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# An Investigating into Teaching Methods Used by Zawia University EFL Teachers in Teaching Phonetics

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of the English Language in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics

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## Declaration

I declare that work in this thesis “An Investigating into Teaching Methods Used by Zawia University EFL Teachers in Teaching Phonetics “has been carried out by me in English Department at Zawia University. I further declare that this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or other similar title or recognition.

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# Abstract

This study investigates how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at the University of Zawia teach phonetics, and the main challenges they face in doing so. Although phonetics is crucial for developing learners' pronunciation and oral communicative competence, it remains under-prioritised in many Libyan university programmes. The study therefore aimed to (1) map the approaches and techniques currently used in phonetics courses, (2) identify the key pedagogical and institutional constraints shaping practice, and (3) draw out practical implications for improving phonetics instruction in similar EFL contexts. A convergent mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire completed by 20 EFL teachers who teach phonetics across five faculties of the University of Zawia. Qualitative data were generated via semi-structured interviews with 12 phonetics teachers and non-participant observations of 6 phonetics classes involving first- and second-year EFL students. Questionnaire data were analysed descriptively, while interview transcripts and observation notes were examined using thematic analysis. The findings show that teachers report drawing on a combination of intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic, and integrative approaches, but that these are implemented inconsistently and are often confined to decontextualised work on segmental features. Instruction tends to prioritise consonants over vowels, with limited, unsystematic attention to suprasegmental aspects such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Participants highlighted several persistent constraints, including insufficient specialist training in phonetics and pronunciation pedagogy, limited contact hours, large classes, scarce materials and technology, and low engagement in sustained professional development. The study recommends targeted in-service training in phonetics, the development of updated and context-appropriate teaching materials, and greater integration of communicative and technology enhanced tools to support learners' pronunciation, intelligibility, and overall oral performance.

## Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

The candles that lighten my whole life, my parents and my dear husband, whose prayers, support and guidance always surrounded me.

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ALM | Audio-Lingual Method |
| B.A. | Bachelor of Arts |
| CA | Contrastive Analysis |
| CLT | Communicative Language Teaching |
| DM | Direct Method |
| EA | Error Analysis |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| EIL | English as an International Language |
| GTM | Grammar Translation Method |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IPA | International Phonetic Alphabet |
| IRB | Institutional Review Board |
| PBL | Problem-Based Learning |
| PPP | Presentation, Practice, and Production |
| Q1, Q2, Q3… | Questionnaire Item 1, 2, 3… |
| SD | Standard Deviation |
| SLA | Second Language Acquisition |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| STT | Student Talking Time |
| TBLT | Task-Based Language Teaching |
| TEFL | Teaching English as a Foreign Language |
| TESOL | Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language |

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces several components related to the study structure, such as background of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, research questions, significance of the study, overview of the methodology and organization of the thesis.

## 1.1 Background of Study

Phonetics is widely regarded as one of the most challenging subjects in Libya, particularly at Zawia University. A recent case study by Genaw (2022) found that many university teachers in Libya have not formally taught pronunciation, and their students struggle a great deal with pronouncing new vocabulary correctly. Wei (2006) identifies significant issues currently and anticipates future difficulties, noting that many language teachers lack effective strategies for teaching pronunciation. Consequently, pronunciation instruction remains limited in numerous schools. In addition to the absence of clear pedagogical approaches, EFL teachers frequently perceive pronunciation as one of the most difficult aspects to teach and learn. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) emphasize the necessity of providing EFL teachers with specialized materials to enhance their pronunciation skills.

Recent research highlights the importance of integrating innovative teaching methodologies to improve phonetics instruction. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) advocate the use of communicative and interactive techniques, such as minimal pairs exercises and phonetic transcription, which have been shown to significantly improve learners' pronunciation accuracy. However, EFL teachers often face challenges in implementing these approaches due to insufficient specialized training, limited classroom time, and restricted access to phonetic teaching resources (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Furthermore, students' native language interference frequently complicates the acquisition of phonetic concepts, making it difficult for teachers to correct deeply entrenched pronunciation errors (Swan & Smith, 2001; Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015).

In addition, technological In addition, technological tools such as computer-assisted pronunciation training have demonstrated potential in enhancing pronunciation outcomes (Levis, 2018). Despite this, many teachers lack the requisite digital literacy and institutional support necessary to effectively integrate these technologies into their instruction. These challenges underscore the urgent need for targeted professional development programs and improved resource allocation to empower teachers in delivering effective phonetics education. Addressing these issues is essential for advancing pronunciation teaching and ultimately improving learners' communicative competence in English.

These difficulties present a valuable area for research, as addressing them may resolve specific problems or lead to changes in teaching methodologies. Additionally, investigating these challenges could uncover previously unexplored aspects of phonetics instruction. This study seeks to deepen teachers' comprehension of phonetics by promoting the use of instructional approaches that are more effectively tailored to the nature of the subject. In addition, it aims to explore the primary challenges educators face in teaching phonetics and to suggest practical strategies for addressing and simplifying these difficulties.

This study approaches phonetics from a specific perspective and addresses a gap in existing literature, which largely focuses on general teaching strategies and learner-centered challenges in secondary or private educational settings. There is a notable lack of research examining actual teaching practices and methods employed by university-level EFL teachers in public institutions, particularly within the Libyan context. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to the specific challenges and decisions EFL teachers face when delivering phonetics content in real classroom environments.

The present investigation is rooted in the researcher's sustained professional engagement as an English language teacher at the University of Zawia, supplemented by informal professional exchanges with colleagues responsible for teaching phonetics. Over time, this classroom-based experience has brought to light recurrent pedagogical problems, notably an apparent mismatch between existing teaching methods and learners' needs, the limited range and quality of instructional materials, and the scarcity of specialized resources for phonetics instruction. These practice-derived insights served as the main catalyst for selecting a mixed-methods research design.

Within this design, the qualitative dimension relies on semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews are employed because they offer a flexible yet systematic means of probing teachers' beliefs, habitual practices, and perceived constraints, while still leaving space for unanticipated but relevant issues to surface. Classroom observations complement these interviews by supplying direct, contextual evidence of how phonetics lessons are organized and enacted in real teaching situations. The quantitative dimension consists of a structured questionnaire developed to generate numerical indicators of how widespread and severe the identified challenges are across a broader group of teachers. Consistent with Creswell's (2012) recommendations for mixed-methods inquiry, bringing together data from interviews, observations, and questionnaires enables methodological triangulation. This integration strengthens the validity and reliability of the findings and enhances the overall credibility of the conclusions drawn about the teaching of English phonetics at the University of Zawia.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) continue to face challenges in achieving clear and understandable pronunciation, even after years of formal education. In Libya, as in many other EFL environments, these difficulties are closely linked to the way phonetics and pronunciation are taught at the secondary and university levels. Although phonetics plays a crucial role in effective spoken communication and overall language ability, it is often treated as a minor part of the curriculum or taught in ways that do not sufficiently meet learners' communicative needs.

Based on extensive classroom experience, the researcher has identified several common problems in phonetics instruction. First, teaching often focuses heavily on theoretical elements such as phonetic symbols, definitions, and descriptions of articulation while providing few opportunities for ongoing, guided pronunciation practice. Consequently, students may gain factual knowledge about sounds but fail to develop the practical skills needed to produce them correctly in real-life communication. Second, many instructors use traditional, teacher-centred methods and have limited familiarity with modern pronunciation teaching approaches. This lack of specialized training in phonetics reduces their ability to identify learners' specific pronunciation difficulties and to create effective, practice-based activities. Third, regular and personalized feedback on pronunciation is often lacking. Without consistent, targeted feedback, learners find it hard to

recognize their mistakes, monitor their speech, and make meaningful improvements. These challenges observed locally align with findings from other EFL contexts. For instance, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) note that Iranian EFL teachers may face significant difficulties in teaching pronunciation effectively, mainly due to constraints such as limited time, resources, and access to supportive materials and technologies. However, within Libya's higher education system, there is a noticeable shortage of empirical research examining how phonetics is taught in university classrooms, how teachers view their role in pronunciation instruction, and how these teaching practices impact students' pronunciation development. This gap is especially apparent in institutions like Zawia University and its associated faculties, where phonetics is included in the English curriculum but has not been thoroughly studied.

As a result, there is little evidence to guide improvements in the design and delivery of phonetics courses, the professional development of EFL teachers, and the support offered to learners struggling with pronunciation. By addressing these issues, the current study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature on phonetics teaching practices in Libyan higher education and to contribute toward a more effective and pedagogically sound approach to pronunciation instruction for EFL learners.

### 1.3 Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to enhance teachers' understanding of phonetics by encouraging the adoption of teaching methods that are better aligned with the subject. Moreover, it aims to identify the most significant challenges teachers encounter in phonetics instruction and to propose potential strategies for simplification and this aim gives rise to the following objectives:

1-To find teaching methods used by EFL teachers at Zawia university when teaching phonetics.

2-To highlight challenges that are faced by EFL teachers at Zawia university when teaching phonetics.

### 1.4 Research Questions

This research utilizes two questions; they are as follows:

Q1-what are the teaching methods that EFL teachers at Zawia university use when teaching phonetics?

Q2-what are the challenges that EFL teachers at Zawia university face when teaching phonetics?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it has the potential to contribute to improved phonetics instruction in EFL contexts. By identifying effective teaching methods and challenges this study can inform the development of teaching methods and materials that can support EFL learners in developing their phonetics skills. This in turn, can lead to enhanced learner outcomes, including improved pronunciation, intonation, and listening skills.

Furthermore, this study can provide insights into the training and support needs of EFL teachers. By identifying the challenges that teachers encounter when teaching phonetics, this study can inform teacher education programs and professional development initiatives. This can help to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge skills and resources needed to teach phonetics effectively.

In addition, this study can contribute to the existing body of research on phonetics instruction. By exploring the teaching methods and challenges associated with phonetics in EFL contexts, this study can provide a foundation for future research in this area. This can help to advance understanding of phonetics and inform the development of evidence-based teaching practices.

This study has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of EFL education by improving understanding of phonetics and informing the development of effective teaching practices. This study can help to enhance learners' outcomes and promote more effective communication in English.

## 1.6 Overview of the Methodology

This study is situated within a mixed-methods framework that brings together quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate how English phonetics is taught in the Libyan EFL context and what challenges teachers encounter. This combination is adopted in order to capture both broad tendencies in reported practice and more detailed accounts of what occurs in classrooms and how teachers understand their work.

Within this framework, data are generated through a teacher questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. The questionnaire offers a structured overview of teachers' reported methods and perceived difficulties, while the interviews and observations provide richer insight into beliefs, decision-making, and actual classroom practices. All

instruments are informed by relevant literature on phonetics pedagogy and research methods and are reviewed and refined to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability for the university setting.

The questionnaire responses are summarised using descriptive statistical procedures, and the qualitative material from interviews and observations is examined through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to teaching approaches, learner difficulties, and contextual constraints. The two strands are then brought together at the interpretation stage, where converging and contrasting findings are considered in order to build a coherent and well-grounded account of phonetics teaching in the study context. A full description of the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, pilot work, data analysis, and ethical considerations is provided in Chapter Three.

### 1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study. Including the background, the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, research questions, significance, methodology, and organization. Then, Chapter two provides a comprehensive review of existing literature and related studies, establishing both theoretical and conceptual frameworks while identifying gaps that the present research seeks to address. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, including the design, population, sampling techniques, instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of analysis, ensuring validity and reliability. Chapter four presents the collected data in organized formats such as tables and figures, analyses them using appropriate statistical or qualitative methods. Finally, Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings and their implications, as well as the conclusion of the study, including recommendations for future research.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides definition of Phonetics, branches of Phonetics, theoretical framework, the historical background of English Language Phonetics, the concept of teaching phonetics, importance of teaching Phonetics, Phonetics and its role in EFL classes, approaches and methods to teaching Phonetics, teaching material for pronunciation learning, teachers' cognition of feedback on pronunciation, Techniques and Strategies to teaching phonetics, challenges in teaching English language Phonetics, previous studies, and a summary of this chapter.

## 2.1 Definition of Phonetics

Phonetics is widely recognized as the scientific study of speech sounds, encompassing their production, transmission, and perception. Ladefoged (1993) defines phonetics as the study of how speech sounds are articulated, classified, and perceived. Similarly, Roach (2009) describes phonetics as the investigation of how speech sounds are produced, used in language, recorded, and interpreted. Cook (2008) refers to it as the process through which language sounds are generated. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) view phonetics as the production of meaningful sounds that facilitate communication. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) expand the definition to include key suprasegmental features such as intonation, rhythm, stress, and pronunciation, all of which are fundamental to effective oral communication.

Phonetics is typically divided into three main branches: articulatory phonetics, which examines how speech sounds are physically produced; acoustic phonetics, which focuses on the transmission and physical properties of sounds; and auditory phonetics, which explores how sounds are perceived by the listener (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014). For language learners, a solid foundation in phonetics is essential, as poor pronunciation can significantly hinder intelligibility and lead to communication breakdowns (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

## 2.2 Types of Phonetics

Phonetics is traditionally divided into three primary branches, each addressing distinct aspects of speech sound analysis. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) explain that phonetics encompasses the study of how speech sounds are produced, transmitted, and perceived. Each branch contributes essential knowledge for pronunciation instruction in language teaching contexts.

Articulatory phonetics, also referred to as physiological phonetics, focuses on the physical production of speech sounds by the human vocal apparatus. Roach (2009) notes that articulatory phonetics examines the movements of the vocal organs involved in speech sound production. This branch investigates which articulatory organs, including the lips, teeth, tongue, alveolar ridge, palate, velum, and vocal cords, are engaged in sound production. Cruttenden (2014) emphasizes that understanding the articulatory properties of sounds is fundamental to effective pronunciation teaching, as it provides learners with explicit awareness of the physical movements required for accurate sound production.

Acoustic phonetics examines the physical properties and transmission characteristics of speech sounds, focusing on acoustic wave forms as they travel from speaker to listener. Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) define acoustic phonetics as the study of the physical properties of speech sounds and the way these properties vary. This branch applies principles from physics, mathematics, and electronics to measure frequency, intensity, duration, and spectral characteristics. Sounds can be objectively measured using spectrograms and waveform analyzers (Cruttenden, 2014), providing precise data that complements articulatory analysis.

Auditory phonetics investigates how the human auditory and perceptual systems receive, decode, and process speech sounds. Roach (2009) notes that auditory phonetics concerns the way speech sounds are perceived by listeners. This branch illuminates how non-native speakers perceive target language sounds and why pronunciation errors may persist despite explicit instruction (Cruttenden, 2014).

## 2.3 Theoretical Framework

The teaching of English language phonetics in EFL settings is founded upon a comprehensive and evolving theoretical framework that integrates insights from multiple disciplines, including educational psychology, applied linguistics, phonology, and second language acquisition (SLA).

This interdisciplinary framework informs the historical and conceptual development of phonetics instruction, its pedagogical practices, and the ongoing challenges faced by educators.

Two fundamental premises underpin this theoretical foundation. First, clear and intelligible pronunciation is a crucial component of communicative competence, which is essential for effective oral communication (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Morley, 1991). Second, pronunciation should not be viewed as an isolated skill; rather, it interacts dynamically with other language subsystems, such as reading, spelling, speaking, and listening (Gilakjani et al., 2011). This holistic approach aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaning-centered instruction that simultaneously addresses both linguistic form and communicative function (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The evolution of pronunciation instruction has closely paralleled developments in language teaching theory. Early approaches, grounded in behaviorist theory, relied on intuitive-imitative methods that emphasized auditory exposure and repetition. These methods were based on the assumption that learners could acquire accurate pronunciation by imitating native-speaker models through repeated listening and practice (Fraser, 2006).

The advent of the Reform Movement, along with the introduction of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), marked a significant shift towards structuralist and analytic-linguistic orientation. This approach prioritized explicit instruction in phonetic systems, articulatory processes, and contrastive analysis between the learners' first language and the target language (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). The emphasis was placed on developing learners' awareness and understanding of the mechanics of speech production.

More recent approaches integrate elements from both behaviorist and cognitivist paradigms. The Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) and the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) have been particularly influential, suggesting that language acquisition is contingent upon exposure to comprehensible input and the conscious awareness of linguistic features. In the context of pronunciation, this implies that learners benefit from both incidental exposure and explicit, focused instruction on segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental (into nation, rhythm, stress) features (Derwing & Munro,2015).

