pronunciation. Nurhayati and Nurhamdah (2019) examined the effectiveness of using Jazz Chants (Graham, 1978) as a technique to teach pronunciation. The researchers applied this technique to determine the significance of students’
abilities before and after using this method. The Jazz Chants in the textbook and the accompanying tapes were intended to help students better understand the rhythm and intonation patterns of American English spoken by native speakers. The results show that after adopting the Jazz Chants approach in treatment, the students' pronunciation improved from "extremely bad" to "good."

Using songs to teach pronunciation may be an alternate method for teachers to help their students learn English pronunciation more quickly. Septiyani et al. (2019) aimed to test the impact of eighth-grade students' pronunciation using English songs and the Joox Application, a music streaming service. The test's evaluation factors were pronunciations of vowels, diphthongs, consonants, intonation, word stress, and rhythm. Students were given a questionnaire to answer after experimental treatments. Most participants agreed that using the Joox Application and English songs benefitted their pronunciation learning.

Fermand and Pourghsrib (2013) held 15-minute sessions for eight weeks at an English institute to determine the effectiveness of English songs on intermediate-level learners' pronunciation. The participants were assigned to two groups and received the text of an favorite English song of the learners and the same vocabulary out of the exact text, and had to repeat it two to three times. The study showed that the students' English pronunciation had improved due to their learning English songs. Their motivation and enjoyment had increased, with increased confidence to speak English and pronounce it more accurately and clearly. Moreover, Arjomad and Yazdanimoghadam (2015) investigated whether listening to music affected learners' pronunciation of lower intermediate-level students in Iran. A six-level curriculum is completed with songs from the "American English File" book, which is advanced level and contains 75% of entirely new content that enthuses pupils with fresh concepts. Engaging films help students
improve their communication skills by using examples from everyday life as well as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation lessons. Additionally, a pronunciation app with interactive sound charts and activities was used as a test for students in the experimental group to help them pronounce English sounds and improve their awareness of intonation and rhythm. This research suggests that Iranian EFL students benefitted from a new, practical, and engaging technique for teaching pronunciation. Using music, teachers can observe their classes to correct mistakes before getting entrenched in memory.

Almalki and Algethami (2022) examined explicit pronunciation instruction through extensive listening to audiobooks (with or without orthography) to observe the pronunciation improvement of 90 Saudi learners of English. The study was conducted entirely at the English Language Center of Taif University, through video conference software using nine audiobooks. The study's spoken data was gathered using three sentences created explicitly. The researchers incorporated the most difficult English sounds for Saudi learners /p v tʃ ɹ ŋ e æ ʌ ɒ ɔ:/ (Ahmad, 2011; Altaha, 1995; Flege & Port, 1980), avoiding unknown words that might not suit the participants' level of proficiency. After extensive aural input, the result showed that learner’s improved language pronunciation significantly. In this study, the interviews with students revealed favorable opinions toward listening to audiobooks as an effective tool for enhancing pronunciation. A similar result was found by Saka (2015) who investigated the impact of audiobooks on EFL learners' pronunciation. He studied 65 Turkish learners at Uludarg University to discover that audiobooks did enhanced pronunciation.

MP3, also known as MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3, is a widely used data compression standard utilized for the encoding of digital audio, mostly music. There has been some evidence that using an audio MP3 which students may carry on their cellphones is creative and challenging. Al-
Ahdal (2020) has shown that engaging exercises have improved students' pronunciation abilities by examining two groups of third-year college student English majors at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. The results show that the experimental group improved pronunciation by 50% after three months of testing.

2.2.2.4. YouTube and Pronunciation Learning

Learners of languages can get realistic and contextualized spoken input by using different online tools to aid in pronunciation instruction. They can practice their pronunciation with the help of YouTube. Additionally, it provides a significant opportunity for language education to enhance pronunciation skills in both receptive and productive ways in language learners. There are several options on YouTube to learn how to pronounce different languages from native speakers. It contains many characteristics that aid learners of other languages in pronouncing words correctly. Understanding input, output, and feedback is possible. Students can view various videos produced by native English speaking content producers. Through video, they convey the correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation. There are several opportunities on YouTube to provide language learners with various types of inputs. The first benefit is that watching videos on any topic is quicker than waiting for class time.

Additionally, students can concurrently mimic a model's activities by watching the videos as often as they like, and independent learners can practice independently. Zitouni et al. (2021) examined the use of YouTube to improve the pronunciation skills of Saudi learners. The participants' perceptions of using YouTube were favorable. It is somewhat encouraging that Saudi English language learners (SELLs) and Saudi foreign language learners (SFLLs) used YouTube to make up for the actual classroom lectures by accessing, browsing, and subscribing to select YouTube channels. Their use of YouTube has significantly expanded because most of
them watch it for two hours a day to acquire language and learn pronunciation; the majority of learners like YouTube content with English or French captions (Zitouni et al., 2021).

Hamad et al. (2019) also examined the influence of YouTube to see whether improving speaking skills affected Saudi learners' pronunciation. The researchers tried to determine how utilizing YouTube and Audio Tracks Imitation (YATI) affected verbal proficiency as pedagogical tools to enhance the speaking abilities of EFL learners. YATI is used in speaking courses to teach the English language. Hamad et al. (2019) used the speaking test to examine 48 Saudi students during their listening and speaking courses. The outcomes show that using the YATI approach had a beneficial influence on the effectiveness of EFL learners' speaking abilities, fluency, and pronunciation. Their study found that YATI and YouTube video resources may significantly boost students' speaking abilities.

On the other hand, the objective of Aulia's (2020) study was to explain the employment of the tongue twister's method to refine English pronunciation skills, alongside the utilization of a dedicated YouTube channel to share these pronunciation endeavors. The research methodology encompassed the application of an observation sheet and a pronunciation task using students' uploaded tongue twister videos on the designated YouTube channel. The observation sheet was implemented to discern students' engagement in tongue twister practice over five sessions and identify any challenges they encountered during the process. Analyzing students' tongue twister videos on the YouTube channel furnished insights into the outcomes of their pronunciation practice efforts.

The findings illuminated that the tongue twisters corresponding to sounds /p/, /f/, /v/, /ð/, and /z/ posed considerable challenges due to the inherent influence of their native language, which frequently led to errors in articulating these specific sounds. Moreover, an analysis of the
scores derived from the students' YouTube channel videos revealed that the highest percentage of students fell within the score range of 60-69, indicating a need for further practice. Engaging in tongue twister practice and subsequently sharing these practice sessions via the YouTube channel contribute to a holistic learning experience for students. These findings underscore the necessity for intensive and comprehensive practice to enhance English pronunciation. Consequently, it is recommended that educators design comprehensive lesson plans and strategies to ensure uniform opportunities for every student to engage in focused practice.

Another study by Rachmawati and Cahyani (2020) focused on learning pronunciation using YouTube as a source of media. The researchers used pre-and post-tests and observations in this study to gather data. The findings show that the utilization of YouTube videos as learning resources was seen to be highly successful and efficient. The researchers conclude that YouTube might be utilized as a learning tool for some challenging courses. YouTube videos help practice pronunciation since they provide sound-accompanied recordings or moving visuals.

As many EFL learners had few opportunities to interact with native English speakers or practice their language outside the classroom, and they struggle with listening comprehension, vocabulary development, and oral fluency. According to research by Al-Jarf (2022), watching YouTube videos boosted EFL students' pronunciation. The researcher looked into different criteria for integrating YouTube into learners' pronunciation learning since it is free and easy to access. She recommends proposing different techniques for using it in the classroom and presenting some content videos in her study. Also, due to inadequate exposure to the target language as native speakers speak it and inadequate exposure to a diversity of English accents, students may have pronunciation issues and deficits. Her study suggests that YouTube should be
used in self-regulated pronunciation instruction in an engaging, motivating, constructive, individual, collaborative, conversational, contextual, and active way.

Rachmawati and Cahyani's (2020) research aimed to see whether students with low English pronunciation abilities were affected by their usage of YouTube videos as media. The findings show that students used direct pronunciation learning techniques by mimicking, rehearsing, and repeating aloud the words uttered by YouTubers on their channels. The researchers conclude that YouTube positively influenced the learner's pronunciation progress. Another study by Rahayu and Putri (2018) asked students to upload a YouTube video as a part of their class speaking assignment. Then, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire expressing their attitudes. The result showed that students had good experiences and were motivated to learn pronunciation because most had practiced and rehearsed before uploading the video on YouTube.

According to research by Zitouni et al. (2021) at two public institutions, Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University and King Saud University, since Saudi students lack direct contact with native speakers of other languages, they must learn and practice English independently. They make up for their lack of practice by accessing websites and using different online tools, which they find a simple and entertaining approach to boost their language learning. They also make up for the absence of direct engagement with native speakers by viewing and listening to speeches, videos, and lectures on YouTube given by native speakers. Using web resources that appeal to learners substantially pushes them to learn the language (Zitouni et al., 2021). Researchers conducted their study to investigate how using YouTube helped improve the pronunciation of 233 Saudi English language learners and Saudi French language learners in the translation department of Princess Norah University. The results revealed that both groups had
positive attitudes toward using YouTube to improve their pronunciation skills in both English and French. The researchers recommend that YouTube could be more beneficial to students by encouraging them to share and create groups to post exciting videos on the site. The results of Zitouni et al. (2021) also matched these results and showed the importance of YouTube in enhancing learners’ pronunciation (Rachmawati & Cahyani, 2020; Rahayu & Putri, 2018).

2.2.2.5. Social Networking and Learning Pronunciation

Many social media applications have been used as a medium of instruction to learn English pronunciation. TikTok is one of them, which is the most popular social networking application in China and worldwide, alongside WeChat, Instagram, Telegram, and Snapchat (Pratiwi et al., 2021). Pratiwi et al.’s study aimed to learn how students could use a mobile application to improve their pronunciation, with TikTok as the choice of University English students at Suryakancana and to determine the effectiveness of social media for the acquisition of English, particularly the learning of pronunciation. According to Pratiwi et al.'s (2021) results, numerous social media platforms were helpful teaching and learning tools, particularly when combined with mobile devices.

Dewi and Arifani’s (2021) research investigates the utilization of LINE video calls as a tool for teaching pronunciation through TikTok videos, focusing on both teacher and student perspectives. This qualitative study involves an online interview conducted with a teacher and three students in Thailand. The findings revealed that both the teacher and students held a favorable view regarding using LINE video calls for teaching pronunciation with TikTok. The advantages identified include enhanced vocabulary acquisition among students, increased self-confidence in English word pronunciation, and heightened engagement in classes due to the interactive nature of the application. However, the teacher encountered challenges regarding time
constraints in creating materials and maintaining student focus during the learning process. Additionally, students needed help with internet connectivity and a high workload of assignments during online learning. Despite these challenges, students exhibited enthusiasm for utilizing TikTok and LINE video calls to aid in their English language learning, particularly in the context of pronunciation improvement.

The use of the social media network Telegram in teaching Iranian EFL learners the pronunciation of English was explored by Xodabande (2017). Telegram is a cloud-based instant messaging service available on mobile for free. Participants were divided into experimental and control groups and received different tasks for four weeks. The researcher created two broadcasting channels on Telegram, and participants were asked to listen to 20 words that were hard to pronounce and to record their voices for pronunciation analysis. The participants' pronunciation in the experimental group compared to the control group improved significantly due to their practice and availability on Telegram. The effect of Telegram on the acquisition of word stress for Iranian EFL learners was also examined by Khodarahmi and Heidari-Shahreza (2018). The study revealed a positive attitude toward using Telegram to learn word stress and pronunciation and inspired the teachers to use mobile applications in their classrooms.

2.2.2.6. Dictionary and Pronunciation Learning

An instance of modern technology with the potential to aid foreign language learning is the online dictionary, which has become increasingly accessible due to the prevalence of internet connectivity in the digital age. An Online dictionary is a mobile application that assists learners' pronunciation. U-Dictionary is a program that may be used both online and offline. Juwita et al. (2020) presented the students' perceptions of utilizing U-Dictionary to assist them in learning how to pronounce words. The authors conducted observations on English study program students
in their fourth semester. To get accurate results, 30 students participated as interviewees. The results revealed that most students believed studying pronunciation was vital for the English study program students. They believed that the "perfect English pronunciation function" in U-Dictionary helped overcome challenges in learning pronunciation pleasantly. When helping students with their pronunciation, this dictionary was more successful than textbook-based phonetics courses.

Aprilia and Ahmad's (2020) study explored how a university student can use the U-Dictionary application to acquire pronunciation elements and intelligibility principles to practice speaking intelligibly. The study's research questions included using the U-Dictionary application to help students learn pronunciation rules. The participants were fourth-semester university students in Karawang, and the information was gathered through an interview. The results demonstrated that the application could help students learn pronunciation components, particularly for suprasegmental aspects in intonation and segmental features like vowels and consonants.

The Ambarwati and Mandasari (2020) research delved into the impact of the online Cambridge dictionary on the vocabulary and pronunciation of students at Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia (UTI). The research pool encompassed 25 students enrolled in the English Education program, specifically those undertaking the Academic Writing subject. The participants completed a questionnaire and were interviewed about using the online Cambridge dictionary as an alternative technological resource for enhancing vocabulary and pronunciation skills. The outcomes of this study reveal that the online Cambridge dictionary influences pronunciation mastery and vocabulary enrichment among students. Consequently, the online Cambridge
A dictionary could serve as a viable alternative to address the challenges of pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition.

Ezza and Saadeh (2011) highlight the importance of an EFL learners’ dictionary as a fundamental resource for the first EFL course in English pronunciation at Majmmah University. Instead of learning speech and phonetics, they conclude that a range of activities might be offered using dictionary-based instruction as the basis of classroom activities in these early courses (from the pronunciation of alphabet letters to the phonetic transcription of whole paragraphs). However, they make the simple case that this role should be postponed until students have mastered the fundamentals of English pronunciation through intensive phonetic transcription practice. As they state numerous times, "the first course in English pronunciation" refers to the dictionary-based instruction at this stage.

### 2.2.2.7. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Several studies showed the effectiveness of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in teaching pronunciation. With CALL-based pronunciation applications, the second language teacher may teach pronunciation skills in less time (Masatake et al., 2004). CALL enables students to receive critical feedback quickly (Eskenazi, 1999). CALL may relieve some of the anxiety that develops with pronunciation (Culhane & Ito, 2003). For ESL students, particularly those just beginning to learn proper pronunciation, CALL may be an effective method for teaching pronunciation and has a future in the ESL class (Harper, 2004).

Rahnavard and Mashhadi (2017) investigated the effect of CALL and web-based instruction on improving EFL learners' pronunciation. The study participants were divided into experimental and control groups. The participants in the experimental group received CALL web-based instruction, while the control group received a traditional education. The
experimental group showed great motivation and enhancement in their pronunciation, as CALL was an effective tool for learning English. Neri et al. (2002) and Pennington (1999) found that numerous advantages came with computer-aided pronunciation training (CAPT) for ESL/EFL students, which provided stress-free learning environments and unlimited instructional resources, personalized practice opportunities, and immediate feedback.

Another study by Hismanoglu (2010) in North Cyprus showed evidence that young aspiring foreign language instructors increasingly used web-based pronunciation instruction aids to liven up their classroom lectures. The results show that teaching pronunciation in a second language was greatly simplified by using online resources, such as discussion groups and other online resources (such as pronunciation lessons, sound, and video animations). Kim (2012) conducted a case study on two male Korean graduate students at U.S. universities seeking to be teaching assistants. The researcher interviewed the participants after two months of direct observation. After utilizing the Technology Enhanced Accent Modification (TEAM) program, a computer software, these students improved their pronunciation and spoken English competence in native-like quality and fluency. TEAM also enhanced their self-awareness and self-monitoring of pronunciation.

Another qualitative study was done to examined EFL teachers who used Pronunciation Power Software (PPS) in an English pronunciation instruction class. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2014) used semi-structured interviews with four volunteer instructors from an open university in Lahijan, Iran. This study showed that PPS had transformed Iranian teachers' responsibilities from information presenters to information facilitators, and they could teach pronunciation more effectively. Al-Qudah (2012) studied the improvement of English pronunciation using CALL program and its effectiveness on Jordanian students. This investigation examined the efficacy of
computer-assisted strategies for instructing Jordanian university students in English pronunciation. The subjects were divided into two groups: an experimental group that received training in English pronunciation using computer-assisted programs and a control group trained using printed materials. The study's findings suggest that students who received instruction using computer-assisted programs did significantly better on the post-test than those who received instruction using printed materials.

Nasim et al. (2022) examined Saudi students using CALL as an effective tool to learn pronunciation. In this study, EFL students at Al-Ghad College in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, were given pronunciation lessons using digital technology. Additionally, the study compared the results of teaching pronunciation through digital technology versus traditional methods. The pre-test results show no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. However, the post-test results showed a significant difference, indicating the superiority of digital technology tools over traditional methods in teaching pronunciation.

The results of Nasim et al. (2022) supported previous studies by Pennington (1999), Neri et al. (2008), and Celce-Murcia et al. (2011), which found that learners are more engaged and motivated when using digital technology for language learning. These studies have implications for students, teachers, researchers, and curriculum planners. Nasim et al. (2022) asserts that by incorporating digital tools, pronunciation can become more engaging, interesting, and enjoyable for students. Teachers can shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach, allowing for more student autonomy. They believe that curriculum planners must incorporate digital technology into syllabus design, and researchers should investigate the connection between psychological constructs and technological tools in different contexts.
Another study on CALL effectiveness of Saudi learners at King Saud University was conducted by AbuSeileek (2007) using *The Mouton Interactive Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* software to help teach stress. The study found that when students were exposed to activities with authentic language contexts, such as actual words, phrases, or sentences, students had slightly more significant results on the pronunciation post-test than activities that focused on single fake words or fictional English word sequences. This result supports the approach of using meaningful communication in teaching English pronunciation. Additionally, the study showed that students held a positive attitude toward computer-based pronunciation instruction and activities. These findings align with previous research, such as Bott (2005) and Sullivan and Czigler (2002). Participants found computer-based pronunciation programs easy to use, enjoyable, and informative. These findings highlight the potential benefits of computer-based pronunciation instruction in language learning.

Samad and Aminullah (2019) investigated students' perception of applying English Language Speech Assistant speaking software (ELSA) in their pronunciation class. Based on the results, the students believed the ELSA speak to be an excellent tool for practicing pronunciation. They believed that this program's content, assessment/flexibility, multimedia, and automatic speech recognition design were good. Additionally, teachers found that it had a solid pedagogical design.

These previous studies comprehensively outline the current pronunciation resources and their effectiveness on EFL learners and Saudi instructors in various Saudi Arabian universities and institutions. In my investigation, I have not only reviewed these existing studies but also introduced different types of pronunciation resources to the discourse. I was eager to discover what Saudi learners perceive that may lack or require in this regard and to compare these
perceptions with prior research findings. My primary focus is on two prominent Saudi public universities, where I will assess the availability and diversity of in-person and online resources to enhance English pronunciation skills and gauge students' perspectives on these resources. The following section will delve into the analysis of the significance of perception in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and investigate whether learners' viewpoints have a discernible impact on their learning outcomes.

2.3. Importance of Perception in SLA

Perception plays a crucial role in second language acquisition, as it enables learners to identify and distinguish different sounds, which is essential for successful pronunciation and speaking skills. According to a study by Doughty and Pica (1986), perception affects second language acquisition, as learners must be able to perceive and distinguish different sounds in the target language before producing them. Another study by Richards (1974) shows that perception is not just crucial in the early stages of second language acquisition but is a continual process throughout the learning experience. Tran (2021) found that second language learners who have developed their perception skills are better equipped to identify and understand different sounds in the target language. When asked which component influenced their language proficiency, 31% of learners said the learning materials, while 28% said it was their own effort. According to the students, the effect of the professors was minimal, accounting for only 16% of their decisions. Language learners who selected the "Other" option as another factor in language learning development noted an attachment to their family and friends, as shown in Figure 1 (Tran, 2021).
Moreover, a study by Silva (1993) highlights the importance of perception in second language acquisition by showing how it could help learners develop their speaking skills. The study found that learners who could perceive and identify different sounds in the target language were more likely to produce them correctly, which in turn could improve their speaking skills.

