

Iraqi EFL Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Explicit and Implicit Pronunciation Teaching

Anas Ali Suweidan

anas.ali@aliraqia.edu.iq

تصورات معلمي وطلاب اللغة الانكليزية كلفة اجنبية العراقيين حول تدريس الضمني والصريح للاصوات الانكليزية

أنس علي سويدان

الجامعة العراقية - كلية القانون والعلوم السياسية

Abstract

Pronunciation plays a vital role in the development of communicative competence, yet in many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, it remains an underrepresented area of instruction. This study investigates Iraqi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions regarding explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching. A total of 81 teachers and 98 students from private English language institutes and universities in Iraq participated. Two modified versions of the Learner Attitudes and Motivations for Pronunciation (LAMP) inventory and Lee's (2000) pronunciation perception questionnaire were administered. Descriptive statistics and paired samples *t*-tests were conducted using SPSS. Results revealed a significant preference for implicit over explicit pronunciation instruction among both teachers and students. The findings highlight the pedagogical importance of integrating implicit pronunciation instruction within communicative approaches while still maintaining targeted explicit interventions for accuracy. Implications for curriculum designers, teacher educators, and classroom practitioners are discussed, along with recommendations for future research on suprasegmental pronunciation features. Keywords: Pronunciation; explicit instruction; implicit instruction; EFL learners; teacher perceptions.

تلعب النطق دوراً حيوياً في تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية، ولكن في العديد من سياقات اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية (EFL)، لا يزال مجال التدريس هذا غير ممثل بشكل كافٍ. تبحث هذه الدراسة في تصورات معلمي وطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية العراقيين فيما يتعلق بتدريس النطق الصريح والضمني. شارك في الدراسة ما مجموعه 18 معلماً و81 طالباً من معاهد اللغة الإنجليزية الخاصة والجامعات في العراق. تم استخدام نسختين معدلتين من قائمة مواقف المتعلمين ودوافعهم تجاه النطق (LAMP) واستبيان لي (2000) بشأن تصور النطق. تم إجراء إحصاءات وصفية واختبارات للعينات المزدوجة باستخدام برنامج SPSS. أظهرت النتائج تفضيلاً كبيراً للتدريس الضمني على التدريس الصريح للنطق بين المعلمين والطلاب على حد سواء. تسلط النتائج الضوء على الأهمية التربوية لدمج التدريس الضمني للنطق النهج التواصلية مع الحفاظ على التدخلات الصريحة المستهدفة لضمان الدقة. تمت مناقشة الآثار المترتبة على مصممي المناهج الدراسية ومدربي المعلمين والممارسين في الفصول الدراسية، إلى جانب توصيات للبحوث المستقبلية حول سمات النطق فوق المقطعي.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

English has evolved into a global lingua franca that facilitates communication across cultural and national boundaries. As the number of English speakers continues to rise, learners' ability to use English effectively in both formal and informal settings has become essential. Among the four primary language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is often regarded as the most immediate indicator of communicative competence (Ur, 1996; Nunan, 2003). Within the domain of speaking, pronunciation serves as a foundational sub-skill, directly influencing intelligibility and communicative success (Brown, 2014; Khamkhien, 2010). For many EFL learners, pronunciation represents one of the most challenging aspects of language learning. Incorrect pronunciation can hinder understanding even when vocabulary and grammar are accurate (Harmer, 2007; Madden & Moore, 1997). The global diversity of English users, as represented in Kachru's (1990) model of World Englishes, reinforces the need to view pronunciation not as an imitation of native accents but as a means