Furthermore, sociocultural theory, particularly the work of Vygotsky, underscores the role of social interaction, scaffolding, and feedback in language development. From this perspective, pronunciation is most effectively acquired within meaningful, communicative contexts where learners receive both guided instruction and ample opportunities for practice (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Contemporary theoretical perspectives also highlight the relationship between pronunciation, identity, and intelligibility. Modern communicative language teaching frameworks have shifted their focus from achieving native-like pronunciation to promoting functional intelligibility (Fraser, 2000; Levis, 2018; Saito, 2014). This shift reflects the recognition of English as an international language (EIL) and the legitimacy of a range of global English accents, provided they do not hinder mutual understanding. As a result, current pronunciation instruction seeks to balance the goal of accurate pronunciation with the pragmatic need to facilitate effective communication. Rather than striving for accent elimination, the focus has moved toward helping learners develop intelligible, context-appropriate speech (Jenkins, 2000).

Methodologically, the theoretical framework acknowledges the complementary roles of intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic, and integrative approaches to pronunciation instruction (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

The integrative approach synthesizes these methods within authentic communicative contexts. It encourages learners to develop pronunciation skills through interactional activities that incorporate both segmental and suprasegmental elements, as well as multimodal input and personalized feedback (Levis & McCrocklin, 2018). This theoretical orientation is exemplified in the design of computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) tools such as ELSA Speak and Praat, which provide learners with individualized practice opportunities and real-time visual feedback to support self-monitoring and improvement (Nushi & Sadeghi, 2021).

In parallel, theories of teacher cognition and reflective practice inform the conceptualization of the teacher's role. Rather than serving merely as transmitters of knowledge, teachers are positioned as facilitators who assess learners' pronunciation needs, design appropriate instructional interventions, and provide constructive, targeted feedback (Kenworthy, 1987). Consequently, the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction is closely tied to teachers' linguistic competence,

pedagogical skills, and professional attitudes toward pronunciation as an integral component of language fluency (Shahzada, 2012).

Finally, the framework accounts for contextual factors that influence the implementation of pronunciation instruction. These include curricular constraints, institutional priorities, the availability of instructional resources, and learner-related variables such as proficiency levels and individual learning differences (Gilakjani, 2012; Jenkins, 2000). These contextual elements interact with pedagogical theories, shaping how theoretical principles are operationalized in diverse instructional settings.

### 2.4 The Historical Background of English Language Phonetics

Both in terms of theoretical comprehension and real-world implementation, the function of pronunciation in language training has changed significantly throughout time. Three main phases (Pre-Reform Movement Era, Post-Reform Movement Era, the middle of the 20th century, and Modern Era) may be distinguished in the development of pronunciation instruction, each of which represents a paradigm shift in pedagogical approaches.

#### Pre-Reform Movement Era

During this period, pronunciation was either neglected altogether or addressed only implicitly, relying on learners' innate ability to imitate the sounds and rhythms of the target language without formal instruction. This approach, commonly referred to as the intuitive-imitative method, was prevalent in early language teaching practices (Fraser, 2006; Macdonald, 2002). Within grammar-translation and reading-based methodologies in which the primary focus was on written texts and grammatical analysis, pronunciation received minimal attention, as the development of oral proficiency was not considered a central instructional goal.

#### Post-Reform Movement Era

The development of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in the late 19th century, led by linguists such as Paul Passy, William Vietor, and Henry Sweet, marked a significant advancement in the formal study of pronunciation. Emerging from the broader Reform Movement, the IPA facilitated a more systematic and scientific approach to phonetics. This development had a profound impact on language teaching by supporting the adoption of an analytic-linguistic approach to pronunciation instruction. Unlike the intuitive-imitative method, the analytic-

linguistic approach emphasized explicit teaching through phonetic transcription, articulatory descriptions, and contrastive analysis, thereby providing learners with a clearer understanding of the sound system of the target language (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996).

**The 1940s–1970s: The Middle of the 20th Century**

The audiolingual approach, which placed an emphasis on grammatical correctness and pronunciation, became more popular in the US in the 1940s and 1950s. This approach placed a high priority on phonemic differences, limited pair exercises, and repeating drills as essential elements of pronunciation training.

But by the 1960s, the cognitive method had surfaced, casting doubt on the viability of attaining native-like pronunciation. This approach's proponents contended that more manageable sub-skills like grammar and vocabulary should receive more instructional time (Morley, 1991). As a result, pronunciation no longer played a major part in language curriculum, which sparked discussions about whether it was still necessary for ESL/EFL training.

Pronunciation was given increased importance in the 1970s by alternative approaches like Community Language Learning (CLL) and the Silent Way. CLL focused on pronunciation within a learner-controlled, intuitive-imitative framework, whereas Silent Way advocates prioritized proper production of phonological characteristics (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996).

**Modern Era**

Since the mid-1980s, the importance of pronunciation instruction in language education has gained increased recognition, with attitudes toward its role becoming more stable and positive. The emergence of the Communicative Approach in the 1980s and 1990s marked a pivotal shift, positioning pronunciation as a central component of language acquisition rather than a peripheral skill. Scholars such as Morley (1991) argue that pronunciation should not be treated as an isolated linguistic feature, but rather as an essential element of effective oral communication. Reflecting this perspective, the primary goal of pronunciation instruction has evolved from striving for native-like accuracy to promoting functional intelligibility, that is, enabling learners to produce speech that is both comprehensible and socially appropriate in a variety of communicative contexts (Fraser, 2000).

## 2.5 The Concept of Teaching Phonetics

Teaching phonetics involves guiding learners in the accurate and meaningful articulation of English sounds, including segmental and suprasegmental features such as intonation, rhythm, stress, and pronunciation (Harmer, 2007). Key components of phonetics instruction include phonemes, word stress, connected speech, and intonation elements that are essential for achieving clear and effective communication. While phonetics can be a challenging area to teach, educators must adopt systematic instructional strategies to ensure that learners develop accurate pronunciation skills (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

A growing body of research highlights effective methodologies for phonetics instruction. Derwing and Munro (2015) emphasize that pronunciation instruction should aim at improving learners' intelligibility rather than achieving native-like accuracy. For instance, Pardede (2018) found that phonetic drilling, supported by exposure to English audiovisual materials, significantly improved pronunciation accuracy among Indonesian university students.

## 2.6 Importance of Teaching Phonetics

Proficient communication in a second language extends beyond mere grammatical and lexical knowledge, underscoring the growing significance of phonetics instruction. Incorrect pronunciation may result in miscommunication, while precise articulation contributes to improved language proficiency and comprehensibility (Gilakjani, 2012). Furthermore, Gilakjani (2012) emphasizes the necessity of employing a variety of instructional resources and evaluative methods to successfully embed pronunciation training within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program.

Despite the acknowledged significance of pronunciation, EFL teachers often prioritize communicative activities over explicit phonetics instruction (Moedjito, 2016). Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of explicit pronunciation training; for example, Lee et al. (2015) report substantial gains in learners' pronunciation accuracy following focused phonetics instruction. Similarly, learners who receive targeted pronunciation instruction often report improved confidence and more positive attitudes toward speaking (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Moreover, corrective feedback plays a crucial role in improving both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, as emphasized by Saito and Lyster (2012). Targeted

instruction also facilitates learners' ability to discern differences between their first language (L1) and second language (L2) pronunciation patterns, which is essential for successful phonetic acquisition (Lee et al., 2015).

### 2.7 Phonetics and Its Role in EFL Classes

Students' understanding of phonetics and their capacity to take productive notes are greatly influenced by the teacher's behavior and teaching style. Shahzada (2012) asserts that classroom learning is deeply affected by the teacher's management styles and behaviors, as these reflect their professional competence and serve as a major source of motivation and inspiration for students. Conducting pronunciation diagnostics and identifying factors that can significantly enhance students' speech comprehensibility are key responsibilities of teachers. EFL teachers must be aware of their learners' needs and pronunciation difficulties to provide appropriate materials and resources that address these challenges (Shahzada, 2012). Teachers have a significant impact on students' pronunciation development, whether positive or negative, as they serve as models of spoken language. Therefore, their primary goal should be to establish an encouraging and supportive classroom environment.

### 2.8 Approaches and Methods to Teaching Phonetics

A theoretical framework that underpins the nature of language, language acquisition, and instructional practices forms the foundation of an approach in language teaching. Jebahi (2022) describes an approach as encompassing correlative assumptions about how learners acquire language and how teachers facilitate this process. In contrast, a method is the practical implementation of an approach. Richards and Rodgers (2014) explain that a method operationalizes theoretical concepts into pedagogical practice, specifying the skills to be taught, the content to be covered, and the sequence in which it is delivered.

Therefore, selecting an appropriate approach is essential for pronunciation teaching. Pronunciation holds particular significance for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), who frequently encounter difficulties in this area (Derwing & Munro, 2015). To address these challenges, educators must employ effective teaching strategies tailored to the specific needs of EFL students (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), phonetics teaching can be categorized into three primary approaches: integrative, analytic-linguistic, and intuitive-imitative.

### 2.8.1 The Intuitive-Imitative Approach

It emphasizes learners' acquisition of pronunciation through imitation and listening, often without explicit instruction. This approach commonly utilizes audiovisual materials such as websites and films and relies on native speakers as pronunciation models. Its central focus is on implicit learning, encouraging natural acquisition by exposing students to language use without overtly teaching phonetic principles. Jam and Adibpour (2014) examined the production of three consonants (/t/, /θ/, and /w/) through both intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic methods. The study revealed that students taught via the intuitive-imitative method struggled to distinguish between /t/ and /θ/, failing to produce the latter accurately. These findings suggest that teaching dental sounds may be particularly challenging using this approach. Nevertheless, students demonstrated strong motivation and engagement in pronunciation learning despite these difficulties.

Similarly, Buss (2016), in a study on pronunciation teaching among Brazilian EFL teachers, found that 91.2% of participants employed imitation and repetition strategies. The findings indicated that the intuitive-imitative method effectively improved the pronunciation of diphthongs, pure vowels, and consonants. Researchers often regard this approach as one of the most effective for addressing pronunciation difficulties in classroom settings.

### 2.8.2 The Analytic-Linguistic Approach

It employs phonetic tools such as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), vocal tract diagrams, and targeted auditory exercises to facilitate pronunciation learning (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). While sharing some similarities with the intuitive-imitative method, the analytic-linguistic approach is characterized by more explicit teaching, requiring students to understand phonetic rules and articulatory mechanisms. Pronunciation is taught systematically through articulatory descriptions, stress patterns, and phonetic symbols, enabling learners to analyze and accurately produce sounds.

Ghorbani et al. (2016) investigated the effect of explicit vowel teaching on learners' perception, using both intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic methods alongside audio recordings for

practice. The results demonstrated that the analytic-linguistic approach yielded superior outcomes, highlighting the benefits of formal teaching in improving vowel perception.

### 2.8.3 The Integrative Approach

Prioritizes prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation, and stress, emphasizing their role in discourse beyond the phoneme and word levels (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). This method incorporates pronunciation teaching into meaningful, task-based communicative activities, allowing students to develop pronunciation skills in authentic language use contexts.

Mora-Plaza et al. (2018) explored the effectiveness of communicative tasks in pronunciation teaching and concluded that they significantly enhance learners' phonetic awareness. The integrative approach synthesizes elements of both the intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic methods, focusing on segmental and suprasegmental features to enhance learners' phonetic and communicative competence (Mora-Plaza et al., 2018).

These three approaches were selected for their prominence and frequent application in phonetics teaching, providing a comprehensive perspective that encompasses both traditional and contemporary EFL pedagogies, particularly within academic settings such as University of Zawia.

In addition to these three core approaches, teaching phonetics to EFL learners, particularly first-year students, requires the selection of instructional strategies that balance linguistic accuracy with learner engagement. One widely adopted approach is the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), which emphasizes repetition and drilling to help students develop accurate pronunciation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

## 2.9 Teaching Materials for Pronunciation Learning

Teaching materials play a central role in pronunciation and phonetics instruction because they shape the kinds of classroom activities learners do, the amount of guided practice they receive, and the extent to which pronunciation is connected to communicative use. Tomlinson (2012) argues that effective materials should provide meaningful exposure, support learner engagement, and help learners notice and practice language patterns through staged work.

In pronunciation teaching specifically, materials are most useful when they prioritize intelligibility and guide both teachers and learners toward realistic, high-impact targets (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Levis & Sonsaat, 2016). For example, course books and teacher resources can provide structured practice that moves from perception work to controlled production and then to communicative tasks (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Because no single textbook can address every context, teachers often need to adapt, supplement, and sequence materials to match learner needs, course aims, and classroom constraints (Tomlinson, 2012).

### 2.10 Teachers' Cognition of Feedback on Pronunciation

Teacher cognition teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions strongly influences whether pronunciation is taught systematically and how feedback is provided. Baker and Murphy (2011) argue that pronunciation teaching depends on a clear knowledge base and teacher preparation; without adequate training, teachers may avoid pronunciation work or focus on limited, easier-to-teach features.

Corrective feedback is a key instructional tool in pronunciation, but teachers' decisions about what to correct, when to correct, and how to correct are shaped by their beliefs about effectiveness, time constraints, and learner affect. Couper (2019) shows that teachers commonly provide feedback on phonemes and word-level issues and often rely on recasts, while also reporting gaps in training and uncertainty about how to give effective feedback. Empirical work indicates that targeted instruction combined with feedback can support pronunciation development (Saito & Lyster, 2012), especially when it is feasible for classroom realities and aligned with intelligibility goals (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

### 2.11 Techniques and Technology for Teaching Phonetics

Effective pronunciation teaching typically involves combining techniques that develop perception, production, and communicative use. Common techniques include discrimination practice, minimal-pair work, guided repetition and drilling, and explicit articulatory explanations supported by phonetic symbols and visualizations (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Physical and visual supports (e.g., mirrors to monitor articulator movement) can also help learners become more aware of how sounds are formed and adjusted (Underhill, 2005).

Technology can extend practice opportunities and offer forms of feedback that are difficult to provide consistently in large classes. Levis (2007) highlights how computer technology and CAPT can support instructional goals when tools are selected to match those goals. Chun (2012) similarly discusses computer-assisted pronunciation teaching as a way to provide practice, modeling, and feedback through multimedia and interactive systems. In this chapter, such technology-supported practice aligns with the integrative approach discussed earlier (Levis & McCrocklin, 2018) and with the use of tools such as ELSA Speak and Praat, which can provide structured practice and feedback, although app feedback quality can vary and requires teacher guidance (Nushi & Sadeghi, 2021).

### 2.12 Teachers' Challenges in Teaching English Language Phonetics

However, various challenges hinder effective pronunciation teaching. Scrivener (2005) notes that many teachers feel inadequately prepared to teach pronunciation due to insufficient training. Similarly, Nair et al. (2006) argue that a lack of formal phonetics teaching contributes to teachers' reluctance to integrate pronunciation activities into lesson plans.

The main challenges faced by EFL teachers in teaching phonetics include:

1. **Lack of confidence**

Lack of confidence in teaching phonetics refers to teachers' feelings of insecurity and self-doubt regarding their ability to teach pronunciation effectively. This lack of confidence often results from teachers' own difficulties with certain sounds and their concern about pronunciation accuracy, which may negatively influence their classroom performance and willingness to engage students in phonetic teaching. Teachers may fear negative evaluation from learners and feel uncomfortable modeling pronunciation in class (Macdonald, 2002). Such lack of confidence is also commonly attributed to teachers' previous learning experiences with phonetics, which were often highly technical, abstract, and difficult, particularly at higher levels of education (Breitkreutz et al., 2001).

2. **Insufficient knowledge and training**

Teachers frequently lack the academic knowledge and practical skills needed to teach phonetics successfully. Grammar and vocabulary are often given more attention in teacher education programs, while pronunciation tends to be overlooked (Jenkins, 2000). Moreover, teachers who receive insufficient phonetic teaching during professional development may be ill-equipped to

address students' pronunciation problems. When teachers do not possess a thorough understanding of phonetics principles, such as articulatory phonetics and prosody, they may struggle to provide accurate models or clear explanations (Baker & Murphy, 2011). This knowledge gap can slow students' progress in acquiring proper pronunciation and may reduce the overall effectiveness of teaching.