Perception in L2 acquisition is considered a critical factor in the success of L2 learning. It refers to the ability of the learner to detect and distinguish speech sounds in the target language. According to several researchers (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; Flege, 1995), perception is a necessary component of L2 pronunciation proficiency, as accurate perception leads to accurate production. Studies have shown that perception is one of the primary determinants of L2 pronunciation accuracy (Best & Tyler, 2007; Flege, 1995). For example, Flege (1995) found that
L2 learners with good perception skills could produce L2 speech sounds more accurately than those with poor perception skills. Moreover, Best and Tyler (2007) found that perception skills were a better predictor of L2 pronunciation accuracy than language-specific knowledge, age, or length of exposure to the target language.

Gass and Varonis (1984) indicate that perception in L2 learning can also influence language motivation and engagement. When L2 learners can perceive the target language accurately, they are more likely to feel confident in their ability to produce L2 speech sounds correctly and thus become more motivated to continue learning the language. This increased motivation and engagement, can lead to better L2 proficiency overall. Perception is one component of L2 pronunciation proficiency, as it helps learners accurately perceive and produce speech sounds in the target language. Furthermore, good perception skills can increase motivation and engagement in L2 learning, leading to better L2 proficiency. In conclusion, perception is a crucial aspect of second language acquisition that enables learners to identify and distinguish different sounds in the target language, essential for successful pronunciation and speaking skills.

2.4. Learners’ Perceptions Toward Using Pronunciation Resources

Numerous studies have investigated the requirements and motivations of foreign language students across diverse educational contexts, aiming to inform the revision of course material and the development of effective teaching methodologies (Alalou, 2001). Guntermann et al. (1996) conducted a study revealing that most French and Spanish students perceived language study as significant for their educational pursuits. Additionally, the study indicated that French students exhibited more enthusiasm towards cultural aspects while displaying relatively fewer practical motivations. It was seen that students, in general, exhibited an interest in engaging in
conversations. However, it was found that students enrolled in language requirement courses showed a higher preference for choosing Spanish over French. The topic of professional motivation drew attention from students studying both the French and Spanish languages. Christison and Krahnke (1986) examined university students' perceptions of the factors contributing to their language ability. The findings indicate that the students believed that natural interaction and fundamental tasks with native speakers are the primary contributors to their language development. However, there was a contradiction between the student's beliefs about the value of interaction and their reluctance to engage in it. The study suggests that receptive listening and reading skills had greater importance for academic success than the productive skills of speaking and writing. Furthermore, the study's results support the importance of comprehensibility in language teaching, with teachers who provided a rich language experience perceived as more effective by the students. These findings highlight the challenge for language teachers to overcome student reluctance to engage in interactive activities, realistic balance evaluations of academic linguistic needs with survival tactics and prioritize comprehensibility in language teaching. The results of the studies mentioned earlier represent a significant challenge to traditional function in determining course content. As stated previously, although students' perceptions of their learning objectives are essential and should be considered when designing language programs, they do not provide concrete curricular objectives (Alalou, 2001).

Learners' perceived and actual needs refer to the motivations and reasons individuals pursue language learning, which are different concepts of second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2001). Perceived needs refer to why language learners believe they need to learn a second language. For example, a learner might perceive the need to learn a language for travel, job advancement, or to communicate with friends and family. However, these needs are often
subjective and personal to the individual (Dörnyei, 2001). Actual needs refer to the practical, objective reasons why an individual should learn a second language. These reasons can include the necessity for intercultural communication in a globalized world, the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, and the improved job prospects of being bilingual. Actual needs are often driven by the social and economic realities of the language learner's environment (Gardner, 1985).

The possibility of a discrepancy between perceived and actual needs must be taken into consideration (Dörnyei, 2001). A learner may recognize the practical benefits of learning a second language but may not fully understand their needs. In these cases, educators and language teachers may help learners understand their actual needs to increase motivation and engagement in language learning (Dörnyei, 2001).

2.4.1. Perceptions of Using Online Resources

Technological advancements in the current educational environment have a wide range of impacts on several aspects of education. Learning results may be improved if technology is effectively incorporated into the teaching and learning processes (Cope & Ward, 2002). The way students approach learning and teaching has also been unintentionally influencing the quality of learning and teaching results (Trigwell et al., 1999). Also, the impact of a teacher's perspective of technology on students' perceptions or approaches to learning may be circular by considering students' learning results and their views or approaches, as shown in Figure 2 which is adopted from (Köksal and Yaman, 2012).
Based on Köksal & Yaman (2012), prospective teachers who possess a "competent" level of computer proficiency exhibit more favorable opinions towards the integration of technology in education, in comparison to their counterparts who possess a "novice" level of computer competency. As shown in the figure, teachers tend to integrate technology in their classes, increasing learning outcomes.

Dewi and Ahmad (2021) used a narrative inquiry approach to gather data, which required observation and interviews at one of the Islamic high schools in Karawang, with the participation of three students in various cognitive categories. All students agree that listening to podcasts was the best and most engaging way to learn how to pronounce words. Even if students are usually the most significant consumers of smartphones and the internet, using
podcasts for English pronunciation was appropriate for students who wished to be competent in that area. Podcasts were advised since they provided engaging information without making students feel bored while learning.

Miqawati (2020) conducted action research to test pronunciation learning, participation, and attitude of 30 students enrolling in pronunciation classes in an English study program. They were asked to use the Tflat English pronunciation mobile courseware which is suggested for use in pronunciation instruction since it has characteristics that can help students learn how to pronounce English words and recognize English phonetic symbols and, with the teacher's assistance, to check their accuracy in articulating sound pronunciation. The application was chosen because it includes various activities covering language skills and detailed instructions on pronouncing each vowel, diphthong, and consonant. Furthermore, once the application was downloaded, it could be accessed anytime and anywhere without an internet connection. At first, Tflat demonstrated the students' proper pronunciation of vowels and consonants. Next, they practiced how to pronounce the words. During this step, the teacher checked each student's pronunciation accuracy and assisted them in overcoming their difficulties in learning. The students checked their pronunciation to ensure that they were on the right track. Then they recorded their voices and assessed the accuracy of the pronunciations in the application. The finding showed that Tflat enhanced students' positive attitudes in learning pronunciation and increased their involvement in classroom activities. It also presented the power of using MALL to encourage students to engage and monitor their learning process.

Purnamasari's (2018) research was part of a more extensive study on EFL learners' perception of using YouTube to improve English pronunciation in a blended learning environment. It featured 26 first-year students majoring in Management at a private institution in
Jakarta, Indonesia, and used the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach with a questionnaire and interviews. The findings demonstrate that the participants were quite familiar with YouTube and had no issue using it. Most participants thought YouTube was engaging and entertaining; they thought that learning with YouTube was beneficial because it presented the material in letters, sounds, and pictures together at once, and they considered YouTube exciting and inspiring, which helped with pronunciation.

Alhaisoni's (2016) study aimed to investigate the perception of Saudi EFL preparatory year students and their teachers on dictionary use. The results show that students predominantly used bilingual dictionaries and online sources, such as online dictionaries and Google Translate, rather than print versions, which highlights the importance of teachers becoming familiar with these new technologies and training their students in their use. The study also reveals that word meaning was the most sought-after lexical information, with little attention paid to other information, such as pronunciation and collocations. This underutilization of additional information in dictionaries was unfortunate, said Alhaisoni (2016), as it could have been beneficial for students to improve their writing and speaking skills. The study emphasizes the need for students to use clear and grammatically correct words as they progress in their language proficiency.

Moreover, Bin Dahmash's (2020) study examined the perception of second language learners in Saudi Arabia towards using Google Translate as a language learning tool. The research was conducted with 12 participants over six weeks through focus groups and individual interviews. The results show that Google Translate provides five different English writing modes, offers the opportunity for in-class and everyday use, and serves as a valuable language learning resource. The participants reported personal experiences, including its introduction to
their daily lives and the benefits they noticed while using it. The study suggests that language teachers should encourage using Google Translate as a mini dictionary and promote its use to improve spelling and pronunciation. Based on the findings, language learners were advised to utilize all five writing modes offered by Google Translate to enhance their speaking skills by using it as a resource for accurate spelling and pronunciation. Therefore, as students, utilizing technology was an essential part of their learning support. For an English teacher, becoming a facilitator in the classroom means having a solid understanding of their student's needs, attitudes, and interests to create a welcoming environment for learning.

In the following section, we focus on a critical aspect of language education within Saudi public institutions: the availability and utilization of pronunciation resources. This section will explore the current state of pronunciation resources in Saudi public institutions, shedding light on the resources available, their accessibility, and their impact on English language learners. By delving into this subject, we aim to gain valuable insights into the role of pronunciation resources in Saudi education and their potential implications for language pedagogy.

### 2.5. Pronunciation Resources in Saudi Public Institutions

As a Saudi citizen who studied at public schools until earning a bachelor's degree, I found that the Ministry of Education planned and provided English books and curricula in public institutions. Private schools offer their curricula to enhance the Ministry's curriculum, but this benefit is not available at all private schools. For example, Prince Mohammad University, as one of the unique private institutions in the Eastern Province, is the only university that teaches every level of English following a North American English curriculum.

Recently, the English language curriculum in public and private schools has evolved significantly because of the Ministry of Education's increased attention. Developing English
language curricula is a nationwide effort aimed at developing all parts of the curriculum and using the most up-to-date theories and practices, implying that the Ministry of Education at the time collaborated with centers of expertise and educational institutions (Saudi Press Agency, 2018).

Based on different public universities' websites and after a long online search, I concluded that in public universities in Saudi Arabia, there are various speaking resources available to help students improve their speaking skills in English. Some universities have well-equipped language labs that offer students access to technology-based speaking exercises, speaking training software, and multimedia resources for speaking practice. Also, some universities offer students the opportunity to work with English speakers trained in speaking instruction. These tutors provide students with one-on-one speaking instruction, feedback, and speaking practice opportunities. Online speaking resources also help students. Various online speaking resources are available to SA students, including online speaking courses, speaking quizzes, and interactive speaking activities. Textbooks and study materials are primarily offered in many universities and colleges, with CDs and videos available for students to purchase or access through the university library.

These resources provide students with information, speaking exercises, and speaking practice opportunities. Many universities also offer group speaking activities and public speaking events, such as debates, presentations, and speeches, which allow students to practice speaking in front of an audience and receive feedback from their peers and instructors. Public universities in SA provide a wide range of speaking resources to help students improve their speaking skills in English; however, no resources on their web pages, course syllabuses or curriculum focus mainly on pronunciation. The next section will explain two of the most highly ranked public institutions
examined in the current study, focusing on their English curricula and whether they provide specific pronunciation courses and learning resources. The public universities I am focusing on in my research are King Abdulaziz University and Al-Qassim University.

2.5.1. King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU)

One of the most prestigious public universities in Saudi Arabia is King Abdulaziz University (KAU), located in Jeddah. KAU has gained an excellent reputation due to its successful experience and investment in the educational systems in higher education. It has progressed in adding many programs, giving it the advantage of being recognized as one of the top universities in SA. The English program at KAU is housed under the Arts and Humanities College and European Languages and its literature departments. Based on its website (KAU, 2022), the department's vision is to achieve academic and research leadership in linguistics, literature, and translation studies. The Linguistics track consists of the third-year study of morphology, phonetics and phonology, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. The phonetics and phonology course teaches students the importance of learning phonological features for the English language's fundamental phonemic unit—the connection between phonology and phonetics. Based on the course description on the program website, students will understand the phonological properties of the basic phonemic unit of English and non-written linguistic features such as tone, regional accent, and variances. In their last year, students must take English as a Second Language, Bilingualism, History of the English Language, Research Methods, and Discourse Analysis in the seventh semester. The program website does not show any pronunciation resources available for students to use as a learning tool to improve their English pronunciation. Most of the faculty in the department are Saudi nationals, and only two faculty only participated in my study.
2.5.2. Al-Qassim University (QU)

Al-Qassim University is another large public university in SA. The program of English consists of eight semesters, with the first year as preparatory. Students take phonetics courses in the first semester of their third year. Students take phonetics and phonology as required courses, similar to many universities in SA. No specific course teaches English pronunciation to the students. The program website does not show pronunciation resources available for students to use as a learning tool to improve their English pronunciation.

Collecting research data from both institutions and ensuring its reliability produces credible and valid research outcomes. Accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the data are ensured through the use of stringent data collection methods, stringent quality checks, and exhaustive verification processes. This thorough approach strengthens the foundation upon which research findings are built and enhances the overall robustness of the study's conclusions and insights. In the next section, I will explain in detail how to ensure data reliability and trustworthiness.

2.6. Reliability of Data

The reliability of the data is crucial for doing thorough and credible research. I look at the critical assessment of data dependability in relation to my work in this part. Ensuring the accuracy and consistency of our data is crucial for drawing trustworthy conclusions and deducing relevant information. To provide readers with transparency and assurance regarding the dissertation's results, I will go into the methods and procedures employed to enhance and validate the reliability of the data gathered here.

Researchers can persuade their readers that their findings are valid if they establish their credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although there are no definitive criteria for determining
whether qualitative research data is enough for hypotheses, there is a commonly accepted criterion for evaluating research: the reliability of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The procedures for meeting the trustworthiness criteria are familiar to many since they rely on methodological arguments and approaches (Green, 2000). Lincoln and Guba's original, widely established, and easily recognizable criteria were used to establish credibility in my research, even though others have lately proposed more expansive and adaptable markers of quality in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). The concepts of trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of data all contribute to the study's perceived reliability. The subsequent paragraphs will provide a detailed explanation of each element and how it relates to my analysis.

Credibility in qualitative research shows how the research results relate to the real world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research techniques increase the credibility of the research findings even though reality or the truth can never be adequately represented. One of these techniques is triangulation, which refers to using two or more data collection methods in research to ensure its validity (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Stake, 2010). Triangulation, a strategy that involves comparing and integrating findings derived from two distinct data collection techniques, helps strengthen the credibility of the gathered data. This technique has been applied to my research by using two methods of data collection: two questionnaires and an interview. Fifty-four participants completed two online questionnaires, and six were interviewed about their perception of using EFL resources to improve their pronunciation. The questionnaires were sent online through Google Forms, and the interview was conducted through Zoom with audio recording. Data from both instruments were transcribed and coded to identify and generate themes.
Transferability describes how far the investigation can be applied. Only case-to-case transfer is involved in qualitative research (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Although the researcher is responsible for providing thorough descriptions so that individuals wishing to transfer the findings to their site can assess transferability, the researcher needs to know the sites that may choose to do so (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability can be improved by describing the study’s unique participants, situations, locations, context, and particular settings. The reader can decide whether it can be used in other cases (Braun & Clarke, 2013). My study's transferability was reinforced by thorough data collection documentation; and an analysis methodology outline will be described in the next chapter.

Dependability can be attained if the research method is rational, verifiable, and well-documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Readers are better equipped to evaluate the dependability of research when they are given a chance to look inside the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Auditing a research study's procedure is one approach to show it is dependable (Koch, 1994). This study's dependability was enhanced by outlining the steps of gathering data and making conclusions. The entire research process was recorded and explained in detail; this included everything from developing codes and categories to selecting analytic interpretations, which will be described further below.

The last step is to enforce data confirmability. Establishing confirmability aims to provide evidence that the researcher's interpretations and findings are reasonable in light of the available data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). One way of confirmability is following a protocol to conduct the interview and documenting the data collection and analysis step by step. Credibility, transferability, and dependability are the three pillars of confirmability, as Guba and Lincoln (1989) outlined.
In the following section, I explored how the insights obtained from my data contribute to the larger discourse within our field, shedding light on the practical and theoretical significance of our findings.

2.7. Significance of the Study

In light of the existing lack of scholarly literature that explains the difficulties associated with pronunciation challenges and the concurrent utilization of instructional materials to address these challenges, the present research endeavors to determine the specific educational resources that Saudi students deem efficacious in enhancing their proficiency in English pronunciation. The study inquiry will undertake an investigation into the perspectives of Saudi female college students regarding the difficulties encountered in pronunciation, determine the particular aspects that pose the most significant challenges, demonstrate the pedagogical tools they employ to facilitate these difficulties, and evaluate the extent which these resources to address their specific needs vis-à-vis pronunciation enhancement.

This inquiry seeks to identify the most challenging facets of pronunciation acquisition, a task undertaken from two distinct perspectives: the students themselves and their educators. Through this dual perspective, the research explores the educational tools accessible to Saudi learners within two academic institutions, and examining how they are integrated into their learning methodologies. Furthermore, the study explores the instructional aids employed by educators, the prevailing provisions accessible to students, the perceived gaps in these provisions, and the exigencies identified by students for effective pronunciation improvement.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to validate the aforementioned contrasting viewpoints on the challenges that students encounter in pronunciation and analyze
them concerning the educational resources offered by the two schools. Therefore, my research addresses the following questions:

2.8. Research Questions

The research questions that this study investigates are:

1. How do Saudi female students perceive their pronunciation abilities in their third and fourth years of university study?
   a. What challenges do they identify in learning pronunciation?

2. How do Saudi EFL teachers perceive students’ English pronunciation in their third and fourth years of university study?
   a. What challenges do they identify for their students’ learning of pronunciation?

3. What resources to teach pronunciation are available to Saudi students at Saudi universities?
   a. Are students in Saudi Arabia aware of these resources?
   b. If they are, how do they make use of them?
   c. Why or why not do they use them?

4. Which resources are available to ESL instructors at Saudi universities?
   a. Which of these would they suggest to their students?
   b. Are instructors willing to seek training to utilize them if they are unaware?

2.9. Summary

The primary objective of this chapter was to provide the relevant literature on available English learning resources and their inclusion in EFL classes. Among the resources utilized by EFL learners, two types were found to be predominantly used: online resources and in-person resources. In-person resources appeared to be more accessible and readily utilized within the
classroom setting. However, within the realm of online resources, the chapter explored several studies that showcased the effectiveness of these resources in enhancing learners' pronunciation skills. These online resources fall under the categories of computer-assisted language learning and mobile-assisted language learning, with a particular focus on the latter in the literature review.

Towards the end of the chapter, emphasis was placed on the significance of perception within the field of SLA, highlighting it as a critical factor contributing to the success of L2 learning. The chapter underscored the importance of distinguishing between actual needs and perceived needs when utilizing various learning resources. Furthermore, it discussed the available resources provided by two public institutions and their contribution to students' language learning endeavors. In conclusion, I discussed the measures taken to verify the accuracy of the gathered data and their interpretation in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology used to determine the perceived pronunciation difficulties of Saudi college students in public institutions and the available resources they believe that they need to address their difficulties in pronunciation. Following data collection, a qualitative analytical approach was employed to examine the data in this study.

This study follows the thematic analysis method. The preliminary steps include eliminating sources of bias and forming first impressions of the information in order to find recurring ideas by searching the resources without imposing a rigid structure on the data and highlighting recurring trends among the results. Subsequently, I will examine relevant previous studies on the methodology and analysis.

3.1. Previous Studies Relating to Thematic Analysis

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research collects and analyzes human subjects' perceptions, experiences, and views in their natural settings. It emphasizes the participants' perspectives, which are used to decode their encounters and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research designs are an efficient method for investigating different perspectives and meanings in a natural environment and within the context of the study participants (Yin, 2011). Qualitative techniques also acknowledge the importance of several information sources over a single one (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another benefit of qualitative research is the emergence of several perspectives and opinions. Miles et al. (2014) explain that qualitative research enables the development of codes, comparison of similar and dissimilar
categories, identification of themes, formulation of relationships, and construction of theory. Researchers explore a wide range of interpretations of their questions and the responses they receive from participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative method may describe interview findings in greater depth by including data from various resources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2011). The comprehensive narrative allows for the integration of many points of view and ties these points of view to the theoretical framework and research topics (Yin, 2011). Taylor & Gibbs (2010) confirmed that qualitative data analysis (QDA) is a comprehensive procedure for establishing theoretical knowledge about individuals, circumstances, and phenomena.

Semi-structured interviews have been used for decades in qualitative research on education. Bernard et al. (2016) conclude that they are valid and trustworthy measures to elicit participant opinions besides the questionnaire. Questionnaires and interviews are two standard methods for collecting data in qualitative studies, and they offer several benefits.

Firstly, questionnaires and interviews can collect primary data directly from research participants. This enables the researcher to gather accurate information about their research questions or hypothesis. This primary data is often more reliable and valid than secondary data collected from other sources (Creswell, 2014).

Secondly, questionnaires and interviews can be used to explore research participants' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, which can provide rich qualitative data that can be used to understand complex social phenomena and generate new theories or hypotheses (Bryman, 2015).