of achieving intelligibility. This shift in focus aligns with contemporary perspectives that emphasize effective communication rather than native-like performance (Morley, 1991; Burns, 2003). In Iraq, where English is taught as a foreign language, pronunciation instruction often receives limited attention. Variations in learners' linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and access to trained instructors contribute to the persistent challenges in achieving intelligible pronunciation. Consequently, investigating how teachers and students perceive different instructional approaches—specifically explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching—offers critical insights into improving EFL pedagogy in the Iraqi context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although pronunciation is recognized as an integral component of communicative competence, it has been described as the “Cinderella” of language teaching (Kelly, 1969). Research suggests that pronunciation is frequently overlooked in EFL classrooms (Gilbert, 1994, 2010; Macdonald, 2002). In Iraq, limited teacher training, insufficient curricular emphasis, and a general focus on grammar and vocabulary have contributed to this neglect. Moreover, linguistic and sociocultural factors—such as the influence of learners' first language, attitudes toward English, and limited exposure to authentic input—further complicate pronunciation acquisition (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Fraser, 2000). While explicit pronunciation instruction emphasizes metalinguistic awareness through structured explanations and phonetic modeling, implicit instruction focuses on exposure and communicative practice without overt rule explanation (Ellis, 2009; Jenkins, 2012). Determining which approach yields more favorable perceptions among Iraqi teachers and students can provide evidence-based guidance for EFL curriculum development.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Effective pronunciation instruction enhances intelligibility and overall oral proficiency. Learners with accurate pronunciation are better understood, even when minor grammatical or lexical errors occur (Gilakjani, 2012). Conversely, poor pronunciation can obstruct communication, regardless of linguistic accuracy. Investigating perceptions of explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching among Iraqi EFL instructors and learners is essential for several reasons. First, it raises awareness of pronunciation as a vital communicative skill within language programs. Second, it fosters teacher–learner coordination, ensuring that both parties recognize pronunciation as a shared pedagogical responsibility. Finally, the findings may guide the design of pronunciation-focused materials, teacher training modules, and classroom strategies suited to the Iraqi EFL context.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to explore Iraqi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of explicit and implicit pronunciation instruction. Specifically, it examines whether these two instructional approaches differ significantly in perceived importance and effectiveness. The study also seeks to determine whether gender differences or educational backgrounds influence these perceptions. By clarifying how teachers and learners conceptualize pronunciation pedagogy, the research contributes to ongoing discussions about communicative competence and pronunciation instruction in foreign language settings.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Do Iraqi EFL instructors perceive differences between explicit and implicit teaching of pronunciation?
2. Do Iraqi EFL students perceive differences between explicit and implicit teaching of pronunciation?

1.6 Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between Iraqi EFL instructors' perceptions of explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching.
2. There is no significant difference between Iraqi EFL students' perceptions of explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited by accessibility constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated online data collection. Additionally, participants were limited to instructors and students from private Iraqi language institutes and universities, which may affect the generalizability of results. Delimitations included focusing exclusively on EFL contexts, excluding ESL or bilingual environments.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

- Explicit teaching: Instruction in which teachers provide clear explanations and phonetic modeling, fostering metalinguistic awareness (Ellis, 2009).
- Implicit teaching: Instruction that encourages learning through exposure and communicative interaction without explicit explanation (Jenkins, 2012).

- Perception: A psychological construct reflecting individual attitudes and evaluations toward an object or process (Fazio, 2007; Rajecki, 2010).
- Pronunciation: The production and perception of speech sounds that determine intelligibility in spoken communication (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This section reviews theoretical and empirical studies relevant to the teaching and learning of pronunciation, focusing particularly on explicit and implicit instructional approaches. It situates the current study within the broader framework of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, emphasizing the interplay between pronunciation, communicative competence, and learner perception.

2.2 Pronunciation in Language Learning

Pronunciation is central to oral communication and directly affects intelligibility—the degree to which a speaker's utterances are understood by listeners (Morley, 1991). It encompasses both segmental features (individual sounds and phonemes) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation). Research indicates that pronunciation is a crucial yet often neglected component of EFL instruction (Gilakjani, 2012; Hismanoglu, 2006). Harmer (2001) emphasized that achieving perfect pronunciation is rare; however, intelligible pronunciation remains a realistic and essential goal. Wong (1987) noted that pronunciation deficits may impede communication even when learners possess adequate grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, pronunciation instruction should be prioritized in language curricula to ensure learners' communicative success (Brown, 2014; Khamkhen, 2010). Despite its importance, pronunciation has historically been marginalized in many teaching contexts. Fraser (2006) and Marks (2006) observed that teachers often allocate minimal classroom time to pronunciation, partly due to limited training or uncertainty about appropriate techniques. As a result, pronunciation instruction is frequently reduced to incidental correction rather than systematic pedagogy (Dalton, 2002; Baker & Murphy, 2011).