3. **Pedagogical limitations**

EFL teachers also encounter pedagogical challenges when teaching phonetics. Effective phonetics teaching requires a methodological approach that combines theoretical explanations with practical classroom application. Large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and diverse linguistic backgrounds in multilingual classrooms make it difficult for teachers to address individual students' needs (Jenkins, 2000). In addition, teachers may face difficulty integrating phonetics into a broader language curriculum that often prioritizes grammar and vocabulary over pronunciation (Seidlhofer, 2011). A lack of clear pedagogical strategies can result in superficial instruction that fails to address deeper phonetic issues, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Many teachers rely on repetitive drills or isolated exercises, which do not promote long-term improvement in communicative competence.

4. **Time restrictions and curriculum priorities**

Because of the time constraints of EFL programs, which tend to emphasize grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, phonetics is sometimes neglected (Jenkins, 2000). Teachers may feel pressured to meet curriculum requirements, leaving little time to teach pronunciation in depth. This can result in surface-level teaching that does not fully address important phonetic features, such as stress, intonation, and articulation (Seidlhofer, 2011). In addition, curriculum design and instructional materials often treat pronunciation as a secondary component in EFL programs (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Finally, pronunciation is frequently excluded from assessment and evaluation processes, which diminishes its perceived importance for both teachers and students (Useini, 2019).

5. **Learner-related challenges**

Teachers also face challenges related to learners, including first language interference, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and spelling-pronunciation inconsistencies (Gilakjani,

2012). Additionally, a lack of awareness among learners regarding pronunciation fossilization can make it more difficult for teachers to achieve improvements in students' speech accuracy.

6. **Specific phonetic difficulties**

Pronunciation teachers often encounter difficulty teaching particular phonemes, such as vowel length distinctions, diphthongs, and triphthongs (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). These aspects of English phonetics require precise teaching and frequent practice, and they may pose challenges both for teachers' own pronunciation and for students' acquisition.

### 2.13 Previous Studies

Several studies have examined the role of phonetics teaching in the English language as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

A study by Gilakjani (2011) highlighted that phonetic teaching helps learners develop a deeper understanding of segmental and suprasegmental features. This research emphasizes the significant role phonetics plays in improving learners' pronunciation, listening comprehension, and overall communicative competence. The study further noted that teachers who incorporate explicit phonetics teaching often observe significant improvements in students' pronunciation accuracy. Similarly, Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) emphasize that effective phonetics teaching allows students to master the segmental and suprasegmental features of a language. Their work highlighted the relationship between phonetics teaching and learners' communicative competence.

Macdonald (2002) highlighted that some teachers hesitate to address students' pronunciation due to concerns about potential negative reactions, as learners may perceive such feedback as a personal criticism of their identity. On the other hand, certain teachers view pronunciation teaching as less critical, reasoning that communication is effective as long as the listener understands the speaker. Others mentioned that they minimized pronunciation teaching believing that prioritizing pronunciation correction could hinder the development of linguistic fluency.

Furthermore, inadequate teaching and learning resources, coupled with limited time for pronunciation practice, were identified as factors contributing to teachers placing less emphasis on L2 pronunciation. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) reported that 78% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they lacked essential resources for effective pronunciation teaching.

Additionally, 92% expressed agreement or strong agreement regarding insufficient access to computer hardware and software tailored for pronunciation teaching. Even when such software is available, many teachers find it overly focused on segmental features (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Mohd Asikin and Ibrahim (2020) investigated the challenges associated with teaching pronunciation to secondary school students in Malaysia from a novice teacher perspective. Findings revealed that trainees struggle with issues related to confidence, lack of knowledge, and pedagogical strategies during practical teaching. Additionally, the limited emphasis on pronunciation in the curriculum, time constraints, and shortage of teaching materials and resources pose significant challenges.

A study by Elmahdi and Khan (2015) investigated the issues faced by English language education students struggling with pronunciation. The study found that inconsistencies between English and their native language in terms of sound placement and articulation were major obstacles. Students also lacked mastery of consonants and vowels using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Saito (2014) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of experienced teachers' perceptions in identifying key pronunciation challenges that impact students' intelligible pronunciation acquisition. Using a quantitative approach, the research involved 120 experienced teachers (native and non-native speakers of English) working with Japanese EFL learners. The findings indicated that teachers should prioritize students' needs by addressing their pronunciation difficulties through effective classroom practices. Additionally, it was suggested that pronunciation teaching syllabi should be carefully designed to align with these needs.

Expanding on this research, Buss (2016) examined the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers in Brazil. The study involved 60 participants and utilized email surveys as the primary data collection method. Results revealed that while most teachers had a positive attitude toward pronunciation teaching, their classroom practices predominantly followed traditional teaching methods. Consequently, the study emphasized the necessity of providing professional training in pronunciation teaching to enhance both teachers' English language proficiency and their teaching effectiveness.

While several studies have emphasized the importance of teaching pronunciation and phonetics in EFL contexts, most of the existing research has primarily focused on general teaching methods or

learner-centered issues, often within secondary or private educational settings. There is a notable lack of research that directly investigates the specific methods and practices used by EFL teachers in university-level public institutions, especially within the Libyan context. Moreover, many previous studies have not adequately addressed the practical challenges that teachers face when delivering phonetics teaching, such as lack of training, limited resources, or native language interference.

Specifically, the context of University of Zawia remains underexplored, with limited empirical data on how phonetics is taught and what difficulties teachers encounter in real classroom situations. This lack of context-specific research limits our understanding of how to effectively support both teachers and students in phonetics teaching in Libya.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the actual teaching methods currently used by EFL teachers at University of Zawia (Zawia Faculty of Education, Abu Issa Faculty of Education, Al-Ajailat Faculty of Education, Nasser Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Language and Translation), and by exploring the specific challenges they face when teaching English phonetics to university-level students. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to a better understanding of phonetics instruction in University of Zawia and inform improvements in teaching practices and teacher training.

### 2.14 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed key ideas and studies on English phonetics in EFL education. It outlined what phonetics is, its main branches, and its importance for clear and intelligible speech. It also sketched the development of pronunciation teaching, from early imitation-based practices to more recent views that stress intelligibility and communication rather than native-like accent.

The chapter then considered main approaches and methods used in teaching phonetics, including intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic, and integrative work, along with classroom techniques, materials, technology, and feedback. It highlighted frequent difficulties reported in the literature, such as limited teacher preparation, lack of time and resources, and learner-related factors, for example first language influence and fossilized errors. Previous research has shown that focused work on phonetics can improve learners' pronunciation and confidence, but it has also shown that pronunciation is often marginal in everyday teaching. Very few studies have examined how

phonetics is actually taught in Libyan public universities, and research on University of Zawia in particular is almost absent. This gap in the literature provides the basis for the present study and guides its research focus and methodology.

# CHAPTER THREE
# METHODOLOGY

## 3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological framework used to investigate how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at Zawia University teach phonetics and what difficulties they report in this area. The study is grounded in a mixed methods approach that brings together quantitative and qualitative data. Three tools were employed: a teacher questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Before these tools were used in the main study, a pilot phase was carried out to check and refine their content and administration procedures.

In the overall design, the questionnaire provides the quantitative strand of the study and offers numerical information about teachers' reported practices, perceived effectiveness of their methods, and the challenges they experience when teaching phonetics. The interviews and classroom observations form the qualitative strand. The interviews allow teachers to describe in their own words how they teach phonetics and why they adopt particular strategies, while the observations show what actually occurs in phonetics lessons in real time.

The study follows a convergent mixed methods design. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected within the same general period, analysed separately, and then brought together at the interpretation stage to build a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). In line with this logic, the present chapter explains: (1) the mixed methods design adopted, (2) the participants and sampling procedures, (3) the three instruments, (4) the sequence of research activities, (5) the pilot study, (6) the data analysis procedures, and (7) ethical considerations. Each part shows how the methodological choices support the aims and research questions of the study.

## 3.1 Research Design

The research is based on a mixed methods design that deliberately combines quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to obtain a fuller and more nuanced picture of phonetics teaching at Zawia University. Mixed methods research is considered appropriate when neither quantitative

nor qualitative data alone are sufficient to address a complex educational issue (Creswell, 2014). By drawing on both numerical trends and detailed accounts, the researcher can develop interpretations that are better grounded and more credible.

In the quantitative strand, a questionnaire is administered to EFL teachers who are responsible for teaching phonetics. The questionnaire focuses on three main areas: the teaching methods they report using, their views of how effective these methods are, and the main obstacles they associate with phonetics instruction. This strand directly addresses the research questions by summarising, in numerical form, which approaches are most commonly reported and which difficulties appear most frequently across the group of teachers.

The qualitative strand consists of semi-structured interviews and structured classroom observations. Through the interviews, the researcher explores teachers' beliefs, experiences, and decision making in relation to phonetics teaching. The classroom observations then provide evidence of how phonetics is actually taught, including the techniques used, the role of the teacher and students, and the classroom conditions under which instruction takes place (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Mackey & Gass, 2015).

The design used in this study can be described as a convergent mixed methods design. Both strands are implemented in the same overall phase of the project, though with a planned ordering of instruments. The two data sets are analysed separately and then compared and combined in the interpretation of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In practice, this means that patterns in the questionnaire data, such as degrees of agreement with particular statements, are interpreted together with the qualitative themes that emerge from the interview transcripts and observation notes. Areas of similarity and difference between the strands are examined to strengthen the final conclusions. In this way, the mixed methods design supports the central aim of the study, which is to identify the methods and challenges associated with phonetics instruction at Zawia University in both breadth and depth.

### 3.2 Participants and Sampling

The study focuses on EFL teachers at Zawia University who teach phonetics courses. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants who could provide relevant and informed accounts of phonetics teaching in this context. Only teachers who met three basic criteria were

invited to take part: they were currently employed as EFL teachers at Zawia University, they had experience in teaching phonetics, and they were willing to participate in the research.

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which the researcher deliberately selects participants who are especially knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018). In the present study, this meant focusing on teachers who actually teach phonetics rather than on the wider population of EFL teachers. This approach was considered more suitable than random sampling, which might have included many teachers with no direct involvement in phonetics instruction.

Altogether, twenty EFL teachers completed the questionnaire. They were drawn from several faculties that belong to Zawia University, including the Faculty of Education in Zawia, the Faculty of Education in Abu Issa, the Faculty of Education in Al Ajailat, the Nasser Faculty, the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Language and Translation. From this broader pool and other eligible teachers, twelve phonetics teachers were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. In making this selection, attention was paid to including teachers with different years of teaching experience, academic qualifications, and faculty affiliations, so that diverse perspectives could be captured.

In addition, six phonetics classes taught by these teachers were observed. The observed lessons involved first and second year EFL students and took place in different faculties. This combination of twenty questionnaire respondents, twelve interviewees, and six observed classes offered both breadth and depth and is consistent with recommendations for mixed methods research in applied linguistics (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2015). It ensured that the study drew on participants who were directly involved in phonetics instruction and who could therefore shed light on the methods and difficulties that are the focus of the research.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data that could address the research questions in a complementary way: semi-structured interviews, structured classroom observations, and a self-completion questionnaire for teachers. The instruments were selected to fit within the convergent mixed methods design and to provide both descriptive breadth and interpretive depth (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The interviews and classroom observations form the qualitative component of the study. They allow the researcher to explore how teachers understand and carry out phonetics instruction and to document what actually takes place during phonetics lessons. The questionnaire provides the quantitative component and yields standardised, comparable responses from a larger group of teachers concerning their reported practices and challenges.

Together, the three instruments generate data that directly address the two main aims of the study: to identify how phonetics is taught by EFL teachers at Zawia University and to describe the major challenges they encounter. The subsections that follow outline, for each instrument in turn, how it was designed, what it contained, and how it was administered.

### 3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews were intended to elicit rich, detailed accounts of teachers' experiences with phonetics instruction. A semi-structured format was adopted, in which a prepared interview guide is followed but the interviewer can ask follow-up questions and change the order of topics when useful. This format is widely recommended for research on teacher cognition and classroom practice because it balances comparability across participants with flexibility to explore issues that arise in the conversation (Dörnyei, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interview guide was developed by drawing on the research aims and questions, as well as on previous studies of pronunciation and phonetics teaching (for example, Celce Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, & Griner, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Saito, 2013). It included questions on teachers' preferred methods for teaching phonetics, their experiences of working with first year students, their views on the use of phonetic symbols and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), the difficulties they notice among their learners, the strategies they use to tackle those difficulties, and the role of materials and technology in their teaching.

Some questions were more closely related to the research question on teaching methods, such as those dealing with techniques, resources, and classroom activities. Others focused on the research question about challenges, asking about perceived obstacles, constraints, and problem areas in phonetics instruction. This mapping ensured that every interview contributed directly to the overall aims of the study.

Interviews were conducted face to face, in English, in quiet rooms within the participating faculties. Each interview lasted roughly 25 to 35 minutes. With the participants' consent, all interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. The interviewer used the guide as a framework but encouraged participants to give concrete examples from their own classes and to expand on any issues they felt were important. In this way, the interviews served as the main source of qualitative data on teachers' beliefs, rationales, and self-reported practices in relation to phonetics teaching.

### 3.3.2 Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were carried out to document what happened in phonetics lessons and to complement the self-reports obtained from interviews and questionnaires. The observations used a structured checklist prepared by the researcher, together with brief field notes. The checklist was informed by literature on pronunciation pedagogy and language classroom observation (for example, Celce Murcia et al., 2010; Gilbert, 2012; Mackey & Gass, 2015), as well as by the specific aims and research questions of the study.

The checklist covered several domains that are important in phonetics teaching. These included the types of techniques used by the teacher (for example, choral repetition, individual drilling, minimal pair work, transcription tasks), the use of IPA symbols and other visual representations, the nature of teacher-learner interaction, opportunities for student participation, the kinds of feedback given on pronunciation, and the use of audio, video, or other teaching aids. There were also items that recorded whether and how segmental features (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental features (such as stress and intonation) were addressed during the lesson.

Each observation session lasted about 45 to 60 minutes, corresponding to a full phonetics class. The researcher sat at the back of the classroom in order to reduce any influence on the normal flow of the lesson. As the lesson proceeded, the researcher completed the checklist and noted specific examples that illustrated how a particular technique was used or how students responded to a certain task. These field notes added qualitative detail to the structured categories in the checklist.

The observation data were later examined alongside the interview data to see where teachers' descriptions of their methods matched or differed from what was seen in the classroom. By documenting actual classroom practice in a systematic way, the observation instrument provided

an important source of evidence for both research questions, especially in relation to how phonetics is implemented in large, real-world university classes.

### 3.3.3 Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was designed as the main quantitative tool in the study. It aimed to produce a concise numerical overview of phonetics teaching practices and perceived challenges among EFL teachers at Zawia University. In line with recommendations for questionnaire research in applied linguistics (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010), the instrument was kept relatively short and focused, with clear wording and a simple response format.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part collected background information about the participants, such as age, academic qualification, years of teaching experience, and whether they had attended any training courses or workshops related to phonetics teaching. These items made it possible to describe the sample and to consider, where relevant, how reported practices might relate to experience or training.

The second part consisted of ten closed statements related to the main constructs of the study. Each statement was rated on a five point Likert scale, from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The items were developed from the research questions and from previous literature on pronunciation instruction (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Saito, 2013). They covered issues such as:

- how easy or difficult teachers find it to teach phonetics to first year students
- whether they usually re-explain lessons using different methods when students have problems
- the extent to which they report using analytical, imitative, and integrative approaches
- their views on how well their methods help students with complex phonetic features like stress and intonation
- their use of student feedback and their tendency to adapt methods during lessons
- their previous training in phonetics teaching
- their beliefs about whether it is better to rely on a single method or to combine several approaches

In this way, the questionnaire translated the central concerns of the study into measurable items. After the questionnaires had been completed and collected, responses to the Likert scale items were planned to be summarised using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These summaries would then be interpreted together with the qualitative findings from interviews and observations to build a coherent picture of how phonetics is taught and what challenges teachers perceive in this context.

### 3.4 Procedure of the Study

The research proceeded through a series of planned stages, from preparation and piloting to main data collection and analysis. The sequence was designed to ensure consistency with the mixed methods design and to make effective use of the three instruments.

In the preparatory stage, the researcher sought and obtained ethical approval from the relevant academic bodies and formal permission from the authorities of the participating faculties at Zawia University. At the same time, a focused review of the literature on phonetics pedagogy and research methodology was undertaken. This review informed the initial design of the interview guide, observation checklist, and questionnaire.

Next, a pilot study was carried out with a small group of EFL teachers working in a context similar to that of Zawia University. During this phase, the draft versions of all three instruments were tested. Feedback from participants and the researcher's own observations were used to revise wording, ordering, and formatting, as explained later in the pilot study section. Only after the tools had been adjusted in light of the pilot where they used in the main study.