Thirdly, questionnaires and interviews are often cost-effective methods of data collection, particularly when compared to other methods such as focus groups or experiments. They can be administered remotely and on a large scale, which makes them particularly useful for studies with a large sample size (Creswell, 2014).
Fourthly, questionnaires and interviews can collect data on sensitive or taboo topics that may be difficult to discuss in other settings, providing insights into previously unexplored areas of research and contributing to developing new theories or approaches (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In my analysis, I used the Thematic Analysis Method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With this approach, the options are endless and practical when learning about people's perspectives, expertise, or experience with a subject. Researchers conducting qualitative analysis must be able to learn and apply the various stages of the thematic analysis strategy, including data familiarization, coding, categorizing, comparing and developing themes from categories, and developing theories. The most typical approach to thematic analysis consists of 6 stages: 1) getting to know the data, 2) coding, 3) generating themes, 4) evaluating the themes, 5) finalizing names for the themes, and 6) reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This strategy or method depends mainly on data coding. One of the primary objectives of coding is to identify repeating patterns of behavior and relationship discrepancies as represented in the data and afterward employ coding techniques (Sharon, 2004; Saldaña, 2013). According to Sharon (2004), coding is characterized as a systematic procedure including the observation and interpretation of facts with the aim of constructing a comprehensive theory.

The purpose of thematic content analysis is to identify recurrent topics or ideas in a dataset. There is a significant amount of flexibility in this approach. This technique is also helpful when eliciting people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences on a given subject. The most common thematic analysis technique consists of six stages explained in depth as follows: (1) getting to know the material and familiarizing myself with it by repeated reading; (2) coding and generating initial codes using an Excel spreadsheet; (3) labeling and organizing themes in tables
in Microsoft Word; the current stage is significant as it requires making accurate decisions to construct a theoretical framework effectively; (4) examining those themes; this step offers the chance to reexamine the original topic framework. At this step, I can critically evaluate my preliminary codes and classifications, progressing toward making definitive determinations; (5) giving those themes names; and (6) reporting the data and providing a rationale for the theory building., as illustrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: The Continuous Cycle of Thematic Analysis**

In the process of data analysis, I employ qualitative data analysis software called MAXQDA to enhance the accuracy of data coding. MAXQDA is specialized software for analyzing qualitative data. It has the same features on both Windows and Mac. MAXQDA can help systematically analyze and interpret data gathered from interviews, articles, videos, and
focus groups (MAXQDA, 2022). Using the flexible and powerful coding tools in MAXQDA can make a classification scheme and help use different codes to mark essential data. It helps use many search options, link qualitative and show ideas with eye-catching visualization and export options. It can also use memos to write down ideas and thoughts.

3.2. The Study Design

This research follows a qualitative method to collect and analyze the data because it allows participants to share their experiences and shed light on the context of the resources they use to help their pronunciation development (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 2010). The study’s design follows three phases: the first phase was to collect the student participants’ data through a questionnaire divided into three sections:

1) The first section manages the demographic (personal) information to record their ages, majors, years of study, if they have taken any proficiency tests and their scores.

2) The second section measures their attitudes toward English pronunciation to see if they have considered their needs and difficulties compared to other skills.

3) The third section is open-ended questions about the pronunciation resources they know and are available to them, what they lack, and what they think they need to improve their English pronunciation.

The second phase is a recorded interview with the selected student participants to see if they have anything else to add that has yet to be elicited. When conducting this study, I primarily relied on semi-structured interviews to collect relevant and reliable information.

In the third phase, a questionnaire was distributed to the teachers to gather their perceptions about their students’ pronunciation difficulties, what resources they use to address these difficulties, and what resources the university provides to help with their students’
pronunciation learning process. Also, I wanted to know if teachers and their students were taking advantage of the available resources to develop their pronunciation learning. The following Figure 4 illustrates the study design and which research question that each instrument answers:

**Figure 4:** The Study Design

![Study Design Diagram]

### 3.3. Participants

The participants were 50 students randomly drawn from two public Saudi Arabian institutions (King Abdelaziz University and Qassim University) and 4 teachers (two from each institution). The students participants are studying in the English Departments in their third and fourth years in different concentrations such as English and Translation, English Literature, and Linguistics and Translation. According to the official website of QU university, the institution offers programs in English and Translation. Additionally, KAU gives courses in English Language and Linguistics.

Some of the participants who completed the questionnaires were first and second years at both universities, however, my targets were third and fourth-year students who had already taken
the phonetics and phonology courses. However, the department chairs distributed the
questionnaire to all students within their respective departments ensuring that my data was not
biased. Based on the questionnaire data, Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the participants’ study years
and majors in both universities. Most students (40%) were studying in their fourth year, whereas
26% were in their third year, and 50% were in English significant classes.

**Figure 5: Participants’ Year of Study**

![Participants’ Year of Study](image)

**Figure 6: Participants’ Major**

![Participants’ Major](image)
The first participant group was comprised of female students, and the second group was comprised of female English language teachers. The participants are presently enrolled in public colleges, as well as English language teachers employed at the same institution. The decision to select women as participants was based on the convenience of conducting interviews. Due to gender division in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, I could encounter difficulties in pursuing a study in male universities. This separation was implemented for convenience and religious adherence, and my academic pursuits. According to Oxford and Nyikos (1989), females tend to use a more significant number of L2 learning techniques and employ them more often than men (Salahshour et al., 2013); gender differences may also apply to L2 pronunciation. Meyer, Dunne, and Richardson's (1994) research on an "extended framework for student learning" can be used to explain why male and female students learn a language in different ways. Salahshour et al. (2013) found that gender is an individual characteristic that can affect how learners use strategies to learn a local language.

The students’ ages ranged from 19 to 27 in the third and fourth years of English study. The following Figure 7 illustrates the participants’ age ranges.

Figure 7: Participants’ Age (Students)
The teachers who agreed to participate with me were two Saudis, one Pakistani, and one Indian. Their ages range from 25 to 55. The Saudis’ native language was Arabic and the Pakistani’s and the Indian’s languages were Urdu. However, they speak English as their second language. The teachers were teaching in the same universities in the Department of the English Language. Three teachers hold a master’s degree in Applied Linguistics and one teacher holds a Ph.D. degree in Education. One teacher is teaching all language skills and the other three teaches grammar only. Their teaching experiences were different from primary to secondary and ranges from 5 to 10 years, as shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Teacher’s Years of Experience**

3.4. Instruments

The data was collected through three qualitative instruments: two questionnaires and an interview. Both instruments were developed in the English language, and the choice to design both the survey and interview questions in English was based on the assumption that the participants, who are studying English language majors, have a high level of proficiency in the language. Moreover, the act of formulating a questionnaire in Arabic and subsequently translating it into English has the potential to influence the reliability and quality of the collected
data. The present investigation has been conducted in order to maintain the integrity of the research and provide reliable results.

The first questionnaire was distributed online by email to students and has three sections:

(a) The first section inquired about the participants' personal information (age, the university in which they are studying, major, year of study) (See Appendix A).

(b) The second section (based on Ahmad & Nazim, 2014) investigated the students' attitudes toward English pronunciation and their most troubling difficulties to see if they were willing to do extra work to improve their needs. The section consists of ten questions about their English learning background in general and pronunciation difficulties and which parts are most troubling to learn in specific. It inquired about their pronunciation difficulties, the most challenging aspects, and if they thought that they needed better resources. It also asked if they were willing to improve their pronunciation, how many hours they spent learning English, and if they knew any pronunciation programs (See Appendix A).

(c) The third section was open-ended questions investigating participants' resources needed to improve their pronunciation skills. It asked what resources were available to them, what they used, and what resources they thought they needed to help them improve their English pronunciation. It also asked if their course textbook helped them learn pronunciation (See Appendix A).

(d) Another questionnaire was distributed to the English teachers seeking to determine if their students had pronunciation difficulties and what aspects were most troubling when they taught them. The questionnaire asked what teachers used to assist with their students’ difficulties, and what resources were available to them that the university provided that match those difficulties. The questionnaire asked if they were aware of those resources available at their
universities and if they made use of them. Other questions included: Were there any additional resources that they utilized? If there were no available resources, what was provided to help their students learn pronunciation? (See Appendix C).

The second phase of the study was to interview the participants (students only) in the English Departments of both institutions. The interviews were conducted in English as well through Zoom® upon the participants' consent. The interview had open-ended questions (See Appendix B) about the English courses they were studying in the universities, if the university provided pronunciation courses, and if their teachers taught pronunciation in their classes. It also asked about the available university resources that could help them with their pronunciation, any university-provided resources, and any resources as part of course requirements, and if they are taking advantage of them. Lastly, the interview inquired what the students thought their needs were to improve their pronunciation and if they felt that other resources were helpful and others not, as well as the benefit of using social media, audio-visual applications under MALL or certain websites, or CALL software to improve their pronunciation.

3.5. Procedure

After receiving the institutional review board (IRB) approval, the research study was conducted at two Saudi institutions, KAU and QU. First, I contacted the department chairs to get their approval of my research data collection. Then, after getting an agreement from the institution to conduct the study, I emailed the department chair to distribute a questionnaire electronically to the English major third- and fourth-year faculty professors so that they could pass it on to their students through the school email system or through their professor's email (as selected by the universities' administrations). I included a statement to assure the confidentiality
and impartiality of the questionnaires and indicated that the administrations had given prior consent.

After the participants received an email with the questionnaire and signed consent form, they freely went through the questionnaires having the choice to stop or withdraw as needed. At the end of the students’ questionnaires, I asked if they would accept to be interviewed, and if so, they added their email addresses. Within a month, I received 29 students' responses and two teachers from QU. Thirteen of them included their email to be interviewed. In addition, from KAU within four months, 21 students and two teachers responded. I emailed QU participants through my university email to set up times and days to conduct the interviews in English through Zoom. I received agreement responses from six participants after several follow-up emails and reminders. When I received the questionnaire data from KAU, I emailed the participants to see if they had specific interview dates and times. The interviews were conducted in English through Zoom after the participants agreed and signed the consent form. All instruments' data were used for academic purposes only. The following section will discuss how I analyzed and summarized the incoming data.

3.6. Data Analysis

Thematic qualitative data analysis was performed to analyze the themes and trends of the participants' responses in this study. The first step in the thematic content analysis was eliminating personal biases and forming broad conclusions about the data. Instead of approaching the data with a rigid structure, I looked for patterns while searching the materials (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I examined the responses in the participants' own words. After receiving the questionnaire answers and the interview recording, the transcripts were transcribed manually
after listening to the recording of each interview. Pseudonyms such as "Participant 1," "Participant 2," etc., were used to conceal personally identifying information about the participants. Then, the transcription was carefully completed with the Descript © Transcription Software, ensuring that all pauses, details, and aural notes were included. All transcripts were read and annotated with initial ideas, including comments, observations, notes, and questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaa, 2016). This preliminary reading aims to establish a set of coding categories or a classification scheme (Patton, 2002). The data was organized using an Excel spreadsheet to look for patterns and trends in the participants' answers. I organized the data into tables using the keywords and phrases most often repeated and discussed the notions that emerged from the questionnaires and the interviews. In this way, I found that some resources are used freely while others are rejected. Figure 9 represents the process of the initial coding, categorizing, and generating themes.

**Figure 9: Analysis Process, Including Coding, Categorizing, And Generating Themes**
In the second data analysis stage, I imported transcribed data files into the qualitative research software MAXQDA, which helps with coding, comparing, retrieving, and storing data (Moustakas, 1994). Each data component was given a descriptive title. The components were grouped according to the commonalities of themes, as shown in Figures 10 and 11 below, as screenshots from the interview and questionnaire data software page. In each image, the researcher has depicted data using various colors. Each color corresponds to a specific theme derived from the participants' responses obtained through interviews or questionnaires.

**Figure 10: Second Stage of Data Analysis Using MAXQDA Software (Interview Data)**

I don't think that there is much, uh, besides the courses, the pronunciation on phr, they do not actually work a lot. I think. Okay, um, what is available. Are you willing to use the available resources to help you with your pronunciation? Yes, if there is anything like the SO SPK or a speaking club, I was nice activity and attended multiple times.

Okay. I think if there is available resources, I would do it, uh. Okay. Are you interested to use, eh, or to use these available resources as a course requirement or it's just, uh, student? Um, like no, we are not required, but, uh, they give us, um, uh, what, what do you call? I think certificate or something in our mm:mm.

Skills. Um, like or something like this. Okay. So they give us hours on it, but we don't, we are not required to do, unless it is in the course with the, the doctor. Okay. What do you, um, what resources do you think you need in the university to help with your pronunciation? My, I think they need to, um,require us to use the lab.

more. Um, hhm, I think it, it is helpful also. We have library, but, and it has computers, but we don't see it a lot. They are all, I think they need to develop them or and, uh, help them or support the speaking club. It's so helpful. But I think the girls working on speaking club do not have much support from the department.
3.7. Summary

This chapter discusses the methodologies and analytical procedures employed for data collection and analysis. The research employed three qualitative instruments: two questionnaires and an interview, which were strategically designed to gather comprehensive data. Once the data collection phase was complete, a thematic qualitative data analysis approach was employed. This analysis involved removing personal biases and identifying patterns and trends within the collected data. The questionnaire responses were examined, and the interviews were transcribed manually. Pseudonyms were used to ensure participant anonymity. The transcripts were then read and annotated, allowing for the initial identification of coding categories or a classification scheme. An Excel spreadsheet was used to organize the data and identify recurring patterns and themes based on frequently repeated keywords and phrases.
This systematic analysis enabled the discovery of valuable insights regarding the participants' utilization of resources, their perceptions of their pronunciation needs, and the effectiveness of available resources. In summary, the combination of questionnaires and interviews, along with the thematic qualitative data analysis, provided a robust framework for uncovering significant findings related to the resources used by Saudi learners of English and their experiences with pronunciation improvement. These findings will be crucial for informing subsequent chapters of this research, where further exploration and recommendations will be discussed.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This qualitative research attempts to examine Saudi learners' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of diverse resources in enhancing their pronunciation skills. The study was conducted across two well-known public universities in SA, namely KAU and QU. The analytical focus of this investigation was directed toward identifying prevalent themes and trends inherent within the available data. Moreover, the research sought to illuminate the participants' perspectives on the utility and significance of these resources in facilitating their pronunciation competence.

A comprehensive research design was employed to achieve these objectives, involving interviews and open-ended questionnaires administered to the participants. Through these means, insights were made into the resources currently utilized by the participants, their preferences, aspirations, and identified requisites for refining their pronunciation. Additionally, teachers' perspectives were requested through open-ended questionnaires, enabling a comparative analysis of their views against those of their students and clarifying the pedagogical support they extend to pronunciation enhancement.

A methodical thematic data analysis, guided by the comprehensive framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013), was employed to examine the data from interview transcripts and questionnaire responses. Through systematically exploring the six consecutive stages outlined in this framework, the analysis revealed pertinent themes and overarching patterns relevant to the
central investigation - the utilization of resources to enhance pronunciation. The interview data were analyzed to identify emerging themes representing the many resources Saudi learners utilize to improve their pronunciation abilities.

4.2. Results

The outcome of my investigation was providing answers to the following research questions:

1. How do Saudi female students perceive their pronunciation abilities in their third and fourth years of university study?
   a. What challenges do they identify in learning pronunciation?

2. How do Saudi EFL teachers perceive students' English pronunciation in their third and fourth years of university study?
   a. What challenges do they identify for their students' learning of pronunciation?

3. What resources to teach pronunciation are available to Saudi universities?
   a. Are students in Saudi Arabia aware of these resources?
   b. If they are, how do they make use of them?
   c. Why or why not do they use them?

4. Which resources are available to ESL instructors at Saudi universities?
   a. Which of these would they suggest to their students?
   b. Are instructors willing to seek training to utilize them if they are unaware?

Participants of this study are Saudi college students majoring in English and are in their third and fourth years, and some who filled out the questionnaire are still in their first and second years. I chose third and fourth-year students because their English language proficiency in English is advanced. Also, most Saudi universities' English major curricula start teaching
phonetic and phonology courses during the first semester of the third year. So they could answer
the survey and interview questions quickly, both of which were conducted in English. IRB
approval of the study's continuation and recruitment procedures started, with the first step being
the distribution of the questionnaire to the two study groups (See Appendices A-C). Eligibility
checks were performed on all potential participants to ensure that they were appropriate for the
study. After being reviewed and carefully chosen, participants were sent an Informed Consent
Form (See Appendix D) to fill out and return. Upon receiving both datasets, I analyzed them
using thematic data analysis, adhering to its six-step analysis process. Subsequently, I provided a
comprehensive interpretation of the interview data.

4.2.1. Interview Results

I demonstrated my dedication to the participants' convenience by carefully arranging the
interview schedules to fit their availability. A carefully considered system of numerical
identifiers for the interviewee that extends from 1 to 6 was used to guarantee the confidentiality
of the participants. This approach played a crucial role in preserving the anonymity of the study
procedure. Table 1 provides a concise graphical representation of the relevant information
obtained from interview participants, including their academic majors, birth years, and academic
years of study.
Table 1: Interview Participants’ Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants ID</th>
<th>Academic Major</th>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Years of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Fourth year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Third year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English and Translation</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Third year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Fourth year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Fourth year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Linguistics and Translation</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Fourth year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaires and interviews were conducted per a protocol explained in (Appendix B). Finally, after all the data collection was completed, the interview recordings were transcribed manually. The Descript © Transcription Software was used after that to complete the transcription precisely, ensuring that all pauses, nuances, and audio clues were included. It completed multiple revisions and a comprehensive manual check to ensure that the transcription output was accurate compared to the original audio content.

4.2.2. Coding

Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the extensive dataset, I carefully executed two coding techniques. The first phase involved the preparation of the code, while the second phase entailed categorizing the code based on its applicability to in vivo techniques. During the initial phase, the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the interview transcripts were manually coded to extract preliminary theme insights. The initial phase was conducted with careful attention and thorough examination of the transcripts, aiming to capture and highlight all significant and noteworthy patterns. After that, in the second phase, a Vivo coding technique was
carefully applied to categorize the diverse data collected throughout this investigation. This method is called "in vivo coding" because it involves carefully searching through the transcripts for words and phrases that best capture the meaning of the data, Saldaña (2016). By capturing the voices and expressions of the participants, this coding method enhances the interpretation process and produces an extensive and comprehensive knowledge of their viewpoints. The researcher developed distinct categories of comparable and contrasting codes. The process of categorizing similar and dissimilar categories is conducted in order to minimize redundancy and repetition within the coding framework, resulting in nuanced and distinct categories that facilitate the development of themes. Both datasets were simple to understand and transcribe because the research was carried out in the English language.

The coding process was structured into a sequence of three stages. In the initial stage, the data is transcribed into tables. This initial phase involved a detailed search for congruent responses, leading to their organization into distinct categories founded on shared thematic attributes. These categories emerged from the recurrence of similar responses and were subsequently aligned within corresponding groups. Illustratively demonstrated through Tables 2 and 3, this stage visually represents the coding approach for questions about available student resources and their perceived needs.