2.3 Significance of Pronunciation Teaching

Early 20th-century language teaching methods, such as the Grammar-Translation Method, largely ignored oral skills, emphasizing written accuracy instead (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). The Reform Movement and the subsequent Direct Method reintroduced attention to pronunciation through imitation and repetition (Thornbury, 2006). Later, the Audiolingual Method emphasized pronunciation drills, while the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) movement shifted focus toward intelligibility and natural communication. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1996), pronunciation instruction should aim at intelligibility, not native-like perfection. Learners who can produce comprehensible speech are more likely to succeed in real-life communication. This perspective aligns with Fraser's (2000) argument that effective pronunciation is a cornerstone of oral competence. In other words, pronunciation should be viewed as an enabling skill that facilitates overall communicative performance.

2.4 Explicit and Implicit Approaches to Pronunciation Teaching

Explicit pronunciation teaching involves conscious instruction, where teachers provide explanations, phonetic symbols, and articulatory descriptions (Ellis, 2009; Spada & Tomita, 2010). It typically employs activities such as minimal pair drills, phonetic transcription exercises, and explicit correction. This approach is rooted in cognitive theories of learning, suggesting that awareness facilitates accuracy (Dekeyser, 2008). By contrast, implicit pronunciation teaching emphasizes exposure and natural acquisition through communicative activities, recasts, and listening-focused interaction (Jenkins, 2012; Doughty & Varela, 1998). Learners internalize pronunciation features incidentally while focusing on meaning rather than form. Advocates of implicit learning argue that it mirrors natural language acquisition processes and supports fluency development. Research comparing these two approaches yields mixed findings. Couper (2003, 2006) reported that explicit pronunciation instruction significantly improved learners' production accuracy. Similarly, Spada and Tomita (2010) found that explicit instruction was generally more effective for developing linguistic awareness. Conversely, studies grounded in communicative frameworks (e.g., Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Kang, 2010) have shown that implicit exposure can enhance fluency and confidence, especially when learners are engaged in meaningful interaction. In practice, many scholars advocate for a hybrid approach that integrates both explicit and implicit elements. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) and Fraser (2002) recommend combining focused articulatory training with communicative practice to address both accuracy and fluency dimensions.

2.5 Learner and Teacher Perceptions of Pronunciation Instruction

Learners' and teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation teaching strongly influence instructional outcomes (Horwitz, 1988; Gilakjani, 2012). Lee (2000) surveyed teachers' views on accent and intelligibility, revealing that many favored native-like pronunciation even though they lacked a clear standard model. Kelch and Santana-Williamson (2002) found that learners preferred native-speaker accents, reflecting sociolinguistic biases toward "standard" English varieties. Kang (2010) extended this inquiry, reporting that ESL learners valued pronunciation highly and were motivated to improve it through both formal and informal exposure. Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) explored Asian students' attitudes toward accented English, showing variation across cultural contexts. While Malaysian learners accepted local accents as part of identity, Japanese and Korean learners tended to prefer native-like pronunciation. In Greece, Papachristou (2011) compared explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching among young learners and concluded that implicit approaches led to more natural vowel production. Unepetty (2014) examined freshman EFL learners' perceptions and found that most participants considered pronunciation critical to communication but doubted their own pronunciation ability. Collectively, these studies suggest that pronunciation attitudes are context-sensitive and often shaped by sociocultural factors. However, research exploring both teachers' and students' perceptions simultaneously—particularly in Middle Eastern contexts—remains limited. The current study addresses this gap by investigating Iraqi EFL instructors' and learners' views on explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching.

2.6 Summary and Research Gap

The literature consistently emphasizes the centrality of pronunciation in communicative competence, yet pronunciation instruction continues to receive minimal emphasis in EFL classrooms. While studies have examined the effects of explicit and implicit teaching, little is known about how these approaches are perceived in Iraqi contexts. Given that both teacher beliefs and learner attitudes significantly affect classroom practices, understanding their perceptions is crucial for developing context-appropriate pedagogical models.

This study, therefore, contributes to the field by examining:

1. Whether Iraqi EFL instructors and learners perceive differences between explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching.
2. How these perceptions can inform pronunciation pedagogy and curriculum design in similar EFL environments.