The main data collection stage began with the administration of the final version of the questionnaire. Copies were distributed to EFL teachers who taught phonetics in the participating faculties. Teachers who agreed to participate completed the questionnaire individually and returned it to the researcher. This step served two purposes: it generated the quantitative data needed to provide an overview of reported practices and challenges, and it also helped identify potential volunteers for the qualitative phase.

Following the questionnaire stage, the researcher contacted eligible teachers and invited them to take part in interviews and classroom observations. From those who consented, a purposive subsample was selected that reflected a range of faculties, teaching experience, and course levels.

Interviews were usually held before classroom observations with the same teachers. This order made it possible to first explore teachers' ideas and self-reports and then observe how they actually conducted phonetics lessons.

The interviews and observations were carried out within a relatively short period so that the qualitative data reflected teachers' current practices. Throughout this phase, participation remained voluntary, and teachers could decline any part of the research without consequences.

Once the data collection had been completed, the researcher moved to the analysis stage. Questionnaire data were prepared for statistical description, and interview transcripts and observation notes were prepared for qualitative analysis. In keeping with the convergent mixed methods design, the two strands of data were analysed separately and then considered together at the interpretation stage, where points of convergence and divergence were examined in relation to the research questions.

### 3.5 Pilot Study

Before the main investigation was launched, a pilot study was conducted in order to test and refine the three research instruments. Pilot work is widely recommended in educational and applied linguistics research because it helps researchers identify problems in instrument design, wording, and administration, and it can reveal practical obstacles that might arise during full-scale data collection (Dörnyei, 2007; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002).

Five EFL teachers from a neighbouring area took part in the pilot. Their institutional context and professional responsibilities were similar to those of the teachers at Zawia University, but they were not included in the main sample to avoid any overlap. The pilot took place approximately two weeks before the beginning of the main data collection phase. Each participating teacher completed the draft questionnaire, took part in a trial interview, and allowed one of their phonetics lessons to be observed using the preliminary observation checklist.

Participants were asked to comment on the clarity and relevance of the questions, the length and structure of the instruments, and any other issues they noticed. The researcher also paid close attention to how long each part of the data collection took, how easy it was to use the checklist during lessons, and whether any items appeared ambiguous or redundant.

The feedback gathered during the pilot led to a number of adjustments. Wording and order of some items were revised, overlapping observation categories were merged, and the formatting of the questionnaire was improved for greater readability. In addition, the pilot provided the researcher with practice in interviewing and observing, which contributed to more consistent use of the instruments during the main study.

The following subsections describe how each instrument was piloted and how it was modified in response to the pilot findings.

### 3.5.1 Pilot of the Semi-Structured Interviews

The aim of piloting the interview schedule was to ensure that the questions were clear, logically ordered, and capable of eliciting detailed information on phonetics teaching. During the pilot interviews, the researcher monitored how easily participants understood the questions and whether any of them caused confusion or seemed repetitive. Participants were also invited to suggest rephrasing or to point out topics that they felt were important but not covered.

Overall, the pilot interviews confirmed that the structure of the guide was appropriate, but some minor refinements were made. A few questions were reworded to avoid technical terms that some teachers found unclear, and the wording of follow-up prompts was adjusted to encourage more concrete examples from classroom experience. The transitions between some sections of the guide were also smoothed so that the interview flowed more naturally.

Conducting the pilot interviews helped the researcher to fine tune questioning techniques, practise the use of probes and prompts, and manage the length of the interviews. These experiences contributed to more effective and consistent interviewing in the main data collection phase.

### 3.5.2 Pilot of the Classroom Observation Checklist

The classroom observation checklist was piloted in order to test its practicality and coverage during a real phonetics lesson. In the pilot observation, the researcher used the checklist while observing a phonetics class and then reflected on whether all important aspects of the lesson could be recorded without excessive effort or confusion.

The pilot revealed that some items overlapped or were too general, which could complicate data recording. As a result, certain categories were combined or clarified, and the wording of some

descriptors was made more specific. The final version of the checklist focused clearly on the key domains relevant to the research questions: instructional techniques, attention to segmental and suprasegmental features, patterns of interaction, feedback on pronunciation, and use of teaching aids.

The length of the observation period and the observer's position in the classroom were also reviewed in the pilot. It was concluded that observing for one full lesson of about 45 to 60 minutes allowed a sufficiently rich sample of classroom interaction, and that sitting at the back of the room was an effective way to minimise intrusion while still observing the necessary details.

### 3.5.3 Pilot of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted to check its clarity, length, and internal consistency. Pilot participants completed the draft version and then commented on any questions they found unclear, difficult to answer, or unnecessary. The researcher noted how long it took them to complete the questionnaire and whether any layout issues made it hard to follow.

On average, teachers took between 12 and 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, which was considered acceptable. Based on their comments, several items were slightly reworded to improve clarity, and some instructions were simplified. Visual layout, such as spacing and alignment, was adjusted to guide respondents more easily through the sections.

A preliminary assessment of internal consistency was carried out on the Likert scale items to check whether they formed a coherent set of measures. The results were satisfactory and suggested that the questionnaire would be suitable for the main study (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Overall, the pilot phase provided important feedback that improved the quality of the instruments and increased confidence that they would function effectively in the main data collection.

### 3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

After the data collection phase, the study moves to analysis and interpretation. In keeping with the mixed methods design, qualitative and quantitative data are analysed separately and then brought together in a final stage of integration (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The qualitative material consists of interview transcripts and classroom observation notes. These data are analysed using thematic analysis. The quantitative material consists of responses to the questionnaire and is summarised using descriptive statistics. The two strands are then compared and combined in the findings chapter.

#### 3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data set includes full transcripts of all semi-structured interviews and the field notes from each classroom observation. Thematic analysis was selected as the main approach because it offers a clear and flexible procedure for identifying and describing recurring patterns of meaning across a corpus of text (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The analysis follows a series of stages. First, the researcher becomes familiar with the data by reading and rereading the transcripts and observation notes. During this stage, initial ideas and potential points of interest related to teaching methods, learner difficulties, and contextual constraints are noted.

Second, the researcher generates initial codes. Sections of text that appear relevant to the research questions are highlighted and assigned short labels that capture their content. Examples include references to a particular teaching technique, comments on lack of resources, or descriptions of students' reactions during practice activities. Interview and observation data are coded separately in this phase.

Third, the researcher examines the list of codes and starts to group similar codes together into candidate themes. These themes represent broader patterns that bring together related ideas found across different participants and classrooms.

Fourth, the candidate themes are reviewed in more detail. Extracts are checked to see whether they fit the theme to which they have been assigned, and the themes are considered in relation to the data set as a whole. At this stage, some themes may be split, merged, or redefined.

Fifth, each theme is clearly defined and given a concise name that reflects its central focus. The relationships between themes and the research questions are also clarified. The final set of themes, illustrated with quotations from teachers and examples from the observations, forms the basis of the qualitative findings presented later in the thesis.

Throughout this process, the interview-based themes are used as a starting point for coding the observation notes, but the analysis remains open to new patterns that may be visible only in the classroom data. Comparing the two sources in this way allows the researcher to identify areas where reported practice and observed practice align or diverge, which strengthens the credibility of the interpretations (Denzin, 2012).

### 3.6.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire are analysed using basic descriptive statistics. Once the completed questionnaires have been checked, the responses are entered into a spreadsheet and verified for accuracy.

For each Likert scale item in the main section of the questionnaire, the number and percentage of teachers choosing each response category (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree) are calculated. In addition, means and standard deviations are computed where appropriate, in order to provide a concise summary of the central tendency and variability for each item (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2016).

These descriptive statistics allow the researcher to identify general tendencies in the sample, such as how many teachers report finding phonetics teaching easy or difficult, how many say they re-explain lessons using different methods, and how many indicate that they have received special training in phonetics instruction. Because the study is exploratory and focused on one institutional context, no inferential statistical tests are used.

The patterns revealed by the descriptive analysis are then considered alongside the qualitative themes from the interviews and observations. For example, if many teachers agree with a statement about adapting methods during lessons, the qualitative data can be examined to see how teachers describe this adaptation in practice. In this way, the quantitative and qualitative strands are brought together to build a coherent account of phonetics teaching at Zawia University.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in line with accepted ethical standards for studies in education and applied linguistics. The main ethical principles addressed were informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the responsible handling of data.

Participants were given clear written and oral information about the aims of the study, the types of data that would be collected, and the ways in which the data would be used. They were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without negative consequences. Only those who provided written consent took part in the questionnaire, interviews, or classroom observations.

To protect anonymity, personal identifiers were removed from all data records. Teachers were assigned codes rather than being referred to by name in transcripts, observation notes, and the final report. Any potentially identifying information, such as specific class labels or references to colleagues, was removed or generalised.

All data were stored securely, and access was restricted to the researcher. Audio files, transcripts, and completed questionnaires were kept in password-protected files or locked storage. Data will be retained for a period specified by institutional guidelines and then securely destroyed.

Classroom observations were conducted with minimal disruption to normal teaching. The researcher informed students that an observation was taking place for research purposes and reassured them that the focus was on teaching practices, not on evaluating their performance. Observations were scheduled at times that were convenient for teachers and did not interfere with assessment or other sensitive activities.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the appropriate institutional review body. Official letters from the relevant university authorities granted permission to approach staff in the faculties involved. Copies of consent forms and ethical approval documents are available in the appendices. The researcher has reported the findings honestly and transparently and has avoided any fabrication or misrepresentation of data.

### 3.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has outlined the methodological design of the study on phonetics teaching among EFL teachers at Zawia University. A convergent mixed methods framework was adopted, combining a teacher questionnaire with semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The participants were selected through purposive sampling in order to focus on teachers with direct experience of phonetics instruction.

The chapter has explained how each instrument was developed, piloted, and implemented, and how the study progressed from planning and ethical approval, through piloting, to the main data collection. The procedures for analysing qualitative and quantitative data have been described, together with the ethical safeguards put in place.

These methodological choices are closely aligned with the aims and research questions of the thesis. They are intended to generate both a broad overview of phonetics teaching practices and a detailed understanding of how teachers experience and manage the challenges of teaching pronunciation in the Libyan EFL context. The following chapter presents the results that emerged from applying these methods and analyses.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# Data Analysis and Results

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports and analyses how EFL teachers at Zawia University teach English phonetics and how they experience this aspect of their work. Phonetics is demanding for both teachers and learners, as students must acquire new segmental sounds and suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation, while teachers must make informed decisions about content, methods, and learner support. These decisions are especially complex in contexts where resources and teacher preparation are uneven (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, & Griner, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011).

The study used a convergent mixed-methods design, collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data in parallel and then integrating them (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). A questionnaire completed by 20 EFL teachers provided quantitative data on their reported practices, beliefs, and training. Semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers offered qualitative accounts of their experiences and decision making, and classroom observations of 6 phonetics lessons supplied direct evidence of how these practices are enacted in real classrooms (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Mackey & Gass, 2015). Questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics appropriate for small-scale exploratory research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Field, 2018), while interview and observation data were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Section 4.1 presents the questionnaire findings, Section 4.2 summarises the main quantitative trends, Section 4.3 reports the interview themes, Section 4.4 presents the classroom observation results, and Section 4.5 integrates these strands to provide an overall picture of phonetics teaching at Zawia University.

## 4.1 Quantitative Findings: Analysis of the Questionnaire

This section presents the questionnaire results from 20 EFL teachers of phonetics at Zawia University and outlines the procedures used to analyse them. The questionnaire was designed to provide a concise numerical picture of how phonetics is taught and how teachers evaluate their own practices, in line with standard approaches in applied linguistics, where Likert-scale data are

typically summarised using frequencies, percentages, and simple descriptive comparisons (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Pallant, 2016).

Section B contained ten items on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), each closely linked to the research questions and to key themes in the literature on pronunciation teaching and teacher cognition (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, & Griner, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). In narrative terms, teachers were asked to indicate:

- whether teaching phonetics to first-year students is easy or difficult;
- whether they usually re-explain phonetics lessons using a different method when students struggle;
- to what extent they use analytical, imitative, and integrative approaches;
- whether their methods help students understand complex phonetic features such as intonation, stress, and articulation;
- how successful they believe their methods are in improving students' outcomes;
- whether they use students' feedback and performance to assess the effectiveness of their teaching;
- how positively students respond to their phonetics teaching;
- whether they adapt their methods during lessons in response to learners' comprehension;
- whether they have attended training or workshops on teaching phonetics; and
- whether they believe combining multiple methods is more effective than relying on a single approach.

All completed questionnaires were checked and the responses entered into a spreadsheet. For each item, the number of responses in each category (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) was counted, converted into percentages based on the total sample (n = 20), and checked so that the percentages for each item summed to 100 per cent. This simple, manual descriptive analysis is appropriate for a small-scale exploratory study and keeps the researcher closely involved with the data, while still following core principles of quantitative description (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2016).

Taken together, the ten items reveal a clear overall pattern. Many teachers view teaching phonetics to first-year students as difficult, report limited access to specialised training or workshops, and are cautious about the idea that merely combining multiple methods is always more effective. At the same time, most feel that their teaching contributes to better student outcomes, is generally welcomed by students, and is adjusted in response to learners' understanding during lessons. This combination of perceived challenge and perceived success reflects wider findings on teacher beliefs, where teaching is often experienced as demanding yet still judged to be effective within local constraints (Cohen et al., 2018; Dörnyei, 2007).

The next subsection presents the detailed results for each questionnaire item, beginning with teachers' views on how easy or difficult they find teaching phonetics to first-year students.

**Detailed results by item**

1. **Ease of teaching phonetics to freshman students**

The statement "I find teaching phonetics to freshman students easy and manageable" examined how teachers judge the overall difficulty of introductory phonetics courses.

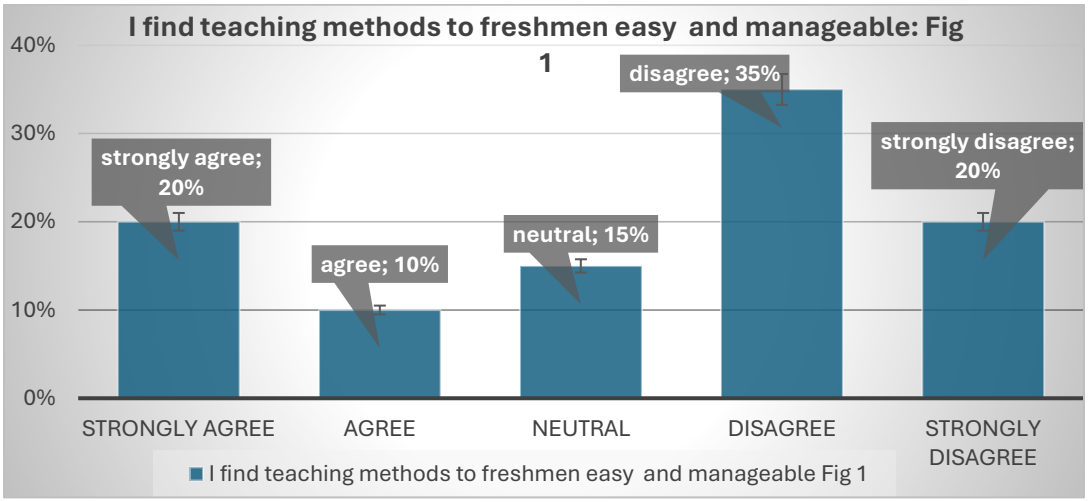


*Figure 4.1. Teachers' responses to the statement: "I find teaching phonetics to freshman students easy and manageable."*

In response to the statement, 'I find teaching phonetics to freshman students easy and manageable' 10% of teachers agreed and 20% strongly agreed, indicating that a total of 30% perceived phonetics instruction as easy. Conversely, a significant proportion (55%) expressed reluctance toward

teaching phonetics, with 35% disagreeing and 20% strongly disagreeing. Additionally, 15% of respondents remained neutral. The mean score for this item was 4, while the median was 3.

2. **Re explaining lessons using different methods**

The item "When students face difficulties in understanding phonetics lessons, I usually re explain the material using a different method" focused on whether teachers change their method when students do not understand.