**Table 2: Initial Stage of Coding (Available Resources)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responses Category 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Only books and having conversations with my professors”&lt;br&gt;“Professors, books at the university library, book clubs and activities that our English department organizes”</td>
<td>Books&lt;br&gt;Conversation with professor&lt;br&gt;Library in the university and online library&lt;br&gt;Department activities&lt;br&gt;Phonetics and phonology courses&lt;br&gt;Listen to the instructor’s speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Only one Free online love library or the physical library on campus”
“Phonetics and Phonology courses”
“A good way to improve pronunciation is to listen so i find my instructors a good resource”
“Presentations, papers, …”
“There’s a few courses that’s completely about phonetics and pronunciation etc.”
“…to be honest I don't know if there any, all we could do is speaking with classmates or the professor”
“Books, labs, articles, teachers”
“Courses' books, educational videos, sometimes our instructor’s speech (which is not my main resource)”
“I do not think there is much besides the courses the pronunciation and phonetics and phonology, they do not actually work a lot.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation and papers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation and papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responses Category 2**

“Workshops- online courses”
“University library and computers”
“…the speaking club”
“We started speaking club to practice more, but nothing provided from Uni”
“We have a library which contains dictionaries and books and etc. but not that much of resources…”
“I think speaking club, but I do not see any activity this term.”
“…speaking events”
other than the speaking classes and phonetics classes we have the library which has computers that we can use which have all kinds of pronunciation apps that we can use.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
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<td>Workshop</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Online courses</th>
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<td>Online courses</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library computers and dictionaries</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Library computers and dictionaries</td>
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<table>
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<th>Speaking club</th>
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<td>Speaking club</td>
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<th>Speaking events</th>
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<th>Speaking events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responses Category 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Resources that teach you in a fun way”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To provide native English teachers to teach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…more new tools for different types of perceptions (visual, auditory, sensual)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“More listening &amp; speaking courses I believe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Speech practices to improve certain weak areas.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Speaking with someone - free internet in university- program”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Learn sounds and practice speaking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think they need to require us to do the lab more I think it is helpful. Also, we have a room and it has computers and they are old and they need to develop them and help them and support the speaking club is so helpful but I think the girls working on the speaking club do not have enough support from the department.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses Category 2</th>
<th>Speak with natives through the Cambly app</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I always want to get in Cambly app. To speak with natives but it’s so expensive. So i need similar app with affordable fees.”</td>
<td>Listen to music and movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Listening to music, movies, communicate with people whose native language is English”</td>
<td>YouTube, podcast, google, Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Youtube, YouTube vlogs, movies, podcasts.”</td>
<td>Practice pronunciation using ELSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“YouTube, Google, and Instagram.”</td>
<td>Video or Audio sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“ELSA speak is a very good app to practice pronunciation while speaking. I think it would help improving mine because it provides sentences, for example, for me to record myself reading them so that it tests how good I actually pronounced the words, and then it identifies the mistakes and corrects them.”

“Applications that teach you how to pronounce words”

“Audio sources.”

“I think video or courses could help a lot, for me is to practice speaking with natives could help me to improve my pronunciation”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses Category 3</th>
<th>Practice the language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Practice I think would help the most.”</td>
<td>Speak and chat with natives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…it is not a resource but talking with native speakers it could be better with pronunciation”</td>
<td>Speaking competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…maybe direct chatting with natives”</td>
<td>Speaking club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe like we focus more on practicing more on speaking classes and umm also, listen to native-like accents pronunciation through podcasts and YouTube, I believe like if they help like making speaking competitions, debates, and speaking clubs is so helpful for students to express themselves and speak fluently.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ensuing stage of the process, the third stage, involved the manual entry of raw numerical data into a dedicated table. This entry was accompanied by supplementary information
detailing the participants associated with each identified theme. This tabulation of data, exemplified through Table 4, serves to manifest the amalgamation of numerical data with participant attribution, enhancing the clarity and comprehensibility of subsequent analyses.

**Table 4: Participants’ Mentions of Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Theme 1: Classroom Interaction</th>
<th>Theme 2: Technology Engagement</th>
<th>Theme 3: Personal Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Only books and having conversations with my professors”</td>
<td>“I always want to get in cambly app. To speak with natives but it’s so expensive. So i need similar app with affordable fees.”</td>
<td>“Workshops- online courses”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Professors, books at the university library, book clubs and activities that our English department organizes”</td>
<td>“Listening to music, movies, communicate with people whose native language is English”</td>
<td>“University library and computers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Phonetics and Phonology courses”</td>
<td>“Youtube, YouTube vlogs, movies, podcasts.”</td>
<td>“…the speaking club”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>“A good way to improve pronunciation is to listen so i find my instructors a good resource”</td>
<td>“YouTube, Google, and Instagram.”</td>
<td>“We started speaking club to practice more, but nothing provided from Uni”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Books, labs, articles, teachers”</td>
<td>“ELSA speak is a very good app to practice pronunciation while speaking.”</td>
<td>“…maybe direct chatting with natives”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>“I do not think there is much besides the courses the pronunciation and phonetics and phonology”</td>
<td>“Audio sources.”</td>
<td>“I believe like we focus more on practicing more on speaking classes”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3. Generated Themes

Upon the completion of the coding procedures through the collected data, the outcomes of this investigation revealed three foundational themes—based on the repeated responses namely, "classroom interaction," "technology engagement," and "personal practice." These thematic elements emerged as pivotal in elucidating the perspectives of EFL students' pronunciation materials which primarily appeared in all the participants’ responses. It is worth noting that the materials utilized did not specifically target the issue of pronunciation concerns. Nevertheless, participants used these resources to develop accurate pronunciation abilities and engage in language exercises.

The participants’ insights, viewpoints, and expressions collectively manifest their perceptions regarding the efficacy of these resources in advancing their pronunciation competence. These themes will be examined in subsequent sections, each reflecting distinct aspects of the participants' experiences. The answers of the research participants revealed insightful themes about how to learn pronunciation. This study's data was analyzed to reveal three overarching themes that directly addressed the study's questions.

- Theme 1: Classroom interaction
- Theme 2: Technology engagement
- Theme 3: Personal practice

Before addressing each theme and what both material data represent, I will discuss participant perceptions of their pronunciation concern based on the data I received from QU and KAU. The following sections will be organized in alignment with the research questions, comprehensively exploring each overarching theme.
4.2.4. Learners’ Pronunciation Perception and Challenges

Addressing Research Question 1, we delve into the perspectives and experiences of Saudi female students as they navigate their pronunciation abilities during the pivotal third and fourth years of their university studies (See Appendix E) for full perspective data. This inquiry seeks to illuminate how these students perceive their pronunciation skills and the specific challenges they identify in their journey to master pronunciation in the English language. By gaining insight into their perceptions and challenges, we aim to comprehensively understand the dynamics at play within this critical phase of language learning.

Research question 1: How do Saudi female students perceive their pronunciation abilities in their 3rd and 4th years of university study? What challenges do they identify in learning pronunciation?

According to the student questionnaire, 30% of participants are ‘Very Much’ concerned about their pronunciation when they speak English, with 15 responses mentioning that. The question asks if they are concerned about their English pronunciation when speaking English. The number of responses was 50, with 38 % answering “sometimes,” 30% answering “very much,” and 26 % answering “no” or not concerned about their pronunciation.
Figure 12: Students’ Concerns About Their Pronunciation

Figure 12 provides valuable insights into the concerns and perceptions of learners regarding their pronunciation in English. It is evident that 68% of the learners express concerns about their pronunciation. However, a closer examination of their responses reveals a nuanced picture. While 26% of these learners feel that they have no fundamental issues with their pronunciation, they are still keen on improving it. This paradoxical situation highlights the complexity of pronunciation acquisition in a second language, such as English.

The study draws on the work of Flege (1995), who emphasized the role of perception abilities in second language (L2) learners. Flege’s research suggests that individuals who exhibit proficient perception skills in their L2 tend to produce speech sounds with greater accuracy. This finding underscores the importance of the physical act of speaking and the ability to discern and replicate the subtle nuances of pronunciation. Moreover, the study incorporates insights from Best and Tyler (2007), who identified the ability to perceive sounds in the L2 as a more reliable indicator of pronunciation accuracy than other factors such as language-specific knowledge, age.
or duration of exposure to the target language. This implies that a learner's capacity to hear and distinguish phonetic features is pivotal in achieving accurate pronunciation.

A significant aspect touched upon in the research is the influence of learners' perspectives on their motivation and engagement in second language learning. Gass and Varonis (1984) suggest that how learners perceive their progress in acquiring the phonetic aspects of the target language can significantly impact their motivation levels. When L2 learners can accurately identify and replicate the phonetic features of the target language, they often experience a boost in confidence. This newfound confidence becomes a powerful motivating factor that drives them to persevere in their language-learning journey.

Figure 12 underscores the multifaceted nature of pronunciation acquisition in English. It sheds light on the coexistence of concerns and optimism among learners, emphasizing the pivotal role of perception skills and learner perspective in shaping the trajectory of language acquisition. These findings are academically significant and have practical implications for educators and language learners seeking to enhance their pronunciation skills. Recognizing the interplay of perception, confidence, and motivation can inform more effective language teaching and learning strategies.

The data presented in Figures 13 and 14 indicates participants' proficiency in working with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).
Figure 13: Students’ Ability to Read IPA

Figure 14: Students’ Ability to Transcribe IPA

Figure 13 reveals that most participants, precisely 52%, self-reportedly claim to be able to read the IPA. This is a promising sign, as IPA proficiency can significantly aid individuals in accurately perceiving and reproducing the sounds of a language. Furthermore, Figure 14 provides...
insights into participants' ability to transcribe words using the IPA. It demonstrates that 32% of the respondents possess the skill to transcribe words with IPA. This skill is essential for language learners as it enables them to recognize and represent the precise pronunciation of words in a standardized and universally understood format.

However, the data also highlights a portion of participants who face challenges with the IPA. Approximately 6% of respondents admit they cannot read IPA, indicating a gap in their phonetic knowledge. This group presents an opportunity for educators to develop targeted teaching strategies and resources to bridge this gap and enhance their ability to understand and work with phonetic symbols. Similarly, Figure 14 reveals that 20% of the participants need help transcribing words using the IPA. This finding suggests that many surveyed learners may require additional support in developing transcription skills. For educators and researchers, this information underscores the need to explore innovative teaching methods or tools that can assist these individuals in acquiring IPA transcription proficiency. Overall, the data from Figures 13 and 14 serves as a valuable resource for educators and researchers in the field of language acquisition and phonetics. It provides an overview of the current proficiency levels. It offers a foundation for designing targeted interventions to accurately improve participants' abilities to perceive and reproduce specific sounds using the IPA. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of learners in this regard, educators can tailor their approaches to foster greater phonetic competence among their students.

The interview data regarding participants' self-assessment of their pronunciation proficiency provides valuable insights into their perceptions and motivations in the context of language learning. During the interviews, participants were asked to rate their pronunciation on a scale from 1 to 10, shedding light on their self-awareness and aspirations for improvement.
Table 5 illustrates the diversity in responses among the participants. This variation underscores the individualized nature of language learning experiences. One noteworthy case is Participant #2, who exhibits a particularly insightful self-awareness regarding her pronunciation skills. She not only understands her current level but also demonstrates a strong motivation to enhance it. This self-awareness and motivation are essential elements in the language learning process, aligning with the principles of self-regulated learning (SRL).

Table 5: Participants’ Self-Rated Pronunciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Self-Rated Pronunciation (Scale: 1-10)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;I give myself maybe 7, it taught me at a young age before school and I always try to listen to the right pronunciation for every word and I watch movies and shows.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;I think 6 I need to work more on it. Actually, I took the pronunciation in the second year, I felt my pronunciation is better but I need to work more on it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;I do not really think I am the one to rate my pronunciation and I would give it an 8, I think it is good it is understandable.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;I do not prefer to rate my own pronunciation because I prefer to have an expert opinion but I think it is in the middle like 5. Because I know I have a lot of trouble in pronouncing some words I do not feel like I can pronounce any words without help. I have to go to any website and make sure the pronunciation I am going to produce is the same as the right one.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;Umm like 8 because there are some words that are difficult to pronounce especially for Arabic speakers like the /p/ sound it is difficult to pronounce, also the long words sometimes I find difficulties in pronouncing these words.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;Ummm nine, because I do pronounce words correctly for most of the time, however, when I encounter a new word I might sometimes pronounce them incorrectly.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant #2's recognition of her pronunciation limitations and her desire to become a proficient speaker reflect Dörnyei's (2001) observation that motivations for language learning are
diverse. These motivations are often driven by personal goals and aspirations, which can range from achieving conversational fluency to mastering a new language for professional purposes. In this case, Participant #2's motivation is fueled by her recognition of her own needs and her desire to bridge the gap between her current proficiency and her ideal level of pronunciation and subsequent quotes that are done this way. Participant 5: "…there are some words that are difficult to pronounce, especially for Arabic speakers, like the /b/ sound it is difficult to pronounce, also the long words; sometimes I find difficulties in pronouncing these words."

Participant 5's statement offers insight into non-native speakers’ challenges, particularly those from Arabic-speaking backgrounds when learning a new language. This quote highlights the specific struggles with certain phonemes, such as the /p/ sound, and the difficulty pronouncing longer words, which are common obstacles for individuals in acquiring a second language. Research in SLA, as exemplified by Flege (1995), has consistently demonstrated that a person's first language significantly influences their ability to both perceive and produce sounds in a second language. In the case of Participant 5, who is an Arabic speaker, the /p/ sound can be particularly challenging to master in English due to differences in phonological systems between Arabic and English. Understanding these language-specific phonological differences is crucial for educators and language learners alike. It underscores that the challenges that learners face are not solely due to their individual capabilities but are often rooted in the phonological disparities between their native and target languages.

Additionally, Participant 5's mention of struggles with long words resonates with findings in SLA research, such as those highlighted by Cutler (2012). Word stress, rhythm, and syllable patterns can vary significantly between languages, posing challenges for non-native speakers when encountering unfamiliar lexical structures. This difficulty with word stress and rhythm can
lead to mispronunciations and hinder effective communication. Educators can use this understanding to develop targeted exercises and teaching materials that address these specific issues, helping learners overcome these hurdles more effectively.

The overarching message here is that language educators should recognize the unique linguistic challenges faced by different groups of language learners. By acknowledging the influence of learners' native languages on their pronunciation and linguistic patterns, teachers can provide more tailored support and instruction. This tailored approach not only enhances the accuracy of speech sounds but also boosts learners' confidence and motivation, aligning with the findings of Gass and Varonis (1984). When learners perceive progress in accurately reproducing the target language's phonetic features, it is a powerful motivator to persist in their language-learning journey. Participant 6: "...I do pronounce words correctly for most of the time; however, when I encounter a new word, I might sometimes pronounce them incorrectly."

Participant 6's statement encapsulates the adaptable and growth-oriented mindset that is essential for language learners. Their admission that while they generally pronounce words correctly, they may encounter challenges with new or unfamiliar words reveals a mature perspective on language acquisition. This mindset of lifelong learning and the willingness to acknowledge and rectify mistakes are valuable attributes for anyone aiming to enhance their communication skills. The participant's recognition of the significance of continually learning and adapting to new words and languages aligns with the idea that language proficiency is an ongoing journey. Language is a dynamic entity, constantly evolving, and individuals who recognize this and remain open to new linguistic experiences are better positioned to navigate these changes effectively. Participant 6's attitude also resonates with Silva's (1993) research, emphasizing the role of perception in language learning. Their openness to encountering and
addressing new sounds or pronunciations exemplifies how active engagement with the auditory aspects of a language can contribute to improved speaking abilities. Learners increase their chances of mastering new linguistic elements by being receptive to new linguistic elements.

4.2.4.1. Challenging Aspects in Pronunciation

The second part of the research question, which seeks to identify the challenges participants face in learning pronunciation, involved an inquiry into students' speaking difficulties. This approach aligns with O'Sullivan's (2012) argument that assessing speaking skills should encompass pronunciation as a vital component. The responses from participants shed light on the specific difficulties they encounter when speaking. Notably, most respondents, representing 60%, indicated that their primary difficulty lies in hesitation when speaking as shown in Figure 15. This finding suggests that confidence and fluency in verbal communication are substantial areas of concern for language learners. Overcoming hesitation is crucial for effective communication, as it can significantly impact one's ability to convey ideas smoothly and clearly.

Figure 15: Difficulties in Speaking
Another noteworthy challenge identified by participants is the struggle to find the correct vocabulary, with 52% of respondents citing this as a significant difficulty. This issue reflects the broader challenge of vocabulary acquisition, which is fundamental to language learning. Practical expression relies heavily on having a diverse and appropriate lexicon, and participants' recognition of this challenge underscores its importance in language acquisition.

In comparison, 26% of respondents identified pronunciation as a challenge. This indicates that pronunciation is a recognized difficulty but is less frequently cited than hesitation and vocabulary issues. Nevertheless, recognizing pronunciation challenges highlights the significance of this aspect of language learning, as accurate pronunciation is essential for effective communication and comprehension.

Figure 15 visually illustrates the distribution of participants' responses to these speaking difficulties. This data is invaluable as it provides a comprehensive view of the challenges faced by language learners in the context of speaking. It highlights the most prevalent issues and emphasizes the multifaceted nature of language acquisition, encompassing aspects of fluency, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Understanding these challenges can inform educators and language learners alike, enabling them to target specific areas for improvement and effectively tailor teaching strategies to address these difficulties:

An in-depth analysis of participants' responses regarding pronunciation skills reveals specific areas where they encounter the most difficulties. Among the various aspects of pronunciation, rhythm emerged as the primary challenge, with 48% of respondents, totaling 24 responses, expressing difficulties in maintaining a smooth and coherent sentence flow as presented in Figure 16.
This finding underscores the importance of rhythm in spoken language, as disruptions in sentence flow can hinder effective communication. Word stress, which involves emphasizing the correct syllables within words, is another pronounced challenge, with 46% of respondents, or 23 responses, indicating struggles in this area. Accurate word stress is critical for conveying meaning and ensuring that spoken language is clear and comprehensible. The high percentage of respondents facing difficulties in this regard underscores the significance of addressing word stress in pronunciation instruction.

In contrast, fewer participants identified issues related to intonation (18%), consonants (12%), and vowels (20%) as their primary challenges in pronunciation. While these aspects are essential for effective communication, respondents cited them less frequently. This distribution of responses indicates that rhythm and word stress are particularly salient pronunciation challenges for this group of language learners. Figure 16 illustrates the participants' responses, providing a clear representation of the distribution of difficulties across different pronunciation aspects. This data highlights the specific areas where learners struggle and offers valuable insights for educators and language learners alike. It emphasizes the need for targeted instruction and rhythm and word stress practice to enhance pronunciation proficiency.
Looking back at previous studies, for instance, Utami’s (2020) findings showed that word stress is problematic in participants EFL learning because they think the listener is deprived of a crucial decoding clue when the stress is misplaced. Utami (2020) also found that intonation is another problematic feature because students typically employ intonation at the conclusion of a sentence. She suggested that prioritizing intonation while teaching pronunciation can create the impact of importance and indicate a word's significance within a tone unit.

Regarding Saudi learners, Ababneh (2018) found that Saudi college students made mistakes with vowels, intonation, stress, and orthography, but the better-trained students made fewer mistakes than the non-trained. He thinks that Arabic speakers use stress shifts in their pronunciation that are not recognized as stress patterns in English, and direct transfer and interference from Arabic cause problems for them. This study pinpoints the pronunciation mistakes Saudi students make while saying words that are difficult for Arabs to understand due to the systematic differences between the two languages. Due to that, Yates (2001), asserted that there was a recognized necessity for instructional resources that integrated pronunciation with its corresponding teaching objectives, consequently, materials that specifically emphasized suprasegmental, intonation, and voice quality.

After inquiring about the challenges faced by my participants, their willingness to invest additional effort into improving pronunciation varied. Among the respondents, 44% expressed a readiness to do extra homework or allocate free time specifically for pronunciation enhancement, while 30% indicated that they would do so occasionally. Notably, both groups demonstrated a shared commitment to enhancing their pronunciation through extra work. This aligns with the perspective put forth by Dickerson (1994), emphasizing the critical role of students' proficiency
in self-regulation and deliberate practice, both within and outside the classroom, as a determinant in the acquisition of pronunciation skills.

**Figure 17: Doing Extra Work or Spend Free Time Improving Pronunciation**

Related to the first research question, I asked the participants (students) about the most challenging aspects of learning pronunciation. Based on what learners think in their answers, the most challenging aspect of learning pronunciation is practicing. Most of the learners’ answers mentioned that practice would help them improve their pronunciation challenges. One participant mentioned that practicing pronouncing words within speech would help her get used to them and never forget them. Another mentioned that lack of practice might lead to pronunciation difficulties. Nine respondents showed that different accents and the mix between different dialects confuse them when learning to pronounce new words; one learner mentioned that Arabs could not produce accurate pronunciation. As a suggestion by Ababneh (2018), the students
should be exposed to a native-like environment in their classes by speaking with native English speakers in person or by watching and listening to their videos or movies.

Other answers varied among different aspects, such as lack of a course that teaches them pronunciation, the similarities between words’ pronunciation, stress, and intonation, being shy or too stressed to speak in class for the first time or with their teachers, and listening to words and reading them aloud, especially the long words that were mentioned in two responses. Vowels and consonants were also a challenging aspect of learning pronunciation. According to Altamimi (2015), it has been observed that Arab EFL learners exhibit mispronunciation of certain consonant phonemes during their English speech. According to prior research conducted on Saudi learners, including studies by Ahmad and Nazim (2014), Alzinaidi and Latif (2019), and Hameed and Aslam (2015), Saudi students encounter challenges in the accurate pronunciation of consonants, particularly in words containing the past morpheme -ed, as well as four- and three-consonant clusters in the English language (as cited in Bin-Hady & Hazaea, 2021).