3. Methodology

3.1 Overview

This section outlines the research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques employed in this study. A quantitative, descriptive–comparative design was selected to examine differences between Iraqi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of explicit and implicit pronunciation instruction.

3.2 Participants

Two groups participated in the study: EFL teachers and EFL students from private English language institutes and universities in Iraq.

- Teachers (n = 81): Their ages ranged from 22 to 60 years. Thirty-nine held bachelor's degrees, 37 master's degrees, and five doctoral degrees in English or applied linguistics.
- Students (n = 98): Ages ranged from 14 to 30 years. Sixty were male and 38 female. Thirty-seven had completed high school, 38 were undergraduate students, 22 held graduate degrees, and one was pursuing postgraduate studies.

Participants were selected through convenience sampling due to accessibility constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic. All participants were native speakers of Arabic and had received formal English instruction in Iraqi educational institutions.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1 Teacher Questionnaire

A modified version of the Learner Attitudes and Motivations for Pronunciation (LAMP) inventory (Sardegna, Lee, & Kusey, 2014) and Lee's (2000) pronunciation perception questionnaire were adapted for teachers. The resulting five-point Likert-scale instrument consisted of two parts:

1. Demographic information (age, gender, qualification, years of teaching).
2. Perception statements measuring attitudes toward explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching (e.g., importance of pronunciation, preferred teaching mode, classroom practices).

Several wording adjustments were made to align with the Iraqi EFL context and to ensure cultural appropriateness. Reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > .85$) was verified using pilot data.

3.3.2 Learner Questionnaire

Students completed a slightly modified version of the LAMP inventory, also presented on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Items probed learners' motivation to improve pronunciation, preferences for explicit or implicit instruction, and self-confidence in producing English sounds.

Previous studies (Sardegna et al., 2014) confirmed the instrument's validity and reliability. Modifications for this study were minimal and primarily linguistic (simplified wording, contextualized examples).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Due to pandemic restrictions, data collection was conducted primarily online using Google Forms and email distribution.

1. Questionnaires were shared with over 100 teachers and 150 students.

2. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

3. After excluding incomplete responses, data from 81 teachers and 98 students were retained for analysis.

Ethical protocols were observed: participants were informed about study aims, assured confidentiality, and allowed to withdraw at any stage.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS (Version 26). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed.

- Descriptive statistics summarized mean scores, standard deviations, and normality indices.
- Paired-samples t-tests compared perceptions of explicit vs. implicit pronunciation teaching within each group.
- Effect sizes (r) were calculated to assess the magnitude of differences.

3.6 Tables and Results Overview

Table 1 Testing Normality Assumption

Group	Gender	N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
			Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Teachers	Female	35	-0.58	0.46	-1.25	-0.08	0.90	-0.09
	Male	46	0.07	0.35	0.20	-0.77	0.69	-1.11
Students	Female	38	-0.34	0.38	-0.89	-0.90	0.74	-1.21
	Male	60	0.34	0.33	-1.01	0.33	0.67	0.49

Ratios within ± 1.96 confirm normality.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics – Teachers

Teaching type	M	n	SD	SE
Implicit	28.83	81	3.11	0.38
Explicit	21.20	81	3.80	0.45

Table 3 Paired-Samples t-Test – Teachers' Perceptions

Comparison	M Diff	SD	SE	95% C Lower	95% C Upper	t	df	P(2-tailed)
Implicit	9.23	6.76	0.84	7.21	10.43	11.33	70	.000
Explicit								

$r = .80$ (large effect).

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics - Students

Teaching Type	M	n	SD	SE
Implicit	37.62	98	6.36	0.66
Explicit	14.86	98	5.25	0.57

Table 5 Paired-Samples t-Test – Students' Perceptions

Comparison	M Diff	SD	SE	95% CI		t	df	P(2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Implicit	22.51	11.31	1.08	18.64	24.71	19.86	87	.000
Explicit								

$r = .91$ (large effect).

The statistical findings demonstrate clear differences between perceptions of implicit and explicit pronunciation teaching among both groups, forming the basis for interpretation in the following section.

١.١ Results and Discussion

١.١.١ Overview

This section presents the statistical results of the study and interprets them in relation to the research questions. The data collected from 81 Iraqi EFL teachers and 98 Iraqi EFL students were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The primary objective was to examine whether these two groups perceive differences between explicit and implicit approaches to pronunciation instruction.