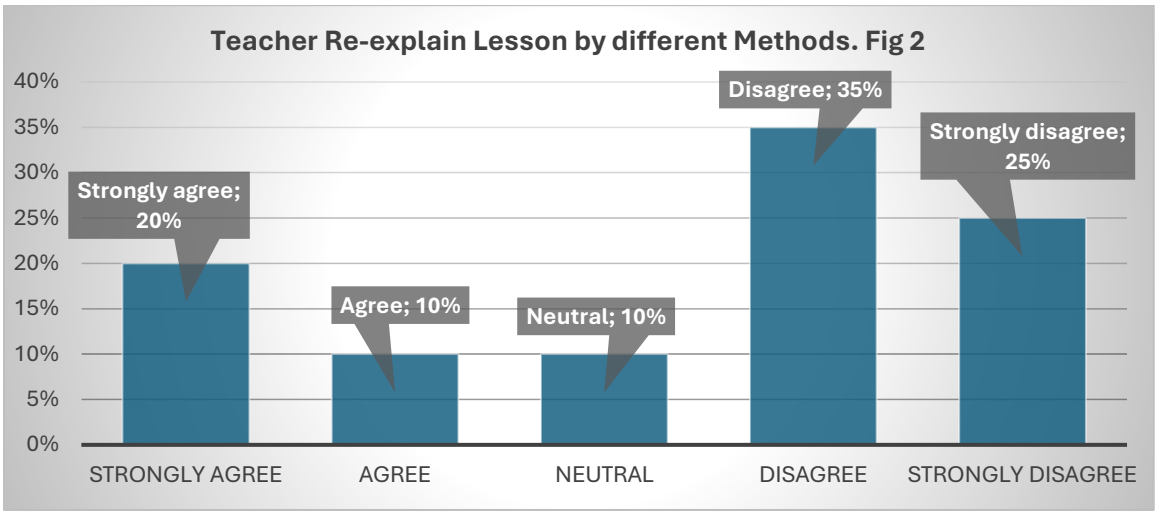


*Figure 4.2. Teachers' responses to the statement: "When students face difficulties in understanding phonetics lessons, I usually re explain the material using a different method."*

To address students' difficulties in understanding phonetics lessons, teachers were asked whether they re-explain the material using alternative methods. The findings indicated that 20% of respondents strongly agreed, and 10% agreed with the statement, 'When students face difficulties in understanding phonetics lessons, I usually re-explain the material using a different method.' Additionally, 10% reported employing alternative instructional strategies when such challenges arise. However, a majority of participants (60%) did not support this approach, with 35% disagreeing and 25% strongly disagreeing with the effectiveness of re-explaining using different methods. The mean response score was 4, and the median was also 4.

3. **Use of analytical, imitative, and integrative approaches**

The statement "I use the analytical linguistic approach, imitative approach, and integrative approach" was included to see to what extent teachers report using a range of recognised methods in their phonetics teaching.

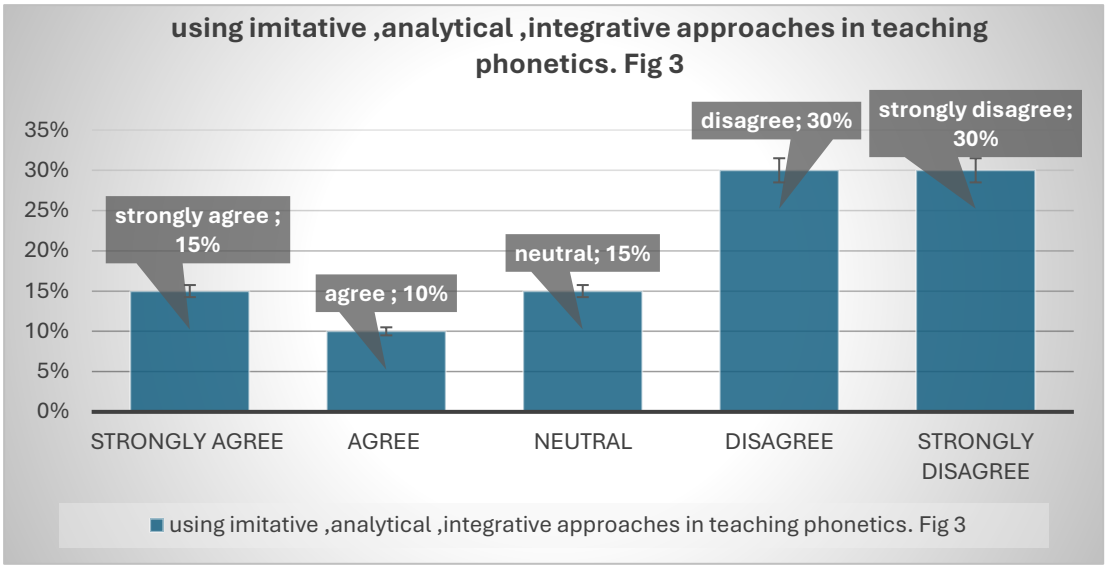


*Figure 4.3. Teachers' responses to the statement: "I use the analytical linguistic approach, imitative approach, and integrative approach."*

Regarding the statement, "I use the analytical linguistic approach, imitative approach, and integrative approach," the responses reflect teachers' reliance on multiple methodologies in phonetics instruction. Fifteen percent of participants expressed a preference for the imitative approach, which emphasizes repetition to enhance listening and pronunciation skills, while 10% favoured the analytical approach, focused on fostering deeper understanding and accuracy. Additionally, 15% of respondents remained neutral toward the integrative approach, which links phonetics teaching to practical communication contexts. Conversely, a majority of 60% with 30% disagreeing and 30% strongly disagreeing perceived these methods as overly time-consuming and demanding a robust background in phonetics. The mean response was 4, and the median was 3.

4. **Perceived success of teaching methods**

The statement "The teaching method I use helps students better understand complex phonetic features such as intonation, stress, and articulation," explored how teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their own methods.

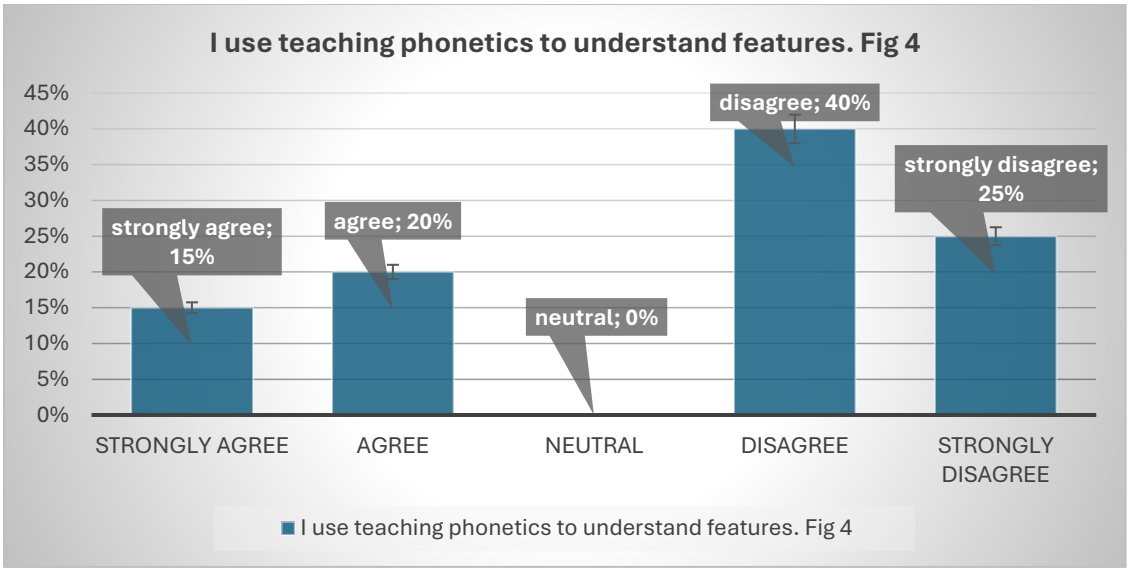


*Figure 4.4. Teachers' responses to the statement: "The teaching method I use helps students better understand complex phonetic features such as intonation, stress, and articulation,"*

Regarding the statement, "The teaching method I use helps students better understand complex phonetic features such as intonation, stress, and articulation," the findings illustrate a divergence in perceptions of pedagogical efficacy. 15% of respondents strongly agreed and 20% agreed that their methods are effective. Notably, 0% of participants remained neutral, indicating that educators hold decisive views on this topic. However, a majority of 65% expressed disagreement, with 40% disagreeing and 25% strongly disagreeing. This suggests that many teachers perceive the instruction of features like stress and intonation as excessively time-consuming or complex for their current strategies. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, the mean response score was 2.6 and the median was 2.

5. **Assessing effectiveness through students' feedback and performance**

The statement "In my experience, the method I apply in teaching phonetics has been successful in improving student outcomes." examined whether teachers systematically evaluate their methods using information from their students.

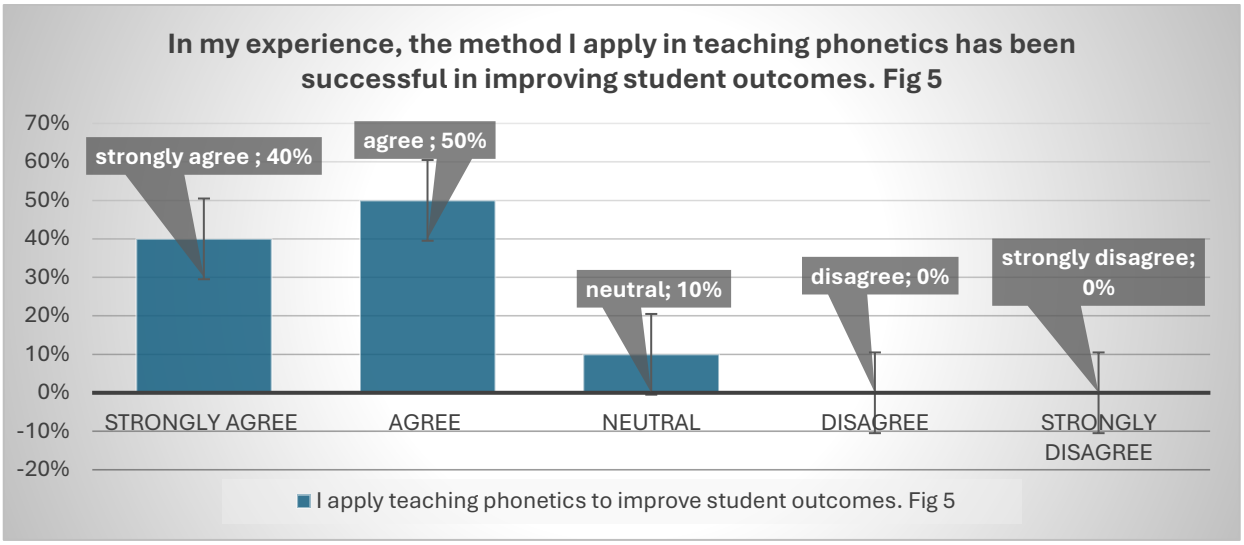


*Figure 4.5. Teachers' responses to the statement: "In my experience, the method I apply in teaching phonetics has been successful in improving student outcomes."*

In response to the statement, "In my experience, the method I apply in teaching phonetics has been successful in improving students' outcomes," the results demonstrated an overall positive trend. Fifty percent of the participants clearly agreed with the statement, while an additional 40% responded affirmatively, albeit with less intensity. Only 10% of respondents expressed a differing or less favourable opinion. The mean score for this item was 6.66, with a median 8.

6. **Students' responses to phonetics teaching methods**

The statement "I assess the effectiveness of my phonetics teaching method through student feedback and performance." focused on how teachers perceive students' reactions to their teaching.

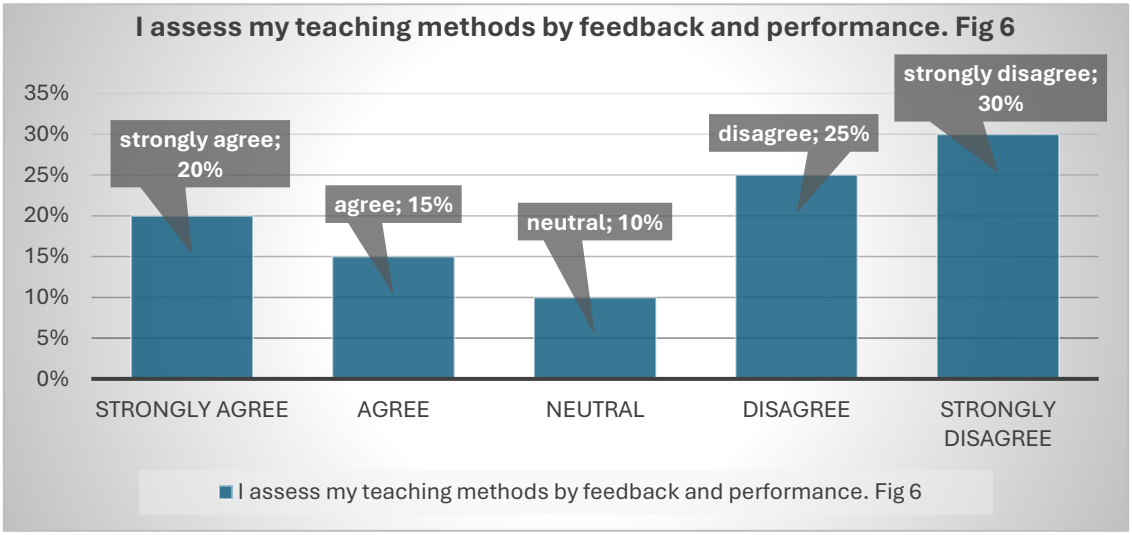

*Figure 4.6. Teachers' responses to the statement: "I assess the effectiveness of my phonetics teaching method through student feedback and performance."*

Regarding the statement, "I assess the effectiveness of my phonetics teaching methods through students' feedback and performance," 35% of teachers indicated a positive inclination toward self-assessment or formative assessment. Conversely, 25% disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting a general reluctance toward such evaluative practices. Additionally, 20% of respondents strongly disagreed, while 15% agreed, and 10% remained neutral. The mean and median scores were both 4.

7. **Adapting methods to learners' comprehension level**

The statement "Students respond positively to the teaching methods I use in phonetics classes." examined the extent to which teachers adjust their teaching while a lesson is in progress.

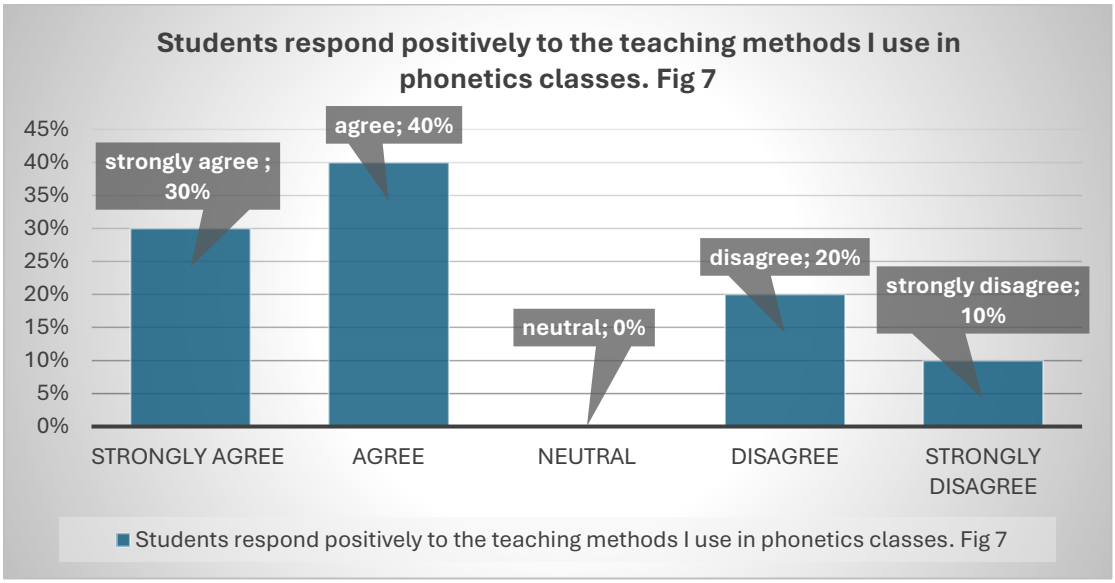


*Figure 4.7. Teachers' responses to the statement: "Students respond positively to the teaching methods I use in phonetics classes."*

In response to the statement, "Students respond positively to the teaching methods I use in phonetics classes" 30% of participants strongly agreed, and 40% agreed that their instructional methods effectively motivate students. Conversely, 20% disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed, indicating that these methods may not be universally effective for all students. The mean score was 5, and the median was 6.