Students will gain the ability to use intellectual methods in a broader communicative context when they receive thorough training and practice in phonetics and phonology (Vitanova & Miller, 2002). According to Morley (1994), developing "new-wave instructional programs" (p. 70) is where most people's attention should be focused when currently teaching pronunciation. She emphasizes that learner self-engagement and learning strategy and practice issues should be factored into these new types of instructional design in addition to linguistic form and function. For instance, Pennington (1992) suggests that thoughtful instruction and practice is the key to creating highly motivated and self-sufficient second-language students learning English.

4.2.5. Teachers' Perspectives on Students' Pronunciation Challenges
Research question 2: How do Saudi EFL teachers perceive students’ English pronunciation in their 3rd and 4th years of university study? What challenges do they identify for their students’ learning of pronunciation?

Comparing the responses that I received from students to those from their instructors, a notable alignment emerges regarding the difficulties encountered in speaking. Both groups, students and teachers, share common perspectives. Specifically, when asked about their learners' speaking challenges, 50% of instructors identified pronunciation, while the remaining 50% chose "hesitation" and "vocabulary." This resonance between the two groups underscores the consistency in recognizing the significance of these particular challenges in the context of speaking skills development.

However, when it comes to the willingness to invest extra effort in improving pronunciation, there is a noticeable disparity between students and teachers. Only 25% of instructors indicated that they required their students to undertake additional work dedicated to pronunciation improvement, while two teachers expressed that it should be optional and dependent on students' preferences. Notably, one instructor mentioned not teaching pronunciation at all. This discrepancy between student willingness and instructor expectations raises questions about the alignment of teaching strategies and learner preferences. It suggests that there might be an opportunity for closer collaboration between instructors and students to ensure that pronunciation improvement strategies are better tailored to the learners' needs and preferences.

Comparing student and teacher responses highlights a shared recognition of particular speaking challenges, particularly in pronunciation, hesitation, and vocabulary. However, differences in expectations regarding extra work for pronunciation improvement underscore the
potential for improved alignment between instructional methods and learner motivations. This emphasizes the importance of effective open communication and collaboration between educators and students in addressing pronunciation challenges.

**Figure 18: Teachers Required Students to Do Extra Work to Learn Pronunciation**

![Pie chart showing 50% Yes, 25% No, 25% Only if they want to](image)

Wahid and Sulong (2013) discuss a large gap between teaching pronunciation and practice using it. They explore the components contributing to teachers' attitudes and practices in their study to address the issue. They also use a case study of ESL instructors at a university to illustrate the points it has made. The study revealed that teachers avoided teaching pronunciation since they needed to learn how to instruct their students effectively. A more detailed examination indicated that they needed more technical understanding in both the subject and pedagogy of pronunciation, and their lack of research literacy made situations harder. Wahid and Sulong (2013) highlighted the importance of adapting future pronunciation investigations to meet the demands of instructors in the classroom.

Regarding engaging participants in extra work to improve their pronunciation, teachers’ answers show a lack of requiring their students to practice and do extra work to improve their pronunciation, possibly due to different factors and a lack of resources (Gilakjani & Sabouri,
These researchers examined the reason behind EFL teachers’ lack of English pronunciation practice in their classes, is that teachers could not teach pronunciation due to a lack of time, motivation, resources, materials, and educational facilities like computer technologies. Teachers should be equipped with all these components if they want to incorporate pronunciation into their classes. These factors showed the reasons behind students’ perceptions of their pronunciation difficulties inside and outside the classroom are their challenges in the classroom, and their lack of practice. Also, teachers lack pronunciation practice in their classes or require students to do more work to improve it, impacting their development.

From the teachers' perspective, various views emerged regarding their students' difficulties in English pronunciation. Teachers A and C expressed the belief that their students faced no challenges in English pronunciation, while Teachers B and D acknowledged that their students did encounter issues, attributing them to different accents and struggles with discipline-related vocabulary. This diversity of responses reflects that teachers know their student’s needs but may not consistently provide assistance to address them effectively. The varying responses from Teachers A and C, with one indicating "no" regarding students' pronunciation problems and the other noting that she does not teach pronunciation, underscore a lack of uniformity in instructional approaches. Their responses were similarly divided in response to a follow-up question about whether teachers were willing to offer resources to help students overcome pronunciation difficulties. Half of the teachers (two out of the four) indicated that they would provide assistance "only if students want to." One teacher (25%) chose "no," and another (25%) simply answered "yes" without further explanation, as Table 6 represents.
Table 6: Teachers’ Response Regarding Pronunciation Difficulty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Response to Students' Pronunciation Difficulties</th>
<th>Willingness to Provide Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>No difficulties observed</td>
<td>Only if they want to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Difficulties due to different accent</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>She said “I don’t teach pronunciation”</td>
<td>Yes (without explanation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>Difficulties in pronouncing discipline-related vocabulary</td>
<td>Only if they want to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This division in teacher attitudes toward addressing pronunciation difficulties suggests a potential gap in providing targeted support for students in this area. It underscores the importance of a more consistent and proactive approach to addressing pronunciation challenges among educators. Collaborative efforts between teachers and students and the availability of resources tailored to student needs could enhance the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction and support.

The teacher exhibited alignment with their students in identifying the challenges encountered in English pronunciation, with 75% of responses focusing on intonation and word stress as significant difficulties. Moreover, the teachers acknowledged that vowels, accents, vocabulary, pronunciation, and word stress were the primary aspects requiring attention in their instruction, reflecting the difficulties highlighted by their students. Despite recognizing student needs, teachers should have mandated extra work or practice addressing challenging aspects like
word stress and intonation. This suggests a potential gap between identifying student needs and implementing strategies to tackle these issues effectively. The text underscores the importance of teachers considering their learners' diverse challenges and applying teaching techniques tailored to address them.

Lambacher's research (2001) emphasizes the need for educators to comprehensively understand the multifaceted aspects involved in pronunciation instruction and acquisition. It acknowledges that addressing these challenges may require substantial time and effort. In summary, the alignment between teachers and students in recognizing pronunciation challenges points out the need for bridging the gap between identifying these issues and implementing targeted strategies for improvement. Teachers play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges. Lambacher's work underscores the importance of a nuanced understanding of pronunciation instruction to create a more effective and tailored learning experience.

4.3. Discussion

Following identifying the primary challenges that teachers and learners face in pronunciation and their readiness to engage in additional efforts for improvement, the subsequent section investigates the available resources that are accessible to students. It also explores students' attitudes toward using these resources to enhance pronunciation. By discussing the resources available, the aims are to understand the practical aspects of pronunciation instruction by assessing whether students have access to the necessary tools and materials for support. Additionally, it delves into the motivation and willingness of students to actively engage with these resources to advance their language acquisition. Moreover, it offers insights into educational institutions' and programs' preparedness to facilitate effective pronunciation instruction and the role of student initiative and motivation in leveraging available resources to
overcome pronunciation challenges. Ultimately, it contributes to the broader discourse on language education by providing insights into the practical implementation of pronunciation improvement strategies and the active involvement of learners in this process.

4.3.1 Resource Availability (Students’ Perspectives)

Research question 3: What resources to teach pronunciation are available to Saudi universities? Are students in Saudi Arabia aware of these resources? If they are, how do they make use of them? Why do they use them or why not?

4.3.1.1. Classroom Interaction

Answering the first part of the question, considering the three generated themes, and based on the student’s answers, data showed that students mostly rely on classroom interaction, such as having a conversation with their classmates or professors, course books, research papers, and presentations, which are primary resources to teach pronunciation in both institutions. The participants mainly depend on phonetics and phonology coursework or listening and speaking courses and materials that are related to both courses to learn pronunciation. According to their responses, no separate course specifically teaches pronunciation. Here are some responses from the interview data regarding what is available to students:

Participant 1: “we have good teachers, but they are not good at pronunciation because they come from places that do not pronounce it right, and I find myself correcting them a lot. They are not providing good resources for us. The teachers are Indians, and Pakistani and even Saudis have some problems with their pronunciation because a lot of girls do not know the right pronunciation for some words and they pronounce as the teacher pronounces it, and the problem just going to keep on and on.”
Participant 2: “I do not think there is much besides the courses the pronunciation and phonetics and phonology; they do not actually work a lot.”

Participant 3: “other than the speaking classes and phonetics classes, we have the library, which has computers that we can use, which have all kinds of pronunciation apps that we can use.”

Three participants show different perspectives based on what is available to them. All three participants discussed the problem of pronunciation, with a focus on the lack of adequate resources available to them. Participant 1 mentioned that the teachers did not provide good resources, causing students’ pronunciation issues. Bai and Yuan (2019) and Wei (2006) asserted that teachers' attitudes and methods for teaching pronunciation were influenced by the fact that they were not native English speakers and had received inadequate training. As well as the majority of language teachers claim they need better methods for teaching pronunciation but are unaware of how to approach a given challenge. Resources, course availability, and opportunities for practice outside the classroom may all work against Saudi EFL students' attempts to employ alternative methods for improving their pronunciation. Therefore, teachers worry greatly about making the right choice regarding pronunciation resources (Al-Ahdal, 2020).

These are some reasons based on previous studies showing why EFL learners still have pronunciation problems. Participant 2 felt that the existing courses on pronunciation and phonetics were not practical enough, indicating a lack of quality in the available resources. Her answer agreed with what Derghal and Chaïra (2019) found in their study, that the textbooks fall short of the pronunciation goals set out in the curriculum, highlighting the necessity for additional supplementary audio recordings to be used in pronunciation exercises. Also, Derwing et al. (2012) found that most ESL general skills textbook series rely on a small number of
activities focusing mainly on pronunciation. Participant 3 suggested that the library provides some valuable resources, including pronunciation apps, but whether the students effectively utilize these resources is unclear. Books and libraries were mentioned in several responses. Students referred to them as something efficiently available and accessible at the university; one stated that the library contained books and a dictionary they could use.

Talking to classmates and professors is also shown in the participants' responses, which are their primary source of learning besides their phonetics and phonology courses. Another resource accessible in both universities is the speech laboratory, but unfortunately, students did not use it. Several quotes from the interview revealed various perceived causes:

Participant 1: “we have labs but we don’t use them a lot as much. I just have one course we are using in the lab but not much and we want to use it as a regular course room because it is not useable and not effective for the course itself.”

Participant 2: “yes we have. Not much, this year I have phonetics and phonology and we sit in the lab but we don’t use the computer or anything in the lab we just sit there and have the lecture. I do not think we use the lab so much.”

Additional quotes revealed different responses. Participants do not utilize the speech or language lab because they are unaware of its availability:

Participant 4: “I have no idea, I do not think so.”

Participant 5: “no no we don’t have. But even if they have we’ve never been introduced to. Maybe they have but we’ve never been introduced to.”

Participant 6: “I don’t know if they do have but uh throughout my years of studying in the university, I haven’t been counter such a thing.”
Based on previous studies by Mohammed (2017) and Jamal (2020) the findings highlight the need for highly functional language laboratories to be used in the English classroom to help students improve their listening and speaking abilities. In these participants’ answers, the lack of knowing if there is a language lab or not gave them the perception that it affected their overall proficiency in pronunciation.

Students were aware of the available resources, such as books and libraries, and used them. However, most of their answers showed they needed to know if resources were available to help with their pronunciation. Overall, student responses regarding the first theme indicated a shared concern that the current resources available for improving pronunciation are inadequate.

4.3.1.2. Technology Engagement

Regarding the second theme, technology engagement, the only choice available to students is computers in the library or language lab and online courses. Participant 6: “Basically what instructors do is provide us with some videos but not mainly for pronunciation but for other courses, however, if you are listening to these videos you could unconsciously or subconsciously improve your pronunciation.”

The present findings are reinforced by earlier investigations conducted by Pennington (1999), Neri et al. (2008), and Celce-Murcia et al. (2011). These studies demonstrated that learners exhibit higher levels of engagement and motivation when utilizing digital technology for language learning which has been implicated in the participants’ responses. These investigations have significance for a wide range of constituents, including students, instructors, researchers, and curriculum planners. Moreover, as Nasim et al. (2022) asserted, integrating digital tools can enhance the learning experience for students by making pronunciation practice more engaging, interesting, and enjoyable. This shift towards incorporating technology allows teachers to adopt a
learner-centered approach, empowering students with increased autonomy. Consequently, curriculum planners are urged to include digital technology in syllabi design, recognizing its significance in fostering effective language learning.

Therefore, I mentioned some valuable technological pronunciation resources that have been mentioned in the previous studies and looked into participants' perspectives on its influence on their pronunciation. First, I asked about one of the speaking and pronunciation programs that students might use outside the classroom to help with pronunciation which is ELSA Speak (English Language Speech Assistant), an app that helps with English pronunciation. Only two participants knew it, used it and found it helpful. One participant stated, "I like that it tests my pronunciation by reading sentences and not only words, and then explains the mistakes if they existed, and the right way to pronounce them." The rest of the students said that they did not use or did not even know about it. Findings have shown that using CALL allows students to get immediate feedback on their work (Eskenazi, 1999). Using CALL can help reduce the tension that comes with pronouncing unknown words (Culhane & Ito, 2003). CALL has the potential to be an effective technique for teaching pronunciation to ESL students, particularly for those who are just starting their studies (Harper, 2004).

Students have taken advantage of several resources that have not been provided in the classroom or their university. So, other responses considered using technology, such as: music, YouTube vlogs and videos, Instagram, podcasts, and pronunciation apps like Cambly, along with the ELSA app and free Wi-Fi on campus. One student mentioned a translation program on her phone, another referred to computers, and one stated that their instructor gives them external resources to be used online for their own practice. Some students mentioned online workshops.
Then, I asked about the technological resources currently available to learners. The answers provided many resources that participants used outside the classroom. The majority of responses (32 responses) referred to learning the word's pronunciation from watching movies, series (e.g., comedy), TV shows (e.g., reality and cooking), and documentaries. Also, students mentioned watching many entertaining videos and channels, such as English channels on YouTube and listening to TED talks, podcasts such as “English level-up,” music, and Cambly: "...whatever a video that I'm interested in its topic, I do pay attention to the pronunciation and vocabulary used, searching for the unknown meanings and the correct pronunciation if I have any difficulty.”

Most of the participants’ answers indicate their use of their mobile phones. Studies such as Abduh (2019), Abdul Ameer (2021) and Akkara et al. (2020) refer to how MALL contributes to enhancing the learners’ pronunciation. However, in my study, (7 responses) showed the opposite answer, responding with “no” because they either had no time or did not have a cell phone with apps.

Listening to songs and podcasts is another way to help students improve their pronunciation as previously mentioned in the literature review (Nurhayati and Nurhamdah, 2019; Fermand & Pourghsrib, 2013; Yazdanimoghadam, 2015). The responses demonstrate how learners were willing to work hard to improve their English pronunciation. Most of my participants used a variety of ways and one was listening to songs, mentioning different singers such as Emma, Lauren, Adele, BTW, Selena Gomez, Taylor Swift, and Elvis Presley, and types of music such as pop. One participant said: “Songs are highly responsible for my good accent and accurate pronunciation.”
Comparing the participants’ answers with recent studies (for instance, Nurhayati & Nurhamdah, 2019, and Septiyani et al., 2019), I believe that adapting songs for the learners’ pronunciation is effective. Moreover, Fermand and Pourghsrib (2013) found that students had improved their English pronunciation after being exposed to the language through English music. They were more enthusiastic and engaged and could better speak English with more precise pronunciation.

Similar to songs are podcasts, which were mentioned in my participants’ answers, with examples of different channels on podcasts such as the personal podcasts “English We Speak” and “Pupils English.” One respondent said, “I also like podcasts such as ‘All Ears English podcast’ and ‘English literature at home’ and ‘Luke’s English podcast’ and ‘my favorite murder’ podcast.” Others were neutral (9 responses) when referring to songs and podcasts, saying, “it's not my favorite way to improve my pronunciation as a singer even changing his/her pronunciation to make it fit, but sometimes yes they are valuable.” Another said, “No, when I am listening to songs and podcasts, I do not aim to improve my pronunciation but listening to such thing help with the pronunciation.” They did not see it as a way to improve their pronunciation: “I watch a lot of podcasts just for fun not to improve my pronunciation.”

My findings do not align entirely with Almqrn and Alshabeb (2017) and Dewi and Ahmad (2021), who found that their students agreed that listening to podcasts was the most exciting and effective way to study pronunciation. Students may benefit from podcasts to improve their English pronunciation because they are often the most avid users of smartphones and the internet users. Podcasts were recommended because they keep students interested and involved in the material.
YouTube and TikTok have recently gained learners' attention based on different studies by Purnamasari (2018), Zitouni et al. (2021), Rachmawati and Cahyani (2020), and Al-Jarf (2022) that examined their effectiveness on learners' pronunciation. The data also showed that the majority (41 responses) in this question responded “yes” -- they have used it almost daily for a long time. A participant responded: “Yes, I do use them a lot. For example, I watch almost always YouTube videos that contain people talking in their native English language and explaining various topics which could help me with being comfortable and familiar with the sounds or how they speak. In other words, I try to listen and watch things in the English language as much as possible regardless of what application I use.” Another participant said, “YouTube has played the biggest part of my English learning journey. I watch many videos every day that are in English.” Only two participants responded with “no.” One said: “Not my pronunciation but to improve other skills,” which showed how this learner was aware of her need: “I don't use the app intentionally to improve my English, I've learned to do whatever I like in the language I wanted to learn or improve. So, I just make sure that I'm making myself exposed to the language everyday using Youtube and Netflix or whatever app it is.”

The participants' preferences for music and podcasts in improving their pronunciation can vary. Some participants mentioned that they like using music and podcasts because it provides an enjoyable way to practice their listening skills. They find it less stressful than actively engaging in conversation or using pronunciation apps. Additionally, music and podcasts can expose participants to various accents and speech patterns that participants may not encounter in everyday conversations, thus broadening their understanding of the language.
4.3.1.3. Personal Practice

By examining these students’ strategies, habits, and self-initiated practices, we gain valuable insights into the personal dimensions of pronunciation acquisition and how these efforts contribute to their overall language proficiency. The third theme, personal practice, represents the library as a source of learning with many related books and computers to search on to learning pronunciation. Also, students mentioned that they voluntarily participate in workshops and create a speaking club for the instructor to help.

Participant 5: “There is speaking club, there is poetry club, and it is voluntarily thing. Students they created it between each other so it is not from the same department itself and we enroll in these clubs and we enjoyed doing these activities together.”

While their responses varied, most agree that speaking with native speakers regularly is essential, as is access to audio courses featuring native speakers or university faculty who can be approached for pronunciation advice. Only one participant said in a questionnaire, "I don't need any resources.” Considering her daily “intensive listening for natives” practice, she was self-aware and used online resources. Most of the remaining (questionnaire) respondents emphasized the importance of improving one's public speaking skills and conversing with natives as a personal practice. Furthermore, other responses demonstrated the existence of a so-called “speaking club,” which, according to the participants, is a club established by students who are encouraged to improve their speaking skills.

Moreover, some participants preferred something other than technological tools because they found them too passive and needed to provide more opportunities for interaction or feedback. They preferred to engage in more interactive activities such as speaking clubs, workshops, or having conversations with native speakers to improve their pronunciation actively.
They may also need help maintaining focus and attention while listening to longer audio content. Many respondents in my study emphasized the importance of speaking with native speakers regularly and accessing audio courses featuring native speakers or university faculty who can be approached for pronunciation advice.

The data revealed that students were aware of the available resources, such as books and libraries, and used them. However, some participants lacked other resources, such as speech or language labs. Overall, the responses showed that students employed a variety of resources to improve their pronunciation, including university-provided resources and personal practices such as online resources, free speaking classes, and workshops. The reasons for the preference for music and podcasts or the lack thereof can vary based on individual learning styles and preferences.

4.3.2. Resources Accessibility and Utilization

Regarding the accessibility of the available resources for the participants, their responses showed that the learners are not sure whether the university provides them with any resources to help develop their pronunciation besides what they usually use, such as books, lecture content, and the library. Therefore, eight responded “yes” that they have access if they want to but not always. Other neutral (16) responses from the questionnaire are:

Participant X: “I don't know if there any resources beside the library with English books”

Participant Y: “I don’t know if Qassim University has some EFL resources in the first place, and second what could be the types of them if it does. Therefore, I don’t know about the opportunity to use them.”