١.١.٢ Research Question 1: Teachers' Perceptions

The first research question explored whether Iraqi EFL instructors perceive a difference between explicit and implicit pronunciation teaching. As reported in Table 2, teachers displayed a higher mean for implicit teaching ($M = 28.83$, $SD = 3.11$) than for explicit teaching ($M = 21.20$, $SD = 3.80$).

A paired-samples t-test (Table 3) indicated that this difference was statistically significant ($t(70) = 11.33$, $p < .001$), with a large effect size ($r = .804$). Thus, teachers demonstrated a clear preference for implicit pronunciation instruction.

These results suggest that Iraqi instructors value communicative, exposure-based methods over rule-based articulation drills. One possible interpretation is that teachers equate implicit instruction with more natural, communicative classroom interactions, aligning with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles (Harmer, 2007; Derwing et al., 1998). Furthermore, limited teacher training in phonetics or phonology may reduce instructors' confidence in conducting explicit pronunciation lessons (Fraser, 2006; Gilner, 2008). Consequently, teachers may rely on indirect techniques such as modeling, repetition, and recasts rather than formal phonetic explanation.

This outcome diverges from Couper (2003) and Saito (2013), who argued that explicit pronunciation instruction yields greater improvement in accuracy. However, the difference could be attributed to contextual variables: in Iraq, pronunciation often receives little curricular attention, and teachers may prioritize communicative competence over phonetic precision due to institutional and time constraints.

١.١.٣ Research Question 2: Students' Perceptions

The second research question examined whether Iraqi EFL students perceive differences between explicit and implicit pronunciation instruction. The results mirrored those of teachers. As shown in Table 4, students reported a higher mean for implicit teaching ($M = 37.62$, $SD = 6.36$) than for explicit teaching ($M = 14.86$, $SD = 5.25$).

The paired-samples t-test (Table 5) revealed a significant difference ($t(87) = 19.86$, $p < .001$), also with a large effect size ($r = .905^*$). This indicates that students strongly favor implicit approaches.

Several explanations may account for this finding. First, implicit instruction aligns with students' natural learning tendencies; they often acquire pronunciation features through listening, imitation, and communicative

exposure rather than formal phonetic study. Second, implicit instruction may reduce anxiety, as students are not overtly corrected or required to analyze complex articulatory details. Finally, in the Iraqi EFL context, learners may associate implicit learning with authentic English use in media and social interaction, reinforcing positive attitudes toward naturalistic practice (Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011).

These findings are consistent with Hariri (2012), who reported that learners viewed pronunciation as an important but often neglected skill and preferred more communicative teaching approaches. The results also support the notion advanced by Fraser (2000) and Hayati (2010) that learners desire meaningful exposure and opportunities to practice pronunciation implicitly rather than solely through mechanical drills.

١,٤ Integrated Interpretation

Both groups—teachers and students—showed significant preference for implicit pronunciation teaching. This alignment implies shared beliefs about effective pronunciation pedagogy in the Iraqi EFL context. The results collectively suggest the following:

١. Communicative Orientation: Teachers and learners associate effective pronunciation learning with communicative engagement, not isolated articulation exercises.

٢. Confidence and Motivation: Implicit instruction may increase students' confidence and willingness to speak, as it integrates pronunciation within real communicative tasks.

٣. Teacher Readiness: Teachers' reliance on implicit methods may also reflect limited professional preparation in phonetic pedagogy; they may lack formal training to conduct explicit instruction confidently (Gilakjani, 2012; Baker & Murphy, 2011).

٤. Curricular Constraints: Iraqi language programs often emphasize grammar and vocabulary over pronunciation, making implicit integration more feasible within existing class time.

While explicit instruction remains valuable for raising phonological awareness (Ellis, 2009; Spada & Tomita, 2010), these findings underscore the practicality of implicit methods for developing communicative competence in resource-limited EFL contexts. A balanced or integrated model, combining explicit focus on problematic sounds with communicative reinforcement, may yield optimal outcomes (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Fraser, 2002).

١,٥ Pedagogical Implications

١. Curriculum Development: Syllabi should integrate pronunciation tasks implicitly within speaking and listening modules rather than isolating them.