8. **Participation in training or workshops on phonetics teaching**

The statement "I adapt my teaching method depending on the learners' level of comprehension during the lesson." explored teachers' exposure to formal professional development in this field.

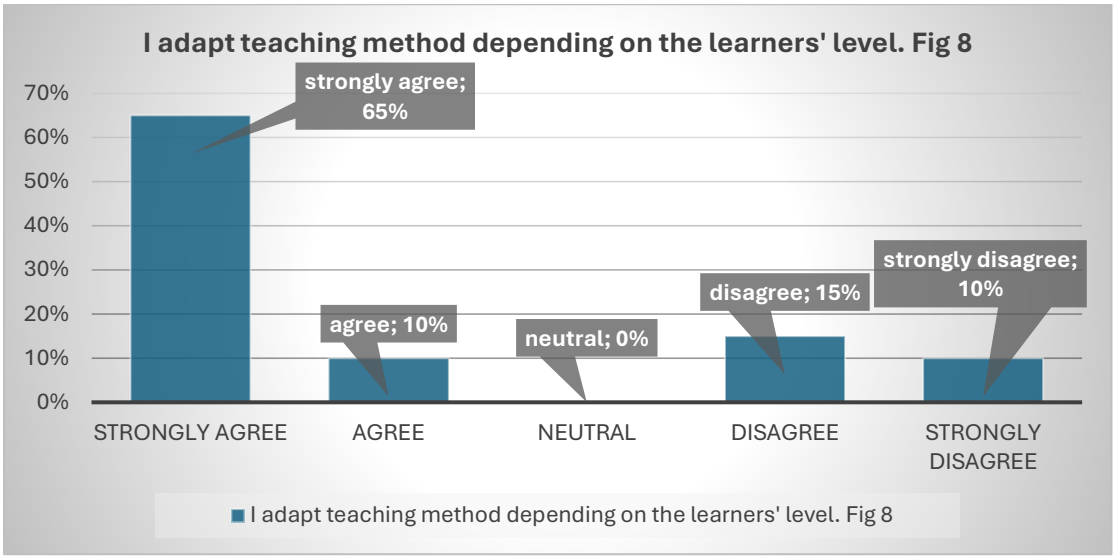


*Figure 4.8. Teachers' responses to the statement: "I adapt my teaching method depending on the learners' level of comprehension during the lesson."*

Regarding the statement, "I adapt my teaching method depending on learners' level of comprehension during the lesson," the findings indicate that a majority of participants (75%) affirmed adapting their instructional approaches in response students' understanding. Specifically, 65% of teachers strongly agreed with this practice, while 10% agreed. Conversely, 25% of respondents expressed disagreement, with 15% disagreeing and 10% strongly disagreeing. The mean score was 6.66, and the median was 5.

9. **Attitudes toward combining multiple methods**

The statement "I have received training or attended workshops on different methods for teaching English phonetics" investigated teachers' beliefs about the value of combining methods instead of using just one.

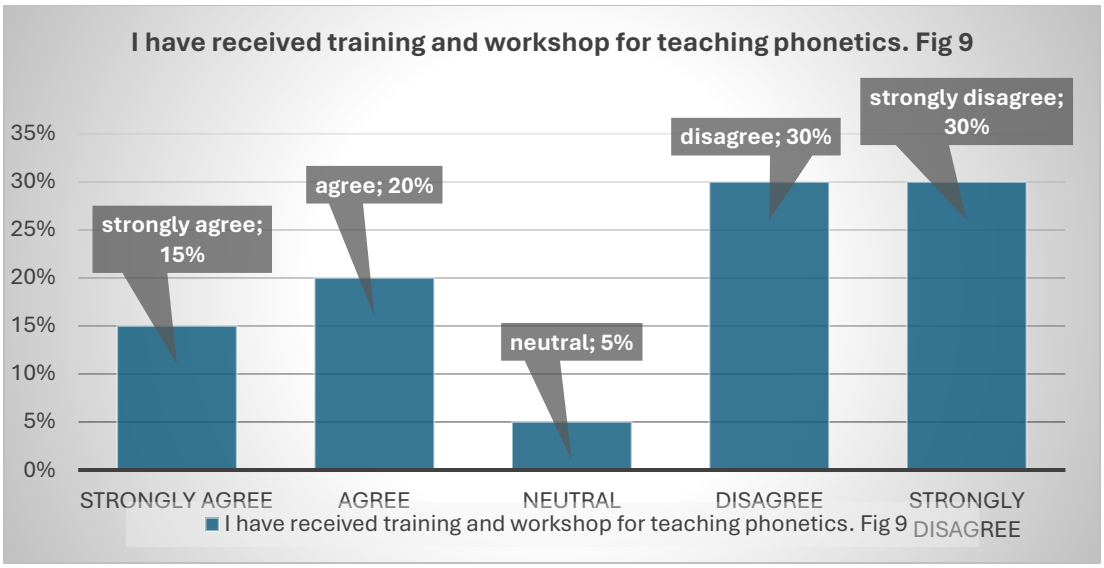


*Figure 4.9. Teachers' responses to the statement: "I have received training or attended workshops on different methods for teaching English phonetics."*

Regarding the statement, "I have received training and workshops for teaching phonetics," the findings highlight a significant gap in professional development among the surveyed educators. 15% of respondents strongly agreed and 20% agreed that they have received specialized training. Only 5% of participants remained neutral on the matter. However, a clear majority of 60% indicated a lack of professional training, with 30% disagreeing and 30% strongly disagreeing. This suggests that most teachers are entering the classroom without formal workshops or training specific to phonetic instruction, which may impact their confidence or effectiveness in the subject. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, the mean response score was 2.6 and the median was 2.

10. **Beliefs regarding the combination of teaching methods**

The final statement, "I believe that a combination of methods is more effective for teaching phonetics than relying on a single approach", investigated teachers' beliefs about the value of combining methods instead of using just one.

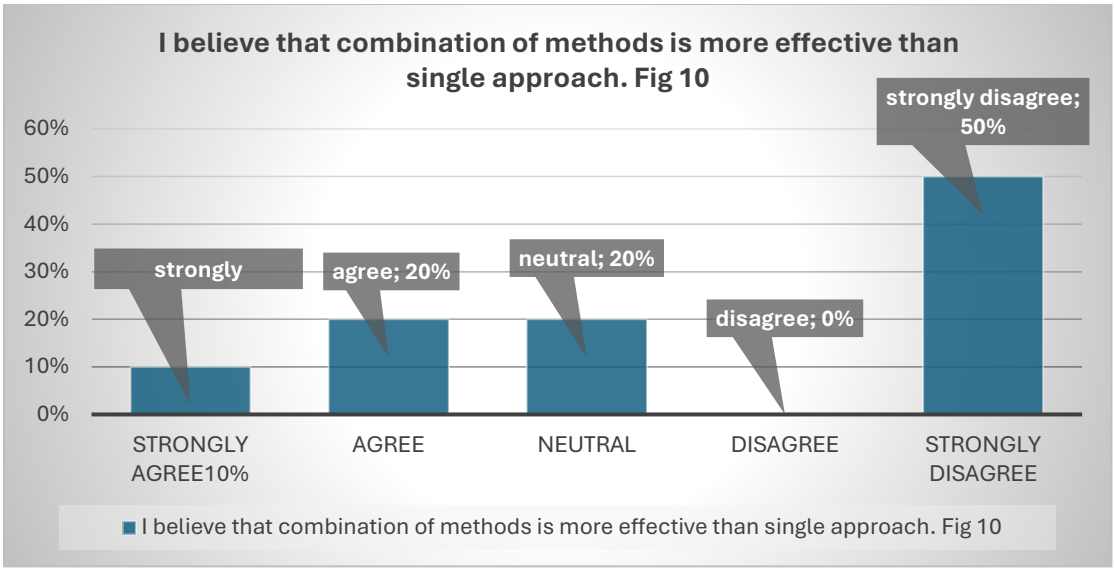


*Figure 4.10. Teachers' responses to the statement: "I believe that a combination of methods is more effective for teaching phonetics than relying on a single approach."*

Regarding the statement, "I believe that a combination of methods is more effective for teaching phonetics than relying on a single approach," the findings reveal a high degree of scepticism toward methodological integration. 10% of respondents strongly agreed and 20% agreed that combining methods is more effective. Additionally, 20% of participants remained neutral on the matter. However, exactly half of the teachers 50% strongly disagreed with the statement, while 0% percent selected the standard disagree option. This indicates that a significant portion of the staff holds a strong conviction that a single approach is preferable to a combination of methods. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, the mean response score was 2.4 and the median was 1.

### 4.2 Summary of Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire offers a clear quantitative picture of how EFL teachers at Zawia University perceive the teaching of English phonetics. Overall, teachers see phonetics as important but difficult, especially with first year students. More than half disagreed that teaching phonetics to freshmen is easy and manageable, and a similar proportion reported that they do not usually re explain lessons using different methods when students struggle. These results indicate that teachers experience phonetics as a demanding subject in which flexible adaptation of methods is not always easy to achieve.

The data also point to limited engagement with reflective and developmental practices. More than half of the teachers reported that they do not systematically use students' feedback and performance to assess the effectiveness of their teaching, and about 60 per cent indicated that they had not received specialised training in phonetics teaching. In addition, half of the respondents strongly rejected the idea that combining multiple methods is more effective than using a single approach. These patterns are consistent with research showing that teachers often work under conditions of restricted access to targeted professional development and only partial institutional support for ongoing self evaluation (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

At the same time, the results highlight areas of confidence and perceived success. Nine out of ten teachers felt that the methods they use in teaching phonetics have been successful in improving students' outcomes. Around 70 per cent believed that students respond positively to their phonetics teaching, and 75 per cent reported adapting their methods during lessons according to learners' comprehension. Within the constraints they face, most teachers therefore see themselves as helping students to make progress and as responsive to learners' needs in real time.

Two more specific issues emerge from individual items. First, many teachers do not feel that their current approaches are fully effective in helping students master complex phonetic features such as intonation, stress, and articulation, even if they believe that overall outcomes improve. Second, while some teachers report using analytical, imitative, and integrative approaches, many regard these combined methods as too time consuming and too demanding in terms of phonetic expertise. When considered alongside the limited training reported and the caution about method integration, these results help explain why teachers may rely on a relatively narrow range of techniques in practice, despite awareness of other options. In summary, the questionnaire portrays a teaching community that regards phonetics as essential but challenging, operates with restricted access to training and formal self evaluation tools, and nevertheless feels able to achieve some success with students. The qualitative findings in the following sections help to explain how teachers interpret and manage these conditions in their own words and in their classrooms.

### 4.3 Qualitative Findings: Analysis of the Interviews

The interview data provide a deeper understanding of how EFL teachers at Zawia University describe their phonetics teaching, the challenges they face, and the decisions they make in class.

While the questionnaire shows overall tendencies, the interviews allow these patterns to be examined from teachers' own perspectives. Semi structured interviewing is widely used in applied linguistics for this purpose, because it combines a common core of questions with flexibility to follow up on issues that participants consider important (Dörnyei, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Twelve semi structured interviews were conducted with EFL teachers who teach phonetics in the same faculties as the questionnaire respondents. The interview guide (Appendix A) covered the main areas needed to address the research questions, including teaching methods, perceived challenges and difficult lessons, specific issues with vowels and suprasegmentals, experiences with freshmen, clarification strategies when students do not understand, ways of judging teaching success, participation in training, and use of resources. All interviews were conducted in English, audio recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns of meaning across a dataset through stages of familiarisation, coding, theme development, and refinement. In this study, the researcher first read and reread the transcripts to gain an overall sense of the data, then coded segments referring to issues such as reliance on drilling, avoidance of certain vowel contrasts, use of Arabic for explanation, and lack of training in phonetics pedagogy. Related codes were grouped into candidate themes and refined so that each theme represented a clear pattern across several teachers' accounts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To protect anonymity, each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym (for example, Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C). The resulting themes were then compared with the questionnaire and classroom observation findings to identify points of convergence and divergence, in line with recommendations for strengthening interpretation in mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Denzin, 2012).

This thematic analysis produced nine interrelated themes describing how teachers at Zawia University experience and practise the teaching of English phonetics:

1. Difficulties in teaching phonetics to EFL students.
2. Difficulty in identifying effective teaching strategies.
3. Lack of a clearly defined teaching method.
4. Greater emphasis on consonants than vowels.

5. Limited teacher knowledge and confidence in vowels.
6. Reduction of phonetics to phonics instruction.
7. Role of teaching experience.
8. Use of L1 in teaching phonetics.
9. Influence of student proficiency level.

These themes are summarised in Table 4.3, which indicates their focus and the teachers who contributed most clearly to each one, and they are discussed in more detail in the subsections that follow, using teachers' own words to illustrate how they expressed their views.

**Table 4.3: Themes Derived from Interview Coding**

| Theme | Brief description | Main contributing teachers |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Difficulties in teaching phonetics | Teachers describe phonetics as challenging, especially for vowels, stress, and intonation. | A, B, C, D, E, F, H, J |
| 2. Difficulty in identifying effective strategies | Teachers are unsure which strategies work best and often feel they need to mix methods without clear guidance. | A, B, D, G, H, I, L |
| 3. Lack of a clearly defined method | Teachers rely on personal experience and switch between methods rather than following a fixed framework. | B, C, E, F, J, K |
| 4. Greater emphasis on consonants than vowels | Instruction focuses more on consonants, while vowels receive less attention. | A, F, G, H |
| 5. Limited confidence and practice in teaching vowels | Teachers feel less confident teaching vowels than consonants; limited training and practice make vowel instruction particularly challenging. | C, D, E, F |
| 6. Reduction of phonetics to phonics instruction | Phonetics is often approached as letter–sound matching, with little focus on broader phonological features. | A, D, K |
| 7. Role of teaching experience | More experienced teachers report greater flexibility and confidence in handling pronunciation issues. | F, G, H, I, J, L |
| 8. Use of L1 in teaching phonetics | Teachers use Arabic deliberately to make difficult phonetic concepts clearer. | A, B, E |
| 9. Influence of student proficiency level | Teachers adjust, or struggle to adjust, phonetics instruction according to students' overall level of English. | C, F, G, H, K |

The main points of each theme are outlined below, using teachers' own words (in italics) to illustrate how they expressed their views.

1. **Difficulties in teaching phonetics to EFL students**

All twelve teachers described phonetics as challenging to teach. They mentioned problems at the level of individual sounds and at the level of suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation. Several noted that students find it hard to notice and reproduce fine differences between sounds, especially when these differences do not exist in their first language. One teacher explained:

*"Students struggle with phonetics because many of the sounds are new to them. When we move to stress or intonation, they find it even more confusing. They are not used to thinking about these things in their first language, so it is like asking them to see something invisible."* (Teacher A)

Another teacher added that even when students can repeat a sound correctly during a drill, they often fail to transfer it to new words or sentences:

*"In the lesson they repeat after me and it sounds fine, but when they read a new word or speak in a sentence, they go back to the old pronunciation. So I feel we are always starting again."* (Teacher D)

Teachers also referred to external constraints such as limited time and competing syllabus demands. These accounts help explain why, in the questionnaire, more than half of the teachers disagreed that teaching phonetics to freshmen is easy and manageable.

2. **Difficulty in identifying effective teaching strategies**

Many teachers expressed uncertainty about which strategies are most effective for teaching phonetics. They felt that they needed to combine several approaches, but were not always sure how and when to do this. One teacher stated:

*"I do not think there is one best way. Sometimes I use imitation, sometimes I explain the sound in more detail, sometimes I try to connect it with spelling or with a word they already know. But I am not sure which part is really helping them most."* (Teacher B)

Another commented:

*"Preparing good activities for intonation or stress takes a lot of time, and sometimes I am not satisfied with the result. I try different things, but I feel I am still searching for the right strategy."* (Teacher G)

As a result, teachers often rely on trial and error, adjusting their methods based on how students seem to respond in a particular lesson. This theme helps to explain why many teachers say they adapt their methods to learners' comprehension, while at the same time being hesitant about combining multiple methods in a more systematic way.