The students were unaware if the university provided them with pronunciation resources.
The next question is whether or not they used these resources, and if so, which tools they employ to better their pronunciation. Their responses are divided into three sections: in the first section, the students answered “no,” they did not use any of the resources because they thought it was not valuable and helpful or they did not know if there were any university resources to help with their pronunciation. The following quotes represent some of the questionnaire responses:

Participant X: “I don’t think it would improve anything to me. Because it isn’t useful for me”

Participant Y: “I haven’t tried anything that is particular to the university.”

Participant Z: “None that I’ve used”

The second section of the responses stated which resources they used that the university provides. Their responses varied between books and the library, meeting different students and talking with them in the speaking club, phonetic and phonology courses, and talking frequently to professors in the classroom. The third section, specifically fifteen responses referred to the resources that they used personally to help with their pronunciation, such as Google, free speaking classes, listening, and free audio, dialogue, and workshops.

The last part of the third research question asks if the students used these resources. Based on what was available to them, and since the book was the primary resource, the most knowledgeable, and accessible resource to participants, I asked if it helped them improve their pronunciation. Most of the questionnaire responses said that it was beneficial and assist their pronunciation by explaining articulation in a fun way, helping to pronounce words correctly, and reading the word correctly in IPA style. Here are some responses from the questionnaire to the course book being helpful:
Participant X: “Yes, a lot! it was so effective it had a lot of exercises to make sure you understood everything well plus a CD was provided with the book which had full audios.”

Participant Y: “Yes, it does help because our instructors and professors teach us every single detail about pronunciation and language in use. Furthermore, IPA has taught us many things and secrets about pronunciation. For instance, words in company, syllabification, and the impact of extralinguistic features on our use of language.”

Participant Z: “Yes, it helped me get to know the rules that I can make use of and apply whenever I encounter some words.”

These thoughts elaborate on my earlier claims that the participants most appreciate the phonetic book's value. Other responses, however, said that the quality of the explanation fell on the teacher, while others claimed that the slide presented in class was more precise and more concise than the textbook itself, and some people in the group had not found either particularly useful. While the textbook can help with some students' pronunciation issues, more is required to meet the learners' needs, as shown by the aforementioned studies (Derghal & Chaira, 2019; Derwing et al., 2012; Pradana, 2020). In most cases, the textbook is also the major teaching instrument, especially when the teachers' native language is not the target language.

After inquiring about different applications and if the participants were taking advantage of them, I gave students chance to let me know what other applications they used to improve their English pronunciation. They referred to different applications, programs, and websites as shown in Table 7.
Table 7: *The Number of Applications Mentioned Used to Improve Pronunciation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Number of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TikTok</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Translate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duolingo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcasts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegram</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Me Speak</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Adel Program</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn English</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronounce</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dict Plus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look Up (Apple)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiobooks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iTunes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SoundCloud</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Games</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free for Talk</td>
<td>1</td>
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For example, social media applications have been mentioned frequently, such as Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Telegram, and TikTok, YouTube, and Netflix. Social media applications focus on connecting people and sharing information. YouTube, Netflix, and TikTok are primarily designed for entertainment. TikTok is a video-sharing platform that allows users to watch videos created by other users. YouTube allows users to upload and share videos on different topics. Netflix is a streaming service that provides users access to a vast library of TV shows and movies. Users can watch videos for leisure or educational purposes, and the platform's algorithms suggest content based on the user's viewing history. My participants were aware of their pronunciation needs and applied what they learned to address their weaknesses.

The data showed that they chose applications based on their preferences and perceived learning styles. Social media applications like Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Telegram, and TikTok, are primarily designed for users to create and share content with others, sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences through posts, photos, and videos. These applications also
allow users to engage with others through comments, likes, and shares. So, learners are practicing using the English language by using these applications and connecting with others.

Other responses referred to online programs such as Duolingo, Google Translate, Pronounce, iTunes, Cambly, Free for Talk, SoundCloud, Audiobook, Let Me Speak, Ibrahim Adel programs, and Learn English, and websites such as BBC Council, Dict Plus, and English British Counsel. These applications and websites focus on helping users improve their language skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar—some applications like Let Me Speak and Cambly even allow users to practice speaking English with native speakers.

Some responses mentioned video and online games, as when one respondent said, “Look up that Apple provides me to read the IPA phonetic transcription of the words,” and applications designed for pronunciation. The last response was “In my opinion, speaking is the best way to improve pronunciation so I’ll say Free for Talk is a website for speaking because we are listening to a huge amount of speech so we need to apply what we hear on the ground.”

They mentioned social media applications and video-sharing platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and TikTok differ as their primary focus. Therefore, language learning and educational tools are separate applications and websites with specific purposes. My participants seem to be looking at what is best in helping them to practice using the language in the real world and focus on pronunciation by using different social media applications and platforms.

4.4. Learners’ Expressed Needs

The last question in the students’ questionnaires asks about their needs and what their university should provide to them to improve their pronunciation. The varied responses have been mentioned based on the three generated themes showing what students think they need. Three participants would like more online workshops, fun activities, events, or competitions to
be held at the university or with native speakers. Other student responses say that they want more speaking and listening classes or sessions, extra courses, weekly practice sessions, and conversations with their professor, which they think will help fix their mistakes and improve their pronunciation. Three responses from students’ questionnaire mentioned that they would like to have teachers or staff or private paid tutors who are native English speakers or can speak like them and pronounce the words correctly:

Participant B: “I think that it should be enforced for the lecturers to speak only in English when explaining, and I believe the best way to improve your pronunciation is through practice; any resource that encourages the girls to practice would be greatly efficient, especially practicing speaking fully in English and forming their sentences as they go, that would be of great help to all their other language skills as well.”

The interviewed participant's response highlighted a noteworthy aspect that, in my perspective, holds significant importance in the context of the English curriculum in Saudi universities:

Participant #6: “I think they should establish a course for that especially for freshmen, yes. Which was introduced in the course phonetics and phonology.”

Some would like access to computers and free internet in the university to access any resources online or a free subscription to Cambly or other programs or applications that help with intonation and pronunciation. Two participants would like the university to support their speaking club because they do not have a place to gather and practice their speaking skills:

Participant N: “I think my university does everything, my department does all kinds of activities in English, also book clubs in English but personally I do not feel comfortable participating in it because I am not confident in my English.”
A variety of reasons were mentioned as to why some participants preferred in-person activities while others preferred online activities. One factor may be convenience - online activities allow students to participate from anywhere without commuting to the university or worrying about scheduling conflicts. Some students mentioned comfort in participating in online rather than in-person activities. For those who preferred in-person activities, the desire for spontaneity and the opportunity to engage with native speakers were motivating factors. These participants felt that in-person activities offer a more immersive language learning experience and provide opportunities to practice their language skills in real-world situations.

As mentioned in previous studies, Jianbin and Fang (2013) summarize the benefits and shortcomings of the two pronunciation textbooks. The learners said the book satisfied their needs and met their expectations. Additionally, Derghal and Chaïra (2019) looked at a set of three English-language novels to examine if their goals matched the demands of the students. Also, Jamal (2020) attempted to illustrate the benefits of establishing a digital language lab and how it improved the target students’ English performance. According to the statistics, a digital language laboratory provided students with rapid feedback on their examinations, assisted them in practicing the language independently, and supervised them while they completed their language tasks. However, my participants showed a lack of using language labs and depended on textbook materials and tools.

On the other hand, some students prefer online activities because they have greater flexibility in terms of scheduling and allow students to access resources and practice materials at their own pace. Additionally, some students felt more comfortable practicing their language skills in a private or less formal setting, which can be facilitated through online activities. Different studies represent that online activities had an impact on students’ learning.
pronunciation, for instance, Hismanoglu (2010) presented empirical evidence indicating that young prospective foreign language educators are increasingly utilizing web-based instructional aids for pronunciation in order to enhance the dynamism of their classroom lectures. The findings of this study demonstrated that the utilization of online resources, such as discussion groups and multimedia materials (e.g., pronunciation lessons, audio, and video animations), greatly facilitated the process of teaching pronunciation in a second language.

Also, the Al-Qudah (2012) study observed that students who received instruction through computer-assisted programs achieved significantly higher scores on the post-test than those who relied on traditional printed materials. This implies that incorporating computer-assisted programs into language instruction can yield improved learning outcomes. Moreover, the previous research by Neri et al. (2008) and Celce-Murcia et al. (2011) supported the notion that learners exhibit greater engagement and motivation when online technology is employed for language learning purposes. These studies emphasize the advantages of integrating digital tools into language education. Building upon these findings, Nasim et al. (2022) assert that incorporating digital tools can contribute to a more engaging, interesting, and enjoyable pronunciation learning experience for students. This integration enables a shift from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one, fostering increased student autonomy. The authors further advocate for curriculum planners to include digital technology in the design of syllabi, recognizing its pivotal role in effective language learning. Additionally, they encourage researchers to investigate the intricate relationship between psychological constructs and technological tools within various educational contexts.

Regarding the desire for speaking and listening classes or sessions, participants felt that these activities provided a more direct and focused approach to improving their language skills,
particularly true for participants who were seeking to improve their pronunciation, as regular practice and feedback can be crucial in developing a more accurate and natural-sounding accent. Aprilia and Ahmad (2020) found that university students' utilization of the U-Dictionary application assists in acquiring pronunciation elements and improving intelligibility in their spoken English. It was observed that pronunciation plays a crucial role in effective communication, as it is closely intertwined with the comprehension of messages exchanged during interactions (Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020). Many learners of English as a second language often perceive pronunciation as the most challenging aspect of speaking, considering it to be the underlying cause of their communication difficulties (Al-Kahtany, 1995; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). Consequently, it becomes imperative to identify effective techniques for mastering pronunciation. Mandasari and Oktaviani (2018) argue that employing various approaches to learning pronunciation, such as listening to English sounds, memorizing vocabulary, describing imagery, and watching films, can significantly enhance learners' performance.

Finally, the desire for access to native English-speaking teachers or tutors and online resources such as Cambly reflects a recognition that exposure to native speakers is an essential component of language learning. This aligns with Zitouni et al. (2021), which shows that since Saudi students have limited opportunities for direct interaction with native speakers of other languages, they often resort to independent learning and practicing English. To compensate for their time constraints, they rely on accessing websites and utilizing various online tools, which they perceive as a convenient and enjoyable means of enhancing their language proficiency. Additionally, without direct engagement with native speakers, they compensate by watching and listening to speeches, videos, and lectures delivered by native speakers on YouTube. The availability of web resources that cater to learners' preferences significantly motivates them to
engage in language learning. The findings of Zitouni et al. (2021) corroborate these results and underscore the importance of YouTube in improving learners' pronunciation skills (Rahayu & Putri, 2018; Rachmawati & Cahyani, 2020). According to Christison and Krahnke's (1986) findings, students considered that natural interaction and essential tasks with native speakers were the most critical factors in their language development. So, participants may feel that working with native speakers can help them develop more authentic language skills and improve their pronunciation fluency. Therefore, the desire for a supportive environment, such as a speaking club, also indicates that some students may benefit from opportunities to practice and receive feedback in a more comfortable and encouraging setting.

4.5. Constructed Hypothesis

To build upon my findings and based on the three generated themes and what resources my participants used to improve their pronunciation, I have constructed a hypothesis that encompasses the participants' needs in learning pronunciation and their expressed desire for specific learning resources. My hypothesis emerged after analyzing the data due to comprehending the learners' requirements and their independent utilization of resources to facilitate their learning without relying on teacher assistance. This hypothesis emphasizes the role of students in taking control of their learning and making choices about resources and strategies that suit their needs and preferences, as well as the role of the teacher in empowering their students in the classroom with the materials and resources that they need to enhance their outcomes.

Researchers tend to make assumptions about the phenomenon they are studying by using coding schemes, comparable and dissimilar categories, and themes (Clarke & Braun, 2020; Mackieson et al., 2018; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). The process of thematic analysis begins
with a broad reading of the content and the identification of significant words and phrases that, to the researcher, transmit a hidden meaning and are, therefore, considered codes. This approach proceeds from one interview transcript to the subsequent ones, persisting until all transcripts have been successfully decoded. Then, an action is undertaken to thoroughly examine the content of all transcripts in order to identify various codes. The process involves the separation of similar and dissimilar codes to minimize redundancy, hence categorizing and facilitating the determination of themes.

In my study, I adopted Clarke & Braun's (2006) thematic data analysis that follows six stages, as mentioned in the Methodology chapter, to support the generalized foundation of the themes that arose from the data analysis. Ultimately, I assert in my hypothesis is that empowering students to engage actively with pronunciation resources can enhance their learning outcomes. My hypothesis emphasizes the role of students in taking control of their learning and making choices about resources and strategies that suit their needs and preferences, as well as the role of the teacher in empowering their students inside the classroom and outside the classroom with the materials and resources that they need to enhance their outcomes. The following Figure will illustrate the framework I use to build my hypothesis. It shows a close examination of various coding stages within the analytic process, which promotes a more comprehensive reflection on the implementation of the coding procedure and the theoretical decisions made about identifying codes, categories, and themes.
Figure 19: Framework of Thematic Analysis from Coding to Hypothesis Building

4.6. Resources Availability from Teachers’ Perspective

Following the concept of my hypothesis and when comparing the responses of students with those of their instructors, it becomes apparent that teachers employ a variety of resources to support pronunciation instruction. The prevalent use of technology in their classrooms is notable, although it is worth mentioning that these resources are not explicitly designed for Saudi learners. Below are four quotes from the teachers’ questionnaire data, offering insights into the resources they utilize:

Participant 1: "Audio tracks from the book, youtube"

Participant 2: "Listening audios - I believe if they listen more and get exposed to the language, they will end up mastering so many skills including pronunciation."

Participant 3: "Sounds"

Participant 4: "talk shows"
These responses reveal that instructors recognize the value of incorporating technology and supplementary resources into their teaching methodologies. Audio tracks, online platforms like YouTube, listening materials, and even talk shows are being utilized to enhance pronunciation instruction. Moreover, three instructors believe that online resources have the potential to assist or facilitate learners’ pronunciation, often making use of these resources through e-learning systems. Meanwhile, one instructor sees talk shows as a valuable resource for students and notes that learners themselves share links to websites or use their phones to access these resources.

It is important to note that while teachers are employing these resources, the current research lacks an exhaustive exploration of the full range of resources available to them and their comprehensive utilization for improving student pronunciation. This finding contrasts with the work of Skorvagova et al. (2017), which emphasizes the importance of foreign language educators and curriculum developers having a comprehensive understanding of pronunciation pedagogical approaches and available learning materials. The effectiveness of instructional methodologies and the student’s perception of their value should also be assessed to ensure that these resources are optimally utilized to enhance pronunciation learning. Teachers did not identify any specific resources that they believe have been proven to facilitate English language pronunciation, nor did they mention any resources that are specially designed for Saudi learners of English in the data collected.

**Research Question 4: Which resources are available to EFL instructors at Saudi universities? Which of these would they suggest to their students? If instructors are unaware, are they willing to seek training to utilize them?**
Teachers’ answers were very limited. Taking into consideration what resources they use to address which pronunciation difficulty, teachers’ responses varied between in-person resources such as Teacher A’s “practice the word” or Teacher C’s using audio in the book “specific audio tracks in the book for stress and intonation.” When asked if they make use of any of the available resources, all responses were “no.” I asked if they use any online tools such as social media applications to compare their responses with students and all responded with “no.” Teacher D mentioned, “I sometimes urge my students to use the dictionary applications where they can listen to the words.” Teachers’ responses are similar to Brown’s (1992), which examined teachers’ attitudes toward teaching pronunciation; educators expressed concerns about the inadequacy of available resources for effective pronunciation instruction.

This indicates that teachers avoid using the online resources and primarily rely on conventional or in-person resources such as coursebooks and audios in the book. The reasons why the teachers may have said no to using certain resources or methods to address pronunciation difficulties are not explicitly stated, but there could be several possible explanations. One possibility is that the teachers may not have enough classroom time to devote to specific pronunciation-focused activities and therefore, may prioritize other aspects of language learning. Another possibility is that as Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) described in their research, the factors that contribute to EFL teachers’ failure to provide English pronunciation instruction in their classrooms. According to the findings, teachers' incapacity to teach pronunciation is caused by various factors, including a lack of time, motivation, insufficient resources, materials, and educational facilities such as computer technology. Teachers must have these crucial components in order to effectively integrate pronunciation into their lectures.
Several teachers stated that they had access to various materials for other subjects but needed more resources to teach pronunciation (Macdonald, 2002). Moreover, instructors generally avoid teaching pronunciation due to a lack in their abilities, insufficient formal training, and a lack of suitable resources (e.g., Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011).

Another possibility is that the teachers may be skeptical of the value of certain resources or methods, either because they have not seen evidence of their effectiveness or because they do not align with their personal teaching philosophy or approach. As they stated, teachers are teaching grammar and writing, suggesting that they may place more emphasis on other academic skills and undervalue the importance of pronunciation. Studies such as Al-Ahdal (2020) revealed that teachers were extremely concerned about selecting acceptable pronunciation resources. Also, according to Buss (2016), teachers prefer to stress word-level features, particularly individual sounds, when teaching pronunciation and rely heavily on exercises requiring repetition and the phonetic alphabet in their teaching methodologies. Many instructors expressed a desire for continued professional development in the sector, and training courses that expose them to various teaching approaches and technologies are likely to be well received.

Resources teachers had mentioned that using such as audio tracks or dictionary applications can be relatively expensive, time-consuming, or difficult to adapt in the classroom, which may make them less appealing or accessible to teachers. Additionally, the teachers may have their own preferred methods or resources for addressing pronunciation difficulties that they feel are more effective or efficient. Finally, it is also possible that the teachers may not have been aware of the available resources or methods for addressing pronunciation difficulties or may not have had the training or support necessary to effectively implement them in the classroom.

According to Alsofyani and Algethami (2017), teachers emphasized the importance of teaching
pronunciation and incorporating traditional resources into their classes. Due to a shortage of easily accessible pronunciation materials and technology tools, teachers were forced to employ traditional ways of teaching pronunciation. Generally, the reasons why the teachers in the quotes said no to using certain resources or methods may be complex and multifaceted and may depend on a range of factors such as time constraints, personal beliefs, resource availability, and training or support.

The last question for teachers was the same as the learners’ questionnaires, which inquired about their needs and which resources they thought their university needed to improve their pronunciation. All respondents agreed that their universities need to provide them with a speech or language lab and an internet connection. Two teachers mentioned, “In my department, we have 2 courses that can help with that: phonology and phonetics” and “I think there are ample resources in the university I teach. Moreover, students have more exposure to the English language due to social media where most of the content is in English. So, it is really only a matter of time before they catch up and are as proficient as the native speakers themselves.”

These responses represent that teachers mostly rely on the available resources in the university based on the data, such as the course book, and they lack internet and language labs. According to Bai and Yuan (2019), the effect of non-native English teachers and inadequate training have been identified as significant factors shaping teachers' views and practices in relation to their approach to pronunciation instruction. It is imperative for educators to acknowledge that attaining native-like pronunciation can pose difficulties for specific individuals learning the English language (Almusharraf, 2021). The examination of various strategies aimed at enhancing pronunciation skills can provide educators with valuable knowledge to identify unique differences among EFL learners, establish realistic goals that align with their
communicative needs, and support students in building self-assurance and overcoming challenges related to pronunciation (Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016).

4.7. Summary

The questionnaires and interviews indicate several reasons why there may be a lack of pronunciation learning resources in Saudi universities.

1. Limited resources: based on the data, many universities need more resources and may prioritize other language learning skills, such as grammar, vocabulary, or writing. Pronunciation may receive a different level of attention or resources than other areas of language learning.

2. Lack of expertise: Pronunciation is a specialized area of language learning that may require specific training and expertise. Since some ESL teachers avoid using the available resources or giving their students extra work on pronunciation, they may need more formal training (Foote et al., 2011). Since teachers have acknowledged difficulties teaching pronunciation (Burns, 2006), it is probable that many L2 students rely on general-skills textbooks for pronunciation education. Universities may need more trained pronunciation instructors or instructors with the qualifications to teach pronunciation effectively.

3. Emphasis on academic English: Students say that their universities focus on teaching academic English, prioritizing reading and writing skills over speaking and pronunciation. Pronunciation may be seen as something other than a high-priority skill in this context.