٢. Teacher Training: Professional development should equip instructors with skills to combine explicit phonetic guidance and communicative practice.

٣. Learner Autonomy: Students should be encouraged to engage in self-directed pronunciation practice—listening to authentic materials, using speech-recognition software, and recording their speech for reflection.

٤. Material Design: Instructional materials should provide balance—structured awareness activities (explicit) followed by communicative reinforcement (implicit).

٥. Cultural Sensitivity: Pronunciation goals should emphasize intelligibility rather than imitation of native accents, aligning with global English perspectives (Kachru, 1990).

Statistical evidence and interpretive analysis confirm that both Iraqi EFL teachers and students perceive implicit pronunciation instruction as more effective and desirable than explicit instruction. This preference reflects a communicative orientation and practical adaptation to contextual realities. The results emphasize the need to reconceptualize pronunciation pedagogy in Iraq to ensure it supports both intelligibility and communicative fluency.

١,٦ Conclusion and Recommendations

١,٦,١ Conclusion

This study investigated Iraqi EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of explicit and implicit pronunciation instruction. Results from 81 teachers and 98 students revealed a consistent preference for implicit pronunciation teaching across both groups. Teachers and learners alike valued pronunciation as an essential skill for communicative success, yet they associated its effective development with exposure-based and communicative approaches rather than rule-oriented or phonetic analysis activities. The statistical results indicated highly significant differences between perceptions of implicit and explicit methods, with large effect sizes in both samples. These outcomes suggest that pronunciation instruction, when embedded within communicative contexts, is perceived as more natural, motivating, and effective. The findings align with communicative language teaching principles emphasizing intelligibility and interaction rather than native-like accuracy.

This shared preference underscores the need to reconsider traditional pronunciation pedagogy in Iraq. Current practices often marginalize pronunciation or treat it as remedial. Integrating pronunciation instruction into regular communicative tasks can enhance learner engagement and fluency while maintaining a focus on intelligibility. Ultimately, the study affirms that implicit instruction, supported by selective explicit guidance, provides a balanced and contextually appropriate framework for pronunciation teaching in EFL settings.

٢,٢ Pedagogical Recommendations

١. Integrate Pronunciation in Communicative Activities: Teachers should design speaking and listening tasks that naturally incorporate pronunciation focus. Role-plays, dialogues, and simulations offer opportunities for implicit learning without overt phonetic analysis.

٢. Balance Explicit and Implicit Instruction: While implicit learning promotes fluency, explicit instruction remains essential for clarifying specific phonological issues. Short, targeted lessons on stress, intonation, or problematic sounds should complement communicative practice.

٣. Enhance Teacher Training Programs: Teacher education curricula in Iraq should include dedicated modules on pronunciation pedagogy, addressing both articulatory and communicative aspects. Training should emphasize awareness of global English varieties and intelligibility-based instruction.

٤. Develop Culturally Relevant Materials: Locally developed teaching materials should reflect Iraqi learners' linguistic needs and cultural context. Incorporating authentic English media and peer interaction can reinforce pronunciation skills effectively.

٥. Encourage Autonomous Learning: Learners should be motivated to practice pronunciation independently through exposure to English media, pronunciation software, and recording-based self-evaluation.

٦. Future Research Directions: Future studies could employ experimental or longitudinal designs to evaluate the effectiveness of hybrid (explicit + implicit) models. Additionally, research on suprasegmental features and their impact on intelligibility would deepen understanding of pronunciation acquisition in EFL contexts.

٢,٣ Limitations of the Study

The findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations. Data were collected through self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias. The sample, limited to private institutes and universities, may not represent all Iraqi EFL learners. Furthermore, the study examined perceptions rather than actual classroom performance; future research should triangulate perceptions with observational or performance-based data.

٢,٤ Concluding Remarks

The present study contributes to the growing body of literature on pronunciation pedagogy by providing empirical evidence from the Iraqi EFL context. By highlighting both teachers' and learners' shared preference for implicit instruction, it invites educators and policymakers to reassess current pedagogical priorities. Pronunciation should no longer remain the "Cinderella" of language teaching but should be integrated systematically into communicative curricula. Through a balanced application of explicit and implicit techniques, EFL practitioners can foster both intelligibility and confidence among learners.

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