3. **Lack of a clearly defined teaching method**

Several teachers reported that they do not follow a single, clearly defined method for teaching phonetics. Instead, they draw on a range of techniques that they have developed over time. One teacher explained:

*"I cannot say I follow one method like analytical or communicative. I use what I think will work with this group. Sometimes I explain the sounds and the place of articulation, sometimes I just ask them to repeat after me. It depends, but it is not a formal method."* (Teacher C)

Another noted:

*"We learned about different approaches in theory, but in practice we mix them. It is more based on our experience than on a clear plan."* (Teacher E)

This reliance on personal judgement rather than on a shared framework contributes to the sense that phonetics teaching is improvised. It also links to the questionnaire finding that many teachers see the combined use of analytical, imitative, and integrative approaches as too demanding.

4. **Greater emphasis on consonants than vowels**

A very consistent theme was that teachers place more emphasis on consonants than on vowels. Many felt that consonants are easier to explain, more directly linked to spelling, and more visible when errors occur. One teacher described this tendency as follows:

*"Usually we focus on consonants because they are easier to show and correct. If the student pronounces the consonant wrong, it is very obvious. With vowels it is more subtle, and even we are sometimes unsure."* (Teacher F)

Another added:

*"Consonants feel safer for us. We can say, 'This is /p/, this is /b/, look at the lips'. But for vowels, like the difference between /ɪ/ and /iː/, it is harder to explain and to hear."* (Teacher H)

This emphasis on consonants was also visible in the classroom observations, where consonant drills were frequent and vowel practice was less systematic.

5. **Limited teacher knowledge and confidence in vowels**

Several teachers reported that, although they have studied vowel phonetics, they feel less confident and less practised in teaching vowels than consonants. One teacher commented:

*"Vowels are difficult even for us. We have not had enough training in how to teach them. Sometimes I feel I am repeating what is in the book, but I am not sure if my explanation is accurate enough."* (Teacher C)

Another noted:

*"Students ask me why this vowel is long and the other is short, or why these two words sound different when they look the same. Sometimes I can answer, sometimes I am not confident. This makes it hard to correct them."* (Teacher E)

These accounts suggest that the issue is not a complete lack of knowledge, but limited specialised training and fewer opportunities to practise teaching vowels in depth. This reduces teachers' confidence and helps to explain why vowel work receives less sustained attention than consonant work.

6. **Reduction of phonetics to phonics instruction**

Another recurring theme was the tendency for phonetics lessons to become phonics lessons, especially in lower level classes. Teachers reported that much of their work focuses on letter–sound correspondence, with less attention to broader phonological patterns such as stress, intonation, and connected speech. One teacher observed:

*"Many times we end up teaching phonetics like phonics. We say, 'This letter makes this sound', and we do not have enough time or maybe enough confidence to go into stress and intonation and all these things."* (Teacher A)

Another added:

*"Phonics is easier to connect to reading and spelling, so sometimes the phonetics lesson turns into that. But then students still have problems when they speak naturally."* (Teacher D)

This reduction is understandable given the constraints teachers face, but it limits students' opportunities to work on the full range of skills needed for clear and natural spoken English.

7. **Role of teaching experience**

The interviews also highlighted the importance of teaching experience. More experienced teachers often felt more flexible and confident in dealing with pronunciation problems. One teacher remarked:

*"When I was a new teacher, I followed the book very closely and I felt nervous about correcting pronunciation. Now, after many years, I am more relaxed. I can see which errors are serious and which ones are not, and I can try different ways to help the students."* (Teacher G)

Another commented:

*"Experience teaches you to read your students. Sometimes you see from their faces that they do not understand the sound, so you change your explanation or you give a different example. This is something you learn over time."* (Teacher I)

Less experienced teachers tended to rely more heavily on the textbook and a limited set of techniques. This theme aligns with the observation that feedback quality and classroom management varied across lessons.

8. **Use of L1 in teaching phonetics**

Many teachers reported using students' first language (Arabic) as a support tool in phonetics teaching. They emphasised that, if used selectively, L1 can help clarify difficult points and make unfamiliar sounds more accessible. One teacher explained:

*"Sometimes I have to explain in Arabic, especially for vowels or diphthongs. If I try to explain only in English, they look confused. When I connect it to a similar or different sound in Arabic, they understand faster."* (Teacher B)

Another added:

*"I do not want to use Arabic all the time, but for some phonetic concepts it is necessary. It builds a bridge for them between what they know and what they are trying to learn."* (Teacher E)

These accounts show that L1 is seen as a planned strategy to support learning rather than as a sign of weakness. The classroom observations confirmed that teachers used Arabic selectively, especially when dealing with complex vowel contrasts and diphthongs.

9. **Influence of student proficiency level**

Finally, teachers repeatedly mentioned the influence of students' overall proficiency level on how phonetics is taught. One teacher stated:

*"With first year students who are very weak in general English, you cannot jump directly to complex phonetic topics. You have to go back to basics, even to simple sounds and simple words."* (Teacher C)

Another commented on mixed ability classes:

*"In one class you have students who can follow the phonetic symbols easily, and others who are still struggling with basic vocabulary. If you slow down for the weaker ones, the stronger ones get bored. If you go faster, the weaker ones are lost. It is hard to find a balance."* (Teacher F)

These experiences help explain why many teachers feel that teaching phonetics is particularly challenging with freshmen and why they often adapt their methods on the spot based on how students are coping.

Taken together, these nine themes add depth to the questionnaire findings and show how teachers themselves understand the difficulty of phonetics, the limits of their training, the imbalance between consonants and vowels, and the ways in which experience, L1 use, and student level shape their everyday practice.

### 4.4 Qualitative Findings: Analysis of the Classroom Observations

This section examines what happens in phonetics lessons when teachers are actually teaching their students. While questionnaires and interviews show how teachers talk about their methods and challenges, classroom observation provides direct evidence of how these methods are implemented in real time. In language classroom research, structured observation is often used to document teaching practices and interaction patterns that may not be fully visible in self report data (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Cohen et al., 2018; Mackey & Gass, 2015).

In this study, six phonetics lessons were observed, taught by participating EFL teachers in the Faculty of Education in Zawia, the Faculty of Education in Abu Issa, the Faculty of Education in Al Ajailat, the Nasser Faculty, the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Language and Translation. The lessons involved first and second year EFL students and lasted about 45 to 60 minutes. The

researcher adopted a non participant role, sitting quietly at the back of the classroom to minimise disruption.

The observations used a structured checklist (Appendix B) combined with brief field notes. The checklist recorded whether and how key aspects of phonetics teaching appeared in each lesson. These aspects included:

- use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and phonetic transcription;
- use of repetition and drilling;
- use of audiovisual aids;
- level and nature of student participation;
- teacher feedback on pronunciation;
- integration of communicative activities involving phonetics;
- use of L1 (Arabic) for explanation;
- techniques used for segmental features (consonants and vowels); and
- techniques used for suprasegmental features (stress, intonation, connected speech).

Structured observation of this kind is recommended where the aim is to compare different lessons on a common set of features and to complement other methods such as questionnaires and interviews (Nunan, 1992; Cohen et al., 2018). Alongside ticking the checklist, the researcher wrote short field notes describing specific examples, such as how a minimal pair drill was organised, how students reacted when IPA symbols were written on the board, or how group pronunciation tasks were managed.

After the observations, the checklist data were summarised to show which features appeared in which lessons. The field notes were coded thematically using the same broad framework that had emerged from the interview analysis. In other words, the researcher looked for evidence in the classroom of issues such as emphasis on consonants, limited attention to vowels, reliance on drilling, use of L1, and the influence of student level. This approach made it possible to see where reported practices and observed practices matched, where they diverged, and where the classroom data added new insights (Miles et al., 2014).

The main observational findings are summarised in the following points.

1. **Use of IPA and phonetic transcription**

In some lessons, teachers made active use of IPA symbols and phonetic transcription, for example by writing symbols on the board and asking students to match them with sounds or words, or by using simple transcription exercises. In other lessons, teachers did not use IPA at all and relied instead on spelling based explanations. Overall, IPA was used inconsistently, often depending on the teacher's confidence and perception of students' readiness.

2. **Repetition and drilling**

Across all observed classes, repetition and drilling were central techniques. Teachers frequently used choral repetition followed by individual repetition. Minimal pair drills were common, especially for consonant contrasts. These drills gave students repeated exposure to target sounds, but in larger classes it was difficult for teachers to monitor individual production and to correct all errors.

3. **Use of audiovisual aids**

The use of audiovisual aids such as charts, videos, or digital tools was very limited. Most teachers relied on the board and the textbook, with occasional hand drawn diagrams. Technical issues and lack of equipment were cited as reasons for not using more multimedia support, even though some teachers expressed a wish to do so.

4. **Student participation and interaction**

Student participation and interaction were present in all lessons but varied in quality and distribution. In some classes, teachers encouraged students to answer questions, read aloud, and work in pairs or groups. In others, participation was dominated by a small number of confident students, while weaker or more hesitant students remained mostly silent, especially during whole class drills.

5. **Teacher feedback on pronunciation**

Feedback on pronunciation occurred in each lesson, but its specificity and timing differed. Some teachers offered precise, targeted feedback on individual sounds and invited students to try again. Others used more general comments such as "repeat" or "listen carefully" without always

specifying the problem. More detailed feedback tended to be associated with more experienced teachers.

6. **Integration of communicative activities**

In a few lessons, teachers integrated phonetics work into short communicative activities such as dialogues or role plays containing target sounds. When these activities were well managed, they allowed students to practise pronunciation in more natural contexts. However, such tasks were relatively rare, and phonetics was more often taught through isolated lists of words or minimal pairs.

7. **Use of L1 for explanation**

The use of students' first language (Arabic) was observed in all lessons. Teachers used L1 strategically to clarify difficult phonetic concepts, especially for vowels and diphthongs. These explanations were usually brief, after which the teacher returned to English for practice activities. This pattern is consistent with the interview data, which presented L1 use as a bridge rather than as a default medium of instruction.

8. **Techniques for segmental and suprasegmental features**

Techniques for teaching segmental features, particularly consonants, were frequent and included modelling, drilling, and spelling based explanations. Vowel work was less systematic and often shorter. Techniques for suprasegmental features such as stress, intonation, and connected speech were rare and usually brief, which meant that students had limited opportunities to practise these aspects in a focused way.

9. **Links between observation findings and other data**

The observation findings support many of the themes identified in the questionnaire and interviews. They show that repetition and drilling are indeed central techniques, that consonants receive more attention than vowels, that IPA and audiovisual aids are used inconsistently, and that L1 is used selectively to aid understanding. They also reveal how class size, time pressure, and resource limitations shape what teachers can do in practice, and how teaching experience influences the quality of feedback and the management of activities.

## 4.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented a mixed-methods study of phonetics teaching at Zawia University, drawing on questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation data. The questionnaire indicated that teachers generally regard phonetics, especially with first-year students, as difficult. Many have had little specialised training, do not consistently re-explain lessons using clearly different methods, and make only limited systematic use of student feedback. They are cautious about simply combining multiple methods, yet most feel their teaching improves students' outcomes, is broadly well received, and is adapted during lessons to learners' understanding.

Qualitative interviews and classroom observations deepened and contextualised these quantitative trends. Teachers reported particular difficulty with vowels and suprasegmental features, greater confidence and emphasis on consonants, and a tendency to treat phonetics largely as phonics. Observed lessons were typically teacher-led and centred on explanation, repetition, and drilling, with uneven attention to vowels, suprasegmentals, IPA, and audiovisual support. Arabic was used selectively to support comprehension, especially with beginners.

Overall, the chapter portrays a committed but under-resourced teaching community working within clear methodological and contextual constraints. The next chapter situates these findings within the wider literature and discusses their implications for teacher education, curriculum design, and the future development of phonetics teaching at Zawia University.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Discussion, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the findings of the study on English phonetics teaching at University of Zawia. As explained in Chapter One, the research focused on how EFL teachers teach phonetics, how they view this part of their work and what difficulties they encounter, across five faculties: the Faculties of Education in Zawia, Abu Issa and Al Ajailat, the Nasser Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Languages and Translation. In these programmes, phonetics is expected to help students develop clear and intelligible pronunciation, which is a key element of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Morley, 1991; Gilakjani, 2011). Previous research shows that weak pronunciation can seriously reduce intelligibility (Derwing & Munro, 2005), while focused phonetic instruction can improve fluency, listening and overall spoken performance (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

The study was guided by two research questions:

- Q1: What are the teaching methods that EFL teachers at Zawia University use when teaching phonetics?
- Q2: What are the challenges that EFL teachers at Zawia University face when teaching phonetics?

A convergent mixed methods design was used. Quantitative data came from a questionnaire completed by 20 EFL teachers. Qualitative data came from semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers and classroom observations of six phonetics lessons, using a checklist that noted the use of IPA, drilling, audiovisual aids, student participation, feedback and work on segmental and suprasegmental features. Taken together, these sources offered a balanced and context-based picture of phonetics teaching at Zawia University.

The rest of the chapter is organised as follows. Section 5.1 outlines the structure of the discussion. Section 5.2 deals with teaching methods (Research Question One). Section 5.3 considers the challenges identified (Research Question Two). Section 5.4 summarises the main findings. Section 5.5 discusses implications for practice and policy. Section 5.6 presents the study's contributions,

Section 5.7 offers recommendations, Section 5.8 notes limitations, Section 5.9 suggests areas for further research, and Section 5.10 provides the overall conclusion.

### 5.1 Overview of the Discussion of the Research Questions

The discussion in this chapter is organised around the two research questions that guided the study and that together provide a coherent picture of phonetics teaching at University of Zawia. The first question concerns the teaching methods that EFL teachers use when they teach phonetics, and the extent to which these methods reflect the intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic and integrative approaches outlined in the literature (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). The second question examines the main challenges teachers face in implementing phonetics instruction, including gaps in training, limitations in curriculum and resources, and the influence of learners' first language, which are widely reported in research on pronunciation teaching (Jenkins, 2000; Scrivener, 2005; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Teachers' perceptions of the importance and effectiveness of phonetics are not treated as a separate question, but as a crucial thread that runs through both issues and shapes how methods are chosen and how challenges are interpreted.

The analysis draws on quantitative findings from the teacher questionnaire (Table 1; Figures 1 to 10) alongside qualitative evidence from interviews and classroom observations. This mixed-methods approach makes it possible to connect what teachers report doing and believing with what is observed in their lessons, and to relate these patterns to the theoretical and empirical work reviewed earlier in the thesis. Section 5.2 examines the teaching methods associated with Research Question One, and Section 5.3 explores the challenges addressed in Research Question Two. Section 5.4 then brings the main findings together, before the subsequent sections consider their implications, contributions, recommendations, limitations and directions for future research.

### 5.2 Discussion of Research Question One: Teaching Methods Used in Phonetics Instruction

The first research question investigates the pedagogical approaches and classroom techniques that EFL teachers at University of Zawia use when teaching English phonetics. In light of widely cited approaches, intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic and integrative (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), this section considers which methods are used, how they are combined in practice, and how they compare with those recommended in the literature. Teachers' own perceptions of how effective these methods are, and how students respond to them, are an integral part of this picture.

### 5.2.1 Evidence from the Questionnaire

Several questionnaire items illuminate teachers' self-reported methods and their views of these methods. For the statement "I use the analytical linguistic approach, imitative approach, and integrative approach" (Item 3), only a minority expressed clear support: 15 per cent favoured the imitative approach, 10 per cent the analytical approach, and 15 per cent were neutral regarding the integrative approach, while 60 per cent (30 per cent disagreeing and 30 per cent strongly disagreeing) considered these approaches too time-consuming and demanding in terms of phonetic knowledge (mean 4, median 3). In other words, teachers are aware of these method labels, but perceive them as difficult to apply fully in their context.

At the same time, they express high confidence in their own ways of teaching. For the statement "In my experience, the method I apply in teaching phonetics has been successful in improving students' outcomes" (Item 5), about 90 per cent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed (mean 6.66, median 8). This suggests that, regardless of formal terminology, teachers feel that their classroom practices lead to real improvement in learners' pronunciation.

Teachers also see themselves as responsive to learners. For "I adapt my teaching method depending on learners' level of comprehension during the lesson" (Item 8), 75 per cent agreed or strongly agreed (mean 6.66, median 5). Many teachers therefore believe that they adjust their approach when students struggle, even if they are reluctant to label this as using multiple methods in a systematic way.