4. Lack of awareness: Both teachers and students indicate that some universities may need to be made aware of the importance of pronunciation in learners’ studying and interaction and the need for dedicated resources to teach it effectively. Regardless, universities can address this issue by prioritizing pronunciation as an essential language skill and investing in resources and training for instructors who can teach it effectively.
To summarize, this chapter discussed the findings of qualitative data collected from the questionnaires and the interviews. The purpose was to gather Saudi perspectives in using the available resources to improve students’ pronunciation and what they lack and need to help with this issue. Findings from six participant interviews and 50 participants in open-ended questions in questionnaires revealed the need for in-person resources focusing mainly on pronunciation. Also, available resources in Saudi universities need to be more beneficial to improve pronunciation. This chapter discussed the three themes that emerged from both instruments: a) classroom interaction, b) technology engagement, and c) personal practice that students use to learn pronunciation. These themes were anticipated as an outcome of analysis results comparable to prior research and studies on students' perceptions of learning pronunciation utilizing different resources.

4.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provided a comprehensive analysis and discussion of the findings derived from the questionnaires and interviews conducted in this dissertation. The primary objective was to gather Saudi perspectives on utilizing available resources to enhance students' pronunciation skills and identify areas where improvements are needed. The insights gained from the six participant interviews and the responses of 50 participants in the open-ended questionnaire revealed a clear demand for in-person resources that specifically address pronunciation. Additionally, the existing resources in Saudi universities were found to require further enhancement to effectively support pronunciation improvement.

The chapter focused on three key themes that emerged from the analysis: classroom interaction, technology engagement, and personal practice. These themes were anticipated as they align with prior research and studies on students' perceptions of learning pronunciation.
using various resources. The analysis further reinforced the significance of these themes in shaping students' experiences and approaches to pronunciation learning. The findings highlighted several underlying factors contributing to the lack of pronunciation learning resources in Saudi universities. Limited resources, the lack of expertise among teachers, an emphasis on academic English, and a need for increased awareness were identified as key issues that need to be addressed. It is imperative for universities to recognize the importance of pronunciation as an essential language skill and prioritize the allocation of resources and training to effectively teach and support pronunciation learning.

Overall, this chapter serves as a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence and insights into the challenges and needs surrounding pronunciation learning in Saudi universities. The findings underscore the importance of addressing the identified issues and offer recommendations for enhancing pronunciation instruction and resources. By implementing these recommendations, universities can strive towards providing a more comprehensive language learning experience that adequately supports students' pronunciation development and overall communicative competence.

The next chapter will draw conclusions of my research and serve as the culmination of its journey presented in this dissertation. It will provide a comprehensive overview of the conclusions, implications, and future studies derived from the study.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE STUDIES

5.1. INTRODUCTION

My study discusses Saudi students’ perceptions of using the available and accessible resources at Saudi public universities to improve their pronunciation. It was conducted in two public universities, with the target subjects as third- and fourth-year college students majoring in English and studying at the same institution. A qualitative research methodology was employed to collect data from several participants and obtain multiple points of view. An open-ended questionnaire and interview were used to collect data from 50 participants in the questionnaire and six in the interview. The University of Mississippi Institutional Research Board approved the online survey and Zoom interview before recruiting participants.

After applying a thematic analysis to obtain the results on Saudi students’ perception of using pronunciation resources to improve their pronunciation, the most significant findings of this study are represented in this chapter. With a thorough discussion of the findings, implications, and suggestions resulting from the study, this chapter serves as the conclusion of the research journey described in this dissertation. The primary goal of this chapter is to summarize the results and explain their significance regarding the broader field of language acquisition, emphasizing Saudi institutions’ pronunciation education.

The chapter begins by summarizing the main findings derived from the data collected through questionnaires and interviews, highlighting the key themes and patterns that emerged from the analysis. These findings shed light on the perspectives of both students and teacher regarding the availability and effectiveness of pronunciation learning resources. Valuable
insights can be gained by understanding the current state of pronunciation instruction and the challenges faced by learners and instructors alike for further research and pedagogical development. Following the presentation of the findings, the chapter delves into the conclusions drawn from the study. These conclusions lead toward a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the lack of pronunciation learning resources in Saudi universities. They also highlight the need to prioritize pronunciation as a crucial language skill and address the identified issues to enhance pronunciation instruction.

The implications of the research findings are then discussed in detail, which extend beyond the immediate context of Saudi universities, offering insights that can inform language learning practices more broadly. The discussion explores the significance of learner autonomy, the importance of specialized training for instructors, and the need for a balanced approach to language instruction that encompasses all language skills, including pronunciation. Building upon the conclusions and implications, the chapter concludes with a set of practical studies. These recommendations are designed to address the identified issues and guide future efforts to improve pronunciation instruction in Saudi universities. They encompass suggestions for enhancing resources, providing specialized training for instructors, raising awareness about the importance of pronunciation, and promoting a learner-centered approach to language learning.

Overall, the aim of this chapter is to draw meaningful conclusions and highlight their implications for pronunciation resources in Saudi public universities. The recommendations aim to inform and guide pedagogical practices, ultimately contributing to enhancing pronunciation learning experiences for Saudi learners and beyond.

The study's objectives and purpose suggest future research on Saudi students' English pronunciation. For instance, a longitudinal examination of student achievement could reveal the
long-term efficacy of diverse resources and strategies. A comparison analysis of speech learning resources, including online tools, language labs, and specialist courses, may reveal the best methods to explore how cultural and linguistic factors affect Saudi students' attitudes and perceptions of pronunciation materials to gain cross-cultural insights and compare them with students from different backgrounds. Future research may explore the effects of instructor training on pronunciation issues and using digital technology to improve resource involvement. These future research directions could improve language pedagogies and our understanding of pronunciation learning processes. Also, in this chapter, I include the contribution this research will make to the field in general and Applied Linguistics and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in specific. The Saudi perspective on improving English pronunciation in public institutions through EFL materials contributes to Applied Linguistics and TESOL in particular. This research allows EFL resources to be tailored to Saudi learners' language and cultural situations through cultural sensitivity and contextual adaptation. Identifying pronunciation issues caused by the original Arabic language helps provide appropriate teaching resources. This study's potential to improve pedagogy, teacher competence, curriculum design, and policy can considerably influence Saudi Arabia's language teaching practices. My research also fills gaps in the literature by investigating Saudi students' and teachers' opinions, bridging information gaps in pronunciation learning resources. This dissertation's contributions could improve cross-cultural communication, English pronunciation education, and Saudi Arabian and worldwide language learning contexts.

5.2. Students’ perception of learning pronunciation

The majority of research participants expressed a genuine need to enhance their pronunciation skills and actively looked for solutions to meet these demands. The Ministry of Education should
take this into account when creating language curricula at public universities. Upon discussing their difficulties with pronouncing words correctly, a few important themes emerged.

Firstly, students expressed a desire for their teachers to pronounce words correctly. They perceived that teacher occasionally struggled with pronunciation, often influenced by their first language or accents. This concern highlighted the importance that students have placed on receiving accurate pronunciation models from their instructors. Secondly, students revealed that they were not mandated to utilize specific resources to focus on pronunciation. Instead, their coursework primarily emphasized overall speaking skills, potentially overlooking the intricacies of pronunciation. This observation suggested a potential gap in the curriculum, where targeted pronunciation practice may be lacking. Furthermore, participants underscored the need for additional resources within their universities. They expressed a desire for access to language laboratories, speaking centers, and internet resources to support their pronunciation improvement efforts. This demand for more comprehensive resources highlighted students' recognition of the value of such tools in enhancing their pronunciation.

Interestingly, some students took the initiative to engage in extracurricular activities independently. They joined speaking clubs and voluntarily participated in plays or performances to work on their speaking abilities actively and to focus on improving their English pronunciation. This proactive approach demonstrated their commitment to self-improvement and their recognition of the importance of consistent practice. Additionally, students acknowledged a significant challenge in their need to practice with native speakers. They viewed regular interaction with native speakers as an essential component of improving their pronunciation. To compensate for this lack of opportunities, many students turned to technological applications, finding them valuable tools for honing their pronunciation skills.
On the other hand, teachers were somewhat reserved in their responses, possibly hesitant to critique their universities openly. However, they did recognize that students with diverse accents faced significant challenges in pronouncing certain words correctly. Teachers' awareness of their students' pronunciation difficulties aligned with the student’s own perspectives. Nevertheless, there was a discrepancy between the pronunciation resources that teachers employed and the options presented in the questionnaire. This disconnect served as a limitation of the research, indicating a potential misalignment between teachers' practices and the tools available to them for addressing pronunciation difficulties.

This study revealed a strong commitment among students to enhance their pronunciation skills, highlighting various challenges they face and their resourceful efforts to overcome them. Teachers, while somewhat reserved, acknowledged their students' pronunciation challenges and the need for targeted support. Bridging the gap between student needs and available resources remains a critical consideration for educators and institutions aiming to improve English pronunciation instruction.

5.3. Lack of pronunciation resources in Saudi public institutions

Before addressing the issue of inadequate use of in-person resources, the data from my study generate three themes that summarize Saudi learners' use of various resources to overcome their challenges.

The first theme is classroom interaction: students mentioned having conversations with classmates and professors or engaging in classroom activities with classmates and instructors, using the course book, and fulfilling the course requirements such as papers and presentations. This theme appears beneficial and most convenient for students as it involves the activities, they need to facilitate learning and engagement such as engaging with the teacher, having a classroom
conversation, and using the course materials which shows in the data as the most accessible and convenient to students to engage in learning pronunciation. Interacting with classmates and professors allows for practice using the language, getting feedback, and collaboration, enhancing students' understanding and retention of the language pronunciation. Additionally, classroom activities and course requirements provided practical applications and reinforced learning outcomes. Therefore, this avenue can be advantageous for students' success in class.

The second theme is using technology. Students found themselves engaging in different applications that assist their learning and subscribed to some, where they met native speakers and practiced using the language. This theme represents most students’ and teachers’ responses, on which they rely inside or outside the classroom using their phones or classroom equipment such as a projector or speakers. The resources mentioned most often were watching videos on YouTube, listening to podcast audio, searching social media applications, and watching TV.

The third theme is personal practice, in which learners engage in different activities and workshops out of the classroom to improve their speaking skills in general and to practice pronunciation. The participants mentioned that the lack of available resources discourages them from focusing on their pronunciation since they can speak and use the language in the classroom. The research findings strongly support the hypothesis that empowering students through active engagement with pronunciation resources enhances their learning outcomes. While this study provides substantial evidence, it represents a crucial step in the broader endeavor to establish this as a comprehensive hypothesis in language education. The hypothesis’s potential to reshape language pedagogy and inform teaching practices is evident, not only within Saudi Arabia but on a global scale. As further research unfolds, a growing body of evidence will continue substantiating this assertion. This evolving hypothesis has the potential to contribute to more
Effective, learner-centered language learning experiences and influence policy decisions, making it a pivotal area of study in language education.

5.4. Valuable resources to learn and teach pronunciation

The findings of my study show that students depend mainly on classroom materials in learning pronunciation—for example, the course book, activities, teacher, and classmates’ conversation. Using in-person resources to improve learners’ pronunciation offers several valuable benefits that online resources may only sometimes provide. Here are a few reasons why in-person resources are valuable for improving pronunciation.

1. Immediate feedback: During the interaction, learners receive comments and advice on their pronunciation with in-person resources. As stated in Jamal (2020), the language laboratory gave students immediate feedback on their tests and helped them practice independently to learn the language independently. A teacher listens to the student talk and provides feedback on pronunciation in real-time, allowing the student to adjust their pronunciation immediately rather than continue to make the same mistakes.

2. Personalized instruction: In-person resources allow for instructional materials and techniques to fit the learner’s needs. Jianbin and Fang (2013) assessed and studied two pronunciation textbooks to see how well they taught students and satisfied their learning needs to discover students’ opinions of the book as satisfactory, acceptable, and suited to their needs. A teacher or tutor can identify the learner’s pronunciation challenges and create a plan to address them. Teachers can also provide targeted exercises and drills to help the learners improve.
3. **Authentic communication:** In-person resources provide opportunities for real-life conversations, as mentioned in Mohammed (2017) and Altoeriqi (2020). Learners can practice speaking with teachers or classmates in a natural conversational setting, which helps them develop their abilities to understand and communicate with native speakers, a task more challenging than online programs.

4. **Motivation:** In-person resources can provide encouragement and accountability for learners. Regular meeting times with teachers help learners stay on track with their pronunciation practice and feel a sense of progress and accomplishment. In general, in-person resources provide a more immersive and personalized experience that helps learners improve their pronunciation more quickly and effectively.

In addition, learners tend to use several technological resources that help them improve their pronunciation. They use technology for personal practice, which is not required by the teachers. Therefore, there are several valuable benefits to using online resources or technology to improve learners’ pronunciation.

1. **Accessibility and convenience:** Online resources and technology can be accessed from anywhere at any time, especially with the increased use of cell phones and laptops, making it convenient for learners to practice pronunciation. This accessibility also means learners can fit pronunciation practice into their busy schedules.

2. **Personalization:** Online resources and technology can offer learning experiences tailored to individual learners’ needs, which can help learners focus on specific pronunciation areas in which they need to improve, leading to faster and more effective progress such as using U-dictionary (Juwita et al., 2020), YouTube (Zitouni et al., 2021), and listening to song (Fermand and Pourghsrib, 2013). The findings of
my study show that most learners use online tools when focusing on pronunciation improvement through these online resources.

3. **Multiple techniques:** Online resources and technology can incorporate several modes of learning, such as visual or auditory, which can help learners to engage with and retain the material better. These resources can be particularly helpful for learners who struggle with traditional teaching methods.

4. **Interactivity:** Many online resources and technology use engaging tools such as speech recognition software, video recordings, and gamification to make pronunciation practice fun and engaging for learners, as many participants mentioned in their responses, which can motivate them and keep them engaged in learning.

5. **Instant feedback:** Online resources and technology can provide learners with immediate assessments and advice on their pronunciation, helping them identify areas needing improvement and track their progress over time.

Online resources and technology can be valuable tools for learners to improve their pronunciation skills, contributing to more effective and efficient learning.

### 5.5. Limitations

The current study presents a number of noteworthy limitations that need to be considered when interpreting its findings. One of the most significant limitations pertains to the scope of the research, which initially aimed to investigate Saudi perspectives on the utilization of pronunciation resources available within both public and private universities in Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts, the private colleges lacked cooperation, even in response to repeated emails and a heartfelt letter from my advisor. As a result, the study was constrained to exclusively examining public universities in the country. This uncooperative
stance from private universities significantly limits the comprehensiveness of the research, as it fails to encompass the full spectrum of educational institutions within Saudi Arabia.

Another critical limitation of the study arises from the relatively small number of participants who consented to be interviewed. In total, only six participants agreed to partake in the interviews, which, while providing valuable insights, constitutes a limited sample size. Consequently, the findings derived from this restricted pool of participants may not fully represent the broader population of Saudi students. This inherent limitation potentially restricts the generalizability of the study's results to a larger scale.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that the study exclusively centers on examining available and accessible resources within public universities. While this approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the resources present in this specific context, it might not encompass the entirety of students' pronunciation improvement strategies and resources. Students could be employing additional methods and resources beyond what is available in public universities, which were not addressed in this study.

One potential limitation of this study is its reliance on self-reported data to assess students' abilities in pronunciation. I elected to have students evaluate and describe their skill levels rather than directly observe and evaluate students' capabilities. While self-reports can provide valuable insights into students' perceptions, they are inherently subjective and may not always accurately reflect actual abilities. The conclusions drawn from self-reported data are contingent on the accuracy of students' self-assessments. As such, when discussing the results, it would be prudent for the authors to note that the findings reflect students' self-perceived abilities rather than externally validated assessments of their skills.
In light of these limitations, it is crucial to interpret the study's findings with caution, recognizing that the scope, participant size, and focus on public universities may impact how the results can be generalized to the broader Saudi student population and their pronunciation improvement practices. Future research should aim to address these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

5.6. Implications

This study centers on a specific group of participants: third- and fourth-year Saudi English students. By directing our attention to this particular demographic, we gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities students face to enhance their pronunciation skills. However, it is essential to know that this research is far beyond the confines of this specific group. The current study carries significant ramifications for the broader field of TESOL. By delving into the experiences of Saudi students and how they utilize the available resources to improve their pronunciation, we shed light on a universal aspect of language learning. The insights from this research can serve as a valuable reference point for educators and researchers in TESOL worldwide. The principles and patterns observed here can be applied and adapted to diverse linguistic and educational contexts, aiding in developing more effective language teaching methodologies.

Furthermore, this research underscores a fundamental principle that transcends linguistic boundaries: the pivotal role of accessible resources in shaping the development of learners’ pronunciation skills. Regardless of the language being studied or the nationality of the learners, the resources at their disposal significantly influence their progress in pronunciation. This observation highlights the importance of tailoring language learning environments to provide learners with the tools and support they need to succeed in their pronunciation goals. In essence,
this study offers valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by Saudi English students and contributes to the broader discourse on language education and pedagogy. It emphasizes the critical interplay between available resources and pronunciation development, thereby providing a foundation for educators and researchers to build to enhance language learning experiences for students worldwide.

This study applies to several areas of second language education:

1. **Improving language learning programs**: My research findings can be used by universities and educational institutions in SA to enhance their language learning programs, particularly concerning improving pronunciation. The research can shed light on the areas requiring more attention and the specific resources students find helpful.

2. **Teacher training**: This research can inform teacher training programs in SA. Teachers can use the findings to identify the specific needs of their students and tailor their teaching approaches and resources accordingly.

3. **Improving student outcomes**: The findings of this research can help students improve their pronunciation skills using the available resources, which can positively impact their academic performance and overall language proficiency, leading to better job prospects and increased opportunities for further education and personal growth in their majors. It will help college or ESL students figure out what tools are available to them and how to use those tools to overcome their pronunciation difficulties.

4. **Enhancing communication skills**: Improving pronunciation can also have a broader impact on communication skills. Students who communicate more effectively in a
second language have demonstrably better social and cultural exchange opportunities, promoting greater understanding and empathy across cultures.

5. *Language policy and planning:* The results of my study may prove helpful to language teachers and policymakers in SA as they work to improve student's proficiency in English, particularly in pronunciation. It will help educators assess their students' pronunciation knowledge and skill gaps. Curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia can help students overcome these learning problems by providing access to appropriate tools and resources.

Finally, my research can have important implications for language education in SA and potentially regionally. My study shows that pronunciation is an understudied topic in Saudi public universities. Teachers and students recognize the need for more opportunities to practice pronunciation, in-person or online. My study indicates that both teachers and students are willing to devote time and attention to English pronunciation, given the tools and techniques to address their issues.

**5.7. Future Research**

Based on the purpose and objectives of the study, the following are possible future research directions:

1. *A longitudinal study:* conduct a longitudinal study to track students' progress in English pronunciation over an extended period, which will provide insights into the effectiveness of different resources and strategies in the long term.

2. *A comparative study:* compare the effectiveness of different types of pronunciation learning resources, such as online tools, language labs, pronunciation-focused courses, or peer tutoring, to determine which ones yield the best results.
3. **Cultural and linguistic factors**: investigate how cultural and linguistic factors impact Saudi students' attitudes and perceptions of English pronunciation learning resources, which could involve comparing Saudi students' experiences with those of students from different cultural backgrounds.

4. **Instructor training**: examine the impact of instructor training and professional development in addressing students' pronunciation challenges, investigate how well-prepared instructors feel about teaching pronunciation, and explore effective training methods. For example, effective utilization of MALL and CALL in teaching pronunciation requires teachers to gain familiarity with the techniques and understand how to meaningfully incorporate them into lessons and curriculum.

5. **Digital technology integration**: examine the role of digital technology, such as mobile apps, pronunciation software, or virtual reality, in enhancing students' engagement with pronunciation resources.

6. **Comparison with English-speaking peers**: compare the pronunciation learning experiences of Saudi students with those of English-speaking students to identify potential gaps and areas for improvement.

7. **Institutional support and policy**: investigate how institutional support and policies affect the availability and accessibility of pronunciation learning resources for students and instructors.

8. **Pedagogical interventions**: Conduct experimental studies to evaluate the effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions in pronunciation instruction.

9. **Online learning platforms**: analyze the use of online learning platforms and how they can be integrated into the curriculum to support pronunciation development.
10. **Case studies**: conduct in-depth case studies of individual students or instructors who have experienced significant improvements in pronunciation to identify the factors that contributed to their success.