This reluctance is evident in responses to the statement "I believe that a combination of methods is more effective for teaching phonetics than relying on a single approach" (Item 10). Half of the teachers strongly disagreed, 20 per cent agreed, 10 per cent strongly agreed and 20 per cent were neutral. On a five-point scale, the mean score for this item was 2.4 and the median was 1. Conceptually, many teachers prefer the idea of one stable method, even though they actually draw on a mixture of techniques in practice. This tension between stated beliefs and classroom behaviour echoes findings from other EFL settings (Buss, 2016) and is consistent with discussions of teacher cognition and responsibility in phonetics teaching (Kenworthy, 1987; Shahzada, 2012). Overall, the questionnaire depicts teachers who know about a range of phonetics teaching approaches, sometimes use elements of them, but tend to rely on a narrower, experience-based repertoire that they regard as effective and manageable within their context.

### 5.2.2 Insights from Interviews and Classroom Observations

The interviews and classroom observations give a more concrete sense of what these methods look like in practice. Teachers repeatedly explained that they use different techniques for different aspects of phonetics. Teacher A, for example, indicated that explicit articulatory explanation was necessary for certain consonants, while rhythm and stress required more listening and repetition in full sentences. Teacher D agreed that a combination of methods is desirable, but emphasised that "activities for intonation or stress take a lot of time to prepare, and with my teaching load it is difficult to do them regularly."

Rather than following a shared, explicit framework, most teachers appear to draw on their own learning histories and experience. Teachers B, E and J described moving between explanation, imitation and occasional communicative practice, depending on student level and lesson content. Teacher C noted that "we never really studied a special method for phonetics," and that choices are often based on what "seems to work" rather than on a formal model. This is consistent with discussions of teacher roles and reflective practice in phonetics teaching (Kenworthy, 1987; Shahzada, 2012). The classroom observations confirm that repetition and drilling, especially for consonants, form the backbone of phonetics teaching. Choral repetition, minimal pairs and teacher-led modelling were central features in all six observed lessons. This is very much in line with traditional intuitive-imitative practice (Fraser, 2006; Jam & Adibpour, 2014). There was some analytic-linguistic work: teachers occasionally wrote IPA symbols on the board, referred to place and manner of articulation, or used basic diagrams, which reflects the influence of analytic approaches (Rohani et al., 2013; Ghorbani et al., 2016).

However, two limitations were striking. First, instruction often resembled phonics rather than fuller phonetics. Many lessons focused on letter–sound correspondences and spelling-based explanations, with limited attention to articulatory detail or to the sound system as a whole. Second, vowel work and suprasegmentals were noticeably under-represented. In one Level 1 lesson, for instance, almost the entire session was devoted to consonant drills, while only brief, reactive attention was given to diphthongs when students mispronounced them. Similar patterns have been documented elsewhere, where teachers are more confident with consonants than with vowels and prosodic features (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Mohd Asikin & Ibrahim, 2020).

Integrative, communicative activities, such as short dialogues, role plays or tasks in which pronunciation is embedded in meaningful exchange, were used occasionally but not systematically. Technology, including computer-assisted pronunciation tools, was practically absent, despite growing evidence that such tools can support awareness and practice (Chun, 2012; Levis & McCrocklin, 2018; Levis, 2007; Nushi & Sadeghi, 2021).

Teachers nonetheless tended to interpret these methods positively. They highlighted students' engagement during drills and believed these activities helped learners "gain confidence" and "sound more correct". Their sense of effectiveness, however, was usually based on participation and short-term accuracy rather than on systematic assessment of longer-term gains. In sum, the findings for Research Question One show that teachers at Zawia University draw selectively on intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic techniques, with only limited movement towards integrative practice. Their methods are shaped not only by the models available in the literature, but also by their own perceptions of what is feasible and effective in large, resource-constrained classes.

### 5.3 Discussion of Research Question Two: Challenges in Teaching English Phonetics

The second research question explores the obstacles that hinder effective phonetics instruction at University of Zawia. The findings reveal a combination of teacher-related and contextual challenges, many of which echo those reported in the pronunciation teaching literature (Scrivener, 2005; Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2011; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016) and show how teachers interpret and respond to these constraints.

#### 5.3.1 Evidence from the Questionnaire

Teachers' views on the difficulty of phonetics and their preparation for teaching it emerged clearly from the questionnaire. For "I find teaching phonetics to freshman students easy and manageable" (Item 1), only 30 per cent agreed or strongly agreed, while 55 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed and 15 per cent were neutral (mean 4, median 3). Phonetics is therefore widely perceived as challenging rather than straightforward.

When asked whether they explain phonetics lessons using a different method when students face difficulties (Item 2), 30 per cent agreed or strongly agreed, but 60 per cent disagreed or strongly

disagreed (mean and median 4). Most teachers thus do not routinely change their approach even when learners struggle, often attributing this to time pressure and syllabus demands.

The item "I have received training or attended workshops on different methods for teaching English language phonetics" (Item 9) showed that only 35 per cent reported having such training, whereas 60 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. On the five-point scale, the mean score was 2.6 and the median was 2. This confirms that many teachers enter phonetics teaching with limited specialised preparation, a pattern noted in other contexts (Jenkins, 2000; Baker & Murphy, 2011).

Finally, for "I assess the effectiveness of my phonetics teaching methods through students' feedback and performance" (Item 6), 35 per cent responded positively, but 55 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed (mean and median 4). Systematic formative assessment is therefore not a regular feature of many teachers' practices. Taken together, these findings present phonetics as a difficult area where many teachers feel under-trained and under-resourced, and where formal mechanisms to evaluate and refine practice are relatively weak. Teachers' own perceptions of difficulty, limited training and lack of time are thus central components of the challenge.

### 5.3.2 Insights from Interviews and Classroom Observations

The interviews and classroom observations help explain how these challenges play out in day-to-day teaching. All twelve interviewed teachers described phonetics as important but demanding. Vowels and suprasegmentals were repeatedly identified as the most problematic areas. Teacher A commented that students "struggle to understand intonation patterns", while Teacher C noted that word stress remained confusing "even after many examples". Teacher F pointed out that intonation "changes with context and emotion", making it hard for students to generalise from the limited classroom input they receive.

Even segmental features can be difficult when they do not exist in Arabic. Teacher D observed that students often forget how to produce certain consonants and vowels correctly, especially when these sounds differ sharply from L1 patterns. This reflects the broader difficulty of overcoming L1 to L2 phonological differences, particularly in vowel systems (Elmahdi & Khan, 2015).

Constraints related to curriculum, materials and resources also feature strongly. Teachers reported that some textbooks provide only patchy coverage of phonetic features, with little guidance on sequencing or integration with other skills. In the observed lessons, phonetics sometimes received

only a small portion of class time, as teachers felt pressure to prioritise grammar, vocabulary and reading. Audiovisual aids and technological tools, which could help learners visualise articulation or receive varied models of target sounds, were rarely used, often because they were not available or practical in large classes.

First language interference emerged as a persistent issue. Teachers H and J reported that students frequently transfer Arabic stress patterns and vowel qualities into English, leading to fossilised mispronunciations that are hard to address within a single semester. Observations confirmed that many learners relied on Arabic-based habits when reading English words and that teachers often reverted to L1 to explain difficult contrasts.

Crucially, teachers did not simply describe these factors; they also interpreted them in ways that shaped their responses. Some saw the difficulty of vowels and suprasegmentals as evidence that it was more realistic to concentrate on consonants and basic segmentals. Others felt that, given large classes and limited time, it was more practical to rely on methods they already knew well, even if they were aware of alternative techniques in the literature. In this way, contextual constraints and teacher perceptions reinforce each other, narrowing the scope of phonetics teaching and making it harder to implement more comprehensive approaches.

In summary, the findings for Research Question Two show that challenges in phonetics teaching at Zawia University arise from a combination of limited specialised training, insufficient curricular time and resources, large and sometimes noisy classes, strong L1 influence and the inherent complexity of the English sound system. Teachers owns sense of difficulty and of what is feasible in their context shapes how they respond to these constraints, often leading them to adopt pragmatic but partial solutions.

### 5.4 Summary of the Findings

When the two research questions are considered together, a coherent picture of phonetics teaching at Zawia University emerges.

With regard to Research Question One, the questionnaire, interview and observation data indicate that teachers draw mainly on a limited set of intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic techniques. Choral and individual drilling, minimal pairs and teacher-led modelling were central in all six observed lessons, especially for consonant contrasts. Some analytic elements were visible, such as

occasional use of IPA symbols, reference to place and manner of articulation and simple diagrams, but these were applied selectively rather than systematically.

The quantitative data show that only a minority of teachers report drawing explicitly on the full range of analytical, imitative and integrative approaches. For the statement “I use the analytical linguistic approach, imitative approach, and integrative approach” (Item 3), 15 per cent favoured the imitative approach, 10 per cent the analytical approach and 15 per cent were neutral about the integrative approach, while 60 per cent (30 per cent disagreeing and 30 per cent strongly disagreeing) saw these approaches as too time-consuming and demanding in terms of phonetic knowledge. At the same time, about 90 per cent of teachers agreed that the methods they use have been successful in improving students’ outcomes, and around 75 per cent reported adapting their method during lessons according to learners’ comprehension. These patterns reflect a familiar tension about teacher beliefs and classroom practice that can be related to the responsibilities and reflective roles described by Kenworthy (1987) and Shahzada (2012). Teachers find their work challenging and are cautious about formal methodological labels, yet they believe that within their constraints they help students to make progress.

Observation and interview data further show that vowels, stress, intonation and connected speech receive relatively limited and often reactive attention compared with consonants and letter sound correspondences. Several teachers openly reported lower confidence in teaching vowels and suprasegmentals and described a tendency for phonetics lessons to slide into phonics work focused on spelling and basic sound letter mapping. This imbalance, also reported in other EFL contexts, goes some way towards explaining why teachers feel that their current methods are not fully effective for complex features such as intonation and stress, even if they see overall outcomes as positive (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Mohd Asikin & Ibrahim, 2020).

With regard to Research Question Two, the findings reveal a cluster of teacher-related and contextual challenges. Quantitatively, more than half of the teachers disagreed that teaching phonetics to first-year students is easy and manageable, and a similar proportion indicated that they do not usually re-explain lessons using different methods when students struggle. Around 60 per cent reported that they had not received specialised training or workshops on phonetics teaching, and more than half stated that they do not systematically use student feedback and performance to evaluate their methods. In addition, 50 per cent strongly rejected the idea that

combining multiple methods is more effective than relying on a single approach. These patterns are in line with concerns about limited training, resources and institutional support for pronunciation teaching highlighted in Scrivener (2005), Nair et al. (2006) and Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016).

The qualitative findings deepen this picture. Teachers consistently described phonetics as one of the most demanding parts of their work, especially in relation to vowels and suprasegmentals. They highlighted time pressure, large and mixed-ability classes, limited resources and strong first language interference as major constraints. Many felt that, under these conditions, it was more realistic to concentrate on consonants and basic segmentals and to rely on methods they knew well, even if they were aware of richer options in the literature (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). At the same time, there are clear signs of commitment and perceived success. About nine teachers out of ten believe that their methods improve students' outcomes, around 70 per cent feel that students respond positively to their phonetics teaching, and 75 per cent report adapting their methods in response to learners' comprehension. Within the limits they face, most teachers therefore see themselves as responsive and as helping students to make progress.

In summary, the study portrays a teaching community that regards phonetics as essential but difficult, operates with limited specialised training and uneven resources, and nevertheless sustains pronunciation work through a relatively narrow, consonant-focused, drill-based repertoire. This pattern diverges from the more balanced and integrated approaches advocated in recent pronunciation pedagogy (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2015), and it points directly to the implications discussed in the next section.

## 5.5 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several implications for phonetics teaching in EFL programmes at Zawia University and in similar contexts. These implications concern classroom practice, curriculum and materials, teacher education and institutional support. They are offered as realistic directions for gradual improvement rather than as immediate prescriptions.

### 5.5.1 Pedagogical Implications for Classroom Practice

At classroom level, three main implications arise.

First, the pronounced imbalance between consonant and vowel work suggests that phonetics instruction should move towards a more systematic and balanced treatment of all key phonological components. Without abandoning current strengths in consonant drilling, teachers might gradually increase explicit and practical work on:

- core vowel contrasts (for example /ɪ/ vs /iː/, /ʊ/ vs /uː/ and problematic diphthongs), and
- suprasegmental features such as word and sentence stress, rhythm and simple intonation patterns.

Existing drills and minimal pairs could be extended to include these elements and linked more explicitly to short phrases or sentences, so that students practise sounds in context rather than in isolation.

Second, the findings underline the value of combining analytic explanation with intuitive imitation. Teachers are already familiar with both strands separately. Small adjustments, such as demonstrating tongue and lip positions with simple diagrams or gestures, and then asking students to listen, repeat and highlight stressed syllables or intonation contours, might help learners connect physical articulation, auditory perception and symbolic representation more effectively (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Gilbert, 2012). In large classes with limited technology, such low-cost techniques may be particularly useful.

Third, the tendency to teach phonetics as a set of isolated drills suggests that pronunciation might be more fully embedded in communicative work. Even brief tasks, for example short role plays, guided dialogues or information gap activities containing target sounds, could help students transfer phonetic knowledge into meaningful use. This would move practice closer to the integrative, communicative principles highlighted in Chapter Two (Mora-Plaza et al., 2018), while still respecting local constraints.

Finally, the study confirms that teachers already use the first language selectively to support understanding. Rather than discouraging this entirely, the implication is that L1 might continue to be used strategically, especially for explaining difficult vowels or contrasting English and Arabic stress and rhythm, while keeping most listening and speaking practice in English to maximise exposure to the target system.

### 5.5.2 Implications for Curriculum, Teacher Education and Institutional Support

Beyond individual classrooms, the findings suggest that phonetics should occupy a clearer and more coherent place within English language programmes.

At curriculum level, course designers might consider:

- allocating explicit time and weighting to phonetics across the degree, rather than confining it to a short period;
- formulating learning outcomes that include vowels, suprasegmentals and connected speech, and not only consonant inventories and IPA symbol recognition; and
- integrating pronunciation goals into speaking and listening courses, so that students see phonetics as part of real communication rather than as an isolated unit.

In teacher education and professional development, there appears to be a strong case for targeted, practice-oriented support. Workshops might focus on:

- the English vowel system and typical difficulties for Arabic-speaking learners;
- classroom techniques for teaching stress, rhythm and intonation in large groups; and
- simple ways of using visual and audio support, including freely available online materials.

Opportunities for peer observation, collaborative lesson planning and small-scale action research could also encourage teachers to share successful techniques and reflect systematically on their practice. At institutional level, even modest investments may have noticeable impact. Providing basic materials such as large IPA charts, mirrors and reliable audio equipment, ensuring that suitable rooms are available for phonetics classes, and explicitly recognising pronunciation in programme documents and assessment schemes would signal that phonetics matters and would make it easier for teachers to act on the pedagogical implications outlined above.

## 5.6 Contribution of the Study

This study makes several contributions to knowledge and practice. Empirically, it offers one of the first mixed-methods investigations of English phonetics teaching in Libyan public universities, focusing on multiple faculties within Zawia University. By combining questionnaire data with interviews and classroom observations, it provides a detailed, triangulated account of how phonetics is actually taught and experienced in this context, going beyond general statements about

“weak pronunciation” to show precisely which methods are used, where attention is concentrated, and how teachers explain their choices.

Theoretically and pedagogically, the study shows how widely discussed approaches to pronunciation teaching, intuitive-imitative, analytic-linguistic and integrative, are selectively realised and reshaped under local conditions of limited training, heavy workloads and scarce resources. It illustrates how teacher beliefs, confidence and perceptions of feasibility interact with institutional factors to produce a distinctive pattern of practice that is consonant heavy, phonics oriented and only partially integrated with communicative work. In doing so, it adds a context-sensitive perspective to international debates about how to adapt pronunciation pedagogy to EFL university settings.

Contextually, the study addresses a clear gap in research on phonetics teaching in Libyan higher education. It documents, for the first time in this setting, the concrete methods used by university EFL teachers, the specific challenges they face and the ways they evaluate their own work. This creates a baseline against which future interventions and reforms can be planned and evaluated, and provides evidence that can inform curriculum development, teacher education and policy decisions aimed at strengthening phonetics teaching. These contributions build directly on the theoretical perspectives on pronunciation and communicative competence set out in Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) and on the view of English as an international language discussed in Jenkins (2000).

### 5.7 Recommendations for EFL Teachers

In light of the findings, this section offers brief, practical suggestions for classroom teachers. The aim is to propose small steps that can be applied in real conditions.

Teachers should consider the following points when planning and delivering phonetics lessons:

- Teachers should give regular attention to vowels and suprasegmental features, not only consonants.
- They might spend a few minutes in each lesson on vowel contrasts, word stress, sentence stress