By exploring these areas, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of students' and instructors' needs, perceptions, and experiences related to English pronunciation learning resources, leading to more effective pedagogical practices and support for language learners.

### 5.8 Contributions

Exploring the Saudi perception of enhancing English pronunciation in Saudi public institutions through EFL resources holds substantial potential for enriching the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and TESOL in various ways:

1. **Cultural sensitivity and contextual adaptation**: Grasping the Saudi perspective empowers researchers and educators to tailor EFL resources to match the linguistic, cultural, and societal contexts specific to Saudi learners. This personalized approach can elevate the efficacy of pronunciation teaching by effectively addressing learners' preferences and requirements.

2. **Recognition of specific pronunciation difficulties**: My research identifies the distinct pronunciation challenges Saudi learners encounter due to the influence of their native Arabic language. This insight could lay the groundwork for crafting specialized educational materials concentrating on these precise challenges.

3. **Advancement of pedagogical strategies**: A nuanced understanding of the Saudi perspective empowers researchers to devise creative teaching methodologies that resonate with Saudi learners, encompassing integrating cultural elements, harnessing
technology, and incorporating interactive exercises to captivate learners in the journey of pronunciation enhancement.

4. *Elevation of teacher competence*: My research findings may guide EFL educators’ training and professional growth within Saudi public institutions. Instructors can refine their teaching practices and strategies by offering practical solutions to address pronunciation obstacles.

5. *Influencing curriculum design*: My research may be pivotal in shaping and adapting EFL curricula within Saudi public institutions. Emphasizing pronunciation as a vital aspect of language learning can lead to comprehensive and holistic language education.

6. *Informing policy decisions*: The Saudi government can potentially employ research insights to shape language education policies. These findings can help steer decisions pertaining to resource allocation, curriculum evolution, and language proficiency evaluation.

7. *Validation of existing approaches*: By inquiring about the efficacy of current EFL resources and methodologies adopted within Saudi public institutions for addressing pronunciation challenges, the research can provide empirical support for their continued application.

8. *Closing research gaps*: Due to the lack of research on the Saudi perspective with regard to EFL pronunciation obstacles, this study may close a significant gap in the literature by providing a thorough understanding of the difficulties unique to this setting and possible solutions.

9. *Fostering cross-cultural connections*: My results may have the potential to enhance cross-cultural communication and comprehension. Enhanced English pronunciation could
facilitate more comprehensible interactions between Saudi learners and English speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

To summarize, examining the Saudi learners' and educators’ perspectives on utilizing EFL resources to address pronunciation issues with English in Saudi public schools could result in enhanced learning experiences, innovative pedagogies, and improved language instruction methods. Benefits occur not only to the fields of Applied Linguistics and TESOL but also to the larger educational landscape within SA and across the globe.


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APPENDIX
Appendix A

Students’ Questionnaire Form

Saudi Perspective on Using EFL Resources to Improve Their English Pronunciation in
Saudi Arabia Institutions

Dear Participants,

You are invited to participate in this research by completing the following questionnaire, consisting of three sections. This research aims to investigate your opinions and perspective on your pronunciation and what resources that you use to learn pronunciation or those that your university provides you to improve your English pronunciation. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and if you choose not to participate, that will not affect you at all. The following questionnaire will require approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your answers will help me with completing my research project. Your data will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

Sincerely,

Khadija Alzahrani
Ph.D. Student in Applied Linguistics.
University of Mississippi
Supervisor:
Felice Coles, Ph.D.

Section A. Demographic Information.

1. In what year were you born?
2. In which University you are studying?

3. What is your major?
   A. English
   B. Applied Linguistics
   C. Translations
   D. Others? Please specify________

4. Which year are you studying in?
   A. First year
   B. Second year
   C. Third year
   D. Fourth year

5. Have you ever taken a proficiency test (TOEFL, IELTS, STEP)?
   A. No
   B. Yes, please specify________
      a. What was your test score?________

   Section B. Students’ attitude toward English pronunciation


1. How long have you studied English?__________________________.

2. Are you concerned about your English pronunciation when you speak English?
   A. Very much       B. A little       C. No        D. Not sure

3. Do you have difficulty learning English pronunciation?
   A. Yes       B. No       C. Maybe       D. I don't know
   What are your difficulties in speaking, if any?
vocabulary  B. hesitation  C. content  D. sentence structure  E. pronunciation

What aspects are the most difficult to learn in pronunciation?

Stress  B. Intonation  C. Rhythm  D. Vowels  E. Consonants

Can you read the international phonetic alphabet (IPA)?

Yes  B. No  C. A little  D. I do not know what is this

Can you transcribe any word by using the (IPA)?

Yes  b. No  c. A little  d. I don't know

Are you willing to do extra homework or spend your free time improving your pronunciation?

Yes  B. Sometimes  C. It depends  D. No

How many hours do you spend each week improving your pronunciation?

3-4 hours or more  B. Less than two hours  C. half an hour  D. None

Do you know about the Sounds Right pronunciation program?

Yes  B. A little  C. Not Sure  D. No

If yes, did you ever use it?

Frequently  B. Sometimes  C. Rarely  D. Not at all

Did you find it helpful?

Yes  B. Somewhat  C. Not much  D. Not at all
Section B. Pronunciation Resources

Open-ended Questionnaire

Answer the following questions in any way that you please:

1. What is the most challenging aspect of learning pronunciation?

2. What EFL resources do you need to improve your English pronunciation?

3. What resources are available at your university? Please name as many as you know!

4. Do you have access to them to help you with your English pronunciation?

5. If you, do use university resources, what do you use from these resources to improve your pronunciation?

6. What resources do you know about but not use to help with your pronunciation?

8. If you use it, what is the best part about the *ELSA Speak* pronunciation program? What is the worst part?

9. If you never use it, why not?

10. Do you listen to English programs on TV or radio to improve your pronunciation? If yes, please specify which ones.

11. Do you listen to English songs or podcasts to improve your pronunciation? If yes, please specify.

12. Do you use applications such as YouTube or Tiktok to improve your English pronunciation?

13. What other applications do you use to improve your pronunciation?

14. What resources do you think you and your university need to help improve your English pronunciation?
Appendix B

Students’ Interview Questions

1. Recruitment Script


Time of interview: vary

Date: 12/14/2022- 01/21/2023

Place: Zoom

Interviewer: Khadija Alzahrani

Interviewee: 6 college students

Position of interviewee: students

Hello, I am Khadija Alzahrani. I am a graduate student in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Mississippi. I am investigating the Saudi students’ Perspective on Using EFL Resources to Improve Their English Pronunciation Difficulties in Saudi Arabia Institutions. I am looking for themes and trends of EFL resources that are used by students or faculty members to improve students' pronunciation that is available to them in their institutions or they used personally. The interview will take approximately 15 minutes. It is completely voluntary, you are not required to participate, and if you change your mind, you can stop at any time. If you are willing to participate, I will ask you to read and sign a brief Consent Form that documents that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this interview and explains your rights in more detail. If you would like to have it, I will leave a copy of the Consent Form with you. Are you willing to participate, and is now a good time for you to answer brief questions?
1. Did you study pronunciation as a separate course? If yes, in which year? Does it have a prerequisite?
2. Do you prefer to study pronunciation in a speaking class? Or as a separate course?
3. Do you think pronunciation is essential for each English major to receive? Why or why not?
4. How do you rate your pronunciation on a scale from 1 (bad) to 10 (superior)? Why?
5. Do you like activities to improve your English pronunciation? What type of activities do you prefer to improve your pronunciation of English?
6. Does the department have a speech lab? And do you use it? For what and for how long?
7. Do you use internet resources in class to improve your pronunciation? Can you give me some examples?
8. What sources does the university in general, and the department specifically, offer to improve the student’s pronunciation?
9. Are you willing to use the available sources to improve your pronunciation? If yes, how often? If no, why not?
10. Are you required to use these resources as a course requirement? How?
11. What resources do you think you need in order to improve your English pronunciation?
12. Do you benefit from using computer software to improve your pronunciation?
13. Do you benefit from using social media to improve your pronunciation?
14. Do you use anything else to improve your pronunciation?
15. Would you like to tell me anything else about learning English pronunciation?

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I will keep all your information confidential and private and only use it for academic purposes. Your participation is very much appreciated.
Teachers’ Questionnaire Form

Teachers’ Thoughts toward students’ pronunciation difficulties and learning resources

Dear Participants,

You are invited to participate in this research by completing the following survey, consisting of two sections: your thoughts on teaching pronunciation and what pronunciation resources do you use in your class. The purpose of this study is to determine Saudi students’ pronunciation difficulties and the resources that the university provides, and the teachers’ use of those resources matching those difficulties. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and if you choose not to participate, that will not affect you at all. The following questionnaire will require approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your responses will assist me in completing my research project. Your data will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

Sincerely,

Khadija Alzahrani
Ph.D. Student in Applied Linguistics.
University of Mississippi

Supervisor: Felice Coles, Ph.D.
Teachers’ Thoughts toward students’ pronunciation difficulties and learning resources


A. Personal Information

Please answer the following questions:

1. In what year were you born?

2. In what Saudi University you are teaching?

3. Years of teaching experience:

   - 0–1 year
   - 1–5 years
   - 5–10 years
   - 10+ year

4. Professional training:

   - BA in

   - MA in ____________________________

   - Doctoral in__________________________

   - Other _____________________________

5. Skills you are teaching:

   - Reading
   - Writing
   - Listening
• Speaking

6. Current (main) teaching situation

☐ Primary level

☐ Secondary level (Gymnasium)

☐ Secondary level (Lyceum)

☐ Other _________________________________

7. Are you a native speaker of an English dialect?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. What is your first language? And nationality?

Section 2: A. Thoughts about Teaching English Pronunciation

9. Do you teach pronunciation in your class?

• Yes

• No

10. What are your learners’ difficulties in speaking?

• vocabulary

• hesitation

• content

• sentence structure

• pronunciation

11. Can your students read the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)?
12. Do you think that your students have difficulty learning English pronunciation?

13. Do you require your students to do extra work to improve their pronunciation?

- Yes
- No
- A little
- Only if they want to

14. What pronunciation aspects do you find difficult for your student when they speak English?

- Consonant
- Vowels
- Word Stress
- Intonation
- Rhythm
- Other

B. Pronunciation Resources

Answer the following questions in any way that you please:

15. What aspects are most troubling?

14. What resources do you use to assist in teaching pronunciation to your students?

15. How do you make these resources available to students?
16. Are these resources located at your university?

17. Have you used them? If yes, how often?

18. Are they helpful to students? If yes, with what pronunciation aspects does it help?

19. Are there other resources that you utilize?

20. Which resources do you use to address which pronunciation difficulty?

21. Do you use social media applications to improve your students’ English pronunciation? If yes, please specify.

22. What resources do you think your university needs to help improve your student’s English pronunciation?
Appendix D

MANDATORY CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE
– ADULT –
(Non-Treatment Studies)

Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Saudi Perspective on Using EFL Resources to Improve Their English Pronunciation Difficulties in Saudi Arabia Institutions

Investigator
Khadija Alzahrani.
Department of Modern Languages
C115 Bondurant Hall
University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677
(202)549-1448
kaalzahr@go.olemiss.edu

Faculty Sponsor
Felice A Coles, Ph.D.
Department of Modern Languages
Bondurant E-210A
University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677
662-915-7702
fcoles@olemiss.edu

Key Information for You to Consider

- **Voluntary Consent.** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

- **Purpose.** The purpose of this research is [This study will seek what Saudi students think they need in learning pronunciation and what aspects they see as the most difficult to overcome, and what resources they lack to help with their pronunciation difficulties. The study will elicit opinions on the students' pronunciation obstacles based on their perspectives and their teachers' perspectives and what resources the teachers use to assist their learning].

- **Duration.** It is expected that your participation will last [no more than 10 minutes].

- **Procedures and Activities.** You will be asked to [fill out a questionnaire and agree to participate in the interview].

- **Risks.** Some of the foreseeable risks or discomforts of your participation include [nothing to be mentioned].

- **Benefits.** Some of the benefits that may be expected include [the researcher will learn what are the most beneficial resources students and teachers use to improve
their pronunciation. This study will be a source for anyone who wants to see what are the trends in learning pronunciation.

- Alternatives. As an alternative to participation, you could Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate.

☐ By checking this box I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

What you will do for this study:

The study will be conducted in four high-ranking Saudi institutions, two public and two private. The targeted participants are (1) Saudi college students studying English in Saudi Arabia in their third and fourth years and (2) their English language teachers. The teachers will provide their perspectives on their students' pronunciation difficulties and their knowledge of the resources the universities provide, and what they use to help the students' pronunciation learning and development. The data will be collected using two questionnaires, one for students and the other for their teachers. The first section of the students' questionnaire will contain the participants' personal information. The second will examine the learners' attitudes about learning English pronunciation and what difficulties they face when learning pronunciation. The third section will investigate which learning resources tools are available to Saudi learners that they take advantage of and use to help with their pronunciation improvement. The teacher questionnaire will examine the teachers' perspectives about their students' pronunciation difficulties and what resources they know about (that the university provides) and use to help facilitate their pronunciation learning. After collecting the questionnaire data, the student participants will be asked if they agree to be interviewed if they would like to say more. After receiving the questionnaires and recording the interviews, I will transcribe the content of the interviews, noting critical themes. The data will be analyzed by looking for themes and trends in the participants' answers. This study will indicate that teachers use materials that correspond to their students' pronunciation perceptions of their difficulties. If students dislike the available, instructors may choose to consider other materials that students like.

Videotaping / Audiotaping

You will be audiotaped while you perform the tests during the ‘Tests day’ so that we can quote your interview answers and take better notes – more accurately.

Time required for this study

This study will take about 20 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and answer the interview questions.

Possible risks from your participation
There are no anticipated risks to you from participating in the study.

Benefits from your participation

You should not expect benefits from participating in this study. However, you might experience satisfaction from contributing to scientific knowledge. Also, answering the survey questions might make you more aware of what resources will you use to improve your pronunciation.

Confidentiality

All information in the study will be collected from you anonymously: it will not be possible for anyone, even the researchers, to associate you with your responses.

Confidentiality and Use of Video/Audio Tapes

1. Only experimenters on the research team will have access.
2. Tapes will be kept indefinitely / kept after transcription / destroyed 10 months after your participation / after the end of the study – which is expected to be spring semester, 2023
3. Tapes will be locked in a file cabinet in a locked office.

Right to Withdraw (Adapt language to your study)

You do not have to volunteer for this study, and there is no penalty if you refuse. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, just tell the experimenter / close your web browser. Whether or not you participate or withdraw will not affect your current or future relationship with the University, and it will not cause you to lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

The researchers may stop your participation in the study without your consent and for any reason, such as protecting your safety or protecting the integrity of the research data. If the researcher terminates your participation, any incentives will be prorated based on the amount of time you spent in the study.

IRB Approval

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

Statement of Consent
I have read the above information. I have been given an unsigned copy of this form. I have had
an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

“CLICK HERE IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE”

“Following debriefing, I approve that the information collected from me in the *Saudi Perspective on Using EFL Resources to Improve Their English Pronunciation in Saudi Public Institutions* study can be used by Mr. Alzahrani & Dr. Coles.”

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant
### Appendix E

**Questionnaire Section 2 Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N# of Q</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How long have you studied English?</td>
<td>2-15 years</td>
<td>50 responses</td>
<td>2% - 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are you concerned about your English pronunciation when you speak English?</td>
<td>1. Very much</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Sometimes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. I am not sure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you have difficulty learning English pronunciation?</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. No</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Maybe</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. I do not know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What are your difficulties in speaking, if any?</td>
<td>1. Vocabulary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Hesitation in speaking</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Content</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Sentence structure</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. pronunciation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What aspects are the most difficult to learn in pronunciation?</td>
<td>1. Stress</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Intonation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Rhythm</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Vowels</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Consonants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Can you read the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)?</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Maybe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. A little</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. I do not know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Can you transcribe any words using the IPA?</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Maybe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. A little</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. I do not know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Are you willing to do extra homework or spend your free time improving your pronunciation?</td>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Sometimes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. It depends</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>How many hours do you spend each week improving your pronunciation?</td>
<td>1. 3-4 hours or more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Less than two hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Half an hour</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. None</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I prefer not to answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do you know about the Sounds Right pronunciation program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>If yes, have you ever used it?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>If you use it, Did you find it helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VITA

Khadija Alzahrani
San Diego, CA 92131 | +1.202.549.1448 | kaalzahrani88@gmail.com

Education

Ph.D. in Second Language Studies with an emphasis in Applied Linguistics and TESOL
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS | OXFORD, MS
December 2023

Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS | KY, USA
May 2016

Diploma Certificate in Intensive English Program (IEP)
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, CENTER FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (CESL) | KY, USA.
May 2014

Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in English
ALBAHA UNIVERSITY | SAUDI ARABIA
June 2010

Research and Publications

Acquisition of Subject-Verb Agreement in Bilingual Children: A Case Study
Under review

Areas of Excellence

- Critical thinking and analytical reasoning are applied to solve problems.
- Linguistic Analysis and Research: Proficient in conducting linguistic research and analysis to understand language acquisition and learning processes better.
- Action Research: Skilled in conducting action research to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods and make data-driven instructional improvements.
- Second Language Acquisition (SLA): Adept at applying SLA theories and research to develop adequate language teaching strategies and materials.
- Curriculum Design and Assessment: Skilled in developing innovative curricula and assessment tools aligned with educational standards and objectives.
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP): Specialized expertise in creating tailored language programs
for specific industries or professions, such as business English or medical English.

- **Bilingual and Multilingual Education**: Proficient in implementing bilingual/multilingual education programs and strategies for diverse student populations. Bilingual/Fluent in English & Arabic

- **Educational Technology Integration**: Experienced in integrating cutting-edge technology and digital resources into language instruction for enhanced learning outcomes. Use different computer operating systems (Mac, PC) and programs: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Word.

- **Public speaking and Presentation skills**: Exceptional ability to deliver engaging and informative presentations, workshops, and lectures, effectively communicating complex language concepts to diverse audiences, including students, educators, and stakeholders. I am skilled in promoting a dynamic and interactive learning environment through compelling public speaking.

- **TESOL Advocacy**: Passionate about advocating for the importance of TESOL education and promoting policies that support language learners.

- **Adult Education**: Experienced in teaching and developing programs for adult learners, including ESL and EFL programs for adults.

- **Language Policy and Planning**: Knowledgeable about language policy development and planning at institutional or government levels.

- **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**: Specialized knowledge in implementing CLIL approaches to teach subject matter content through the target language.

---

**Practical Experience**

**Teaching assistant at the Department of European Languages**  
College of Humanities, King Abdulaziz University | Jeddah, SA  
August 2016 – December 2017

**English Teacher**  
Helm Altofolah School  
January 2018- November 2018

**Nine credit hours internship as an English instructor**  
Murray State University  
Summer 2016

**English Teacher**  
Dar AlTarbyah Alhadetha School | Jeddah, SA  
August 2011- August 2012

**One-year internship as English Teacher**  
Al-Baha University | Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia  
2008-2009

---

**Committee and Community Involvement**

- TESOL International Association, Member  
  2022- Present

- Editorial Board in University of Mississippi Working Papers in Linguistics Journal, Member  
  University of Mississippi- Main Campus  
  2021- Present

- American Association for Applied Linguistics Organization, Member  
  2019- Present
Acquired techniques and professional skills

- **Effective Communication**: Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, for interacting with students, colleagues, and stakeholders.
- **Classroom and Time Management**: Proven ability to manage classroom dynamics and create a conducive learning environment for students.
- **Assessment and Feedback**: Proficient in creating and implementing assessment tools and providing constructive feedback to support student progress.
- **Cross-Cultural Communication**: Adept at working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusivity and mutual respect.
- **Professional Development**: Committed to ongoing professional development and staying current with the latest Applied Linguistics and TESOL trends and research.
- **Adaptability**: Capable of adjusting teaching strategies to address emerging needs and challenges in language education.
- **Team Collaboration**: Collaborative and able to work effectively with colleagues and education administrators to achieve common goals.
- **Research Skills**: Proficiency in conducting research related to language acquisition, teaching methodologies, and educational outcomes.
- **Conflict Resolution**: Skilled at resolving conflicts and addressing student concerns diplomatically and in a solution-oriented manner.
- **Cultural Sensitivity**: A deep appreciation for and understanding of cultural diversity, with a commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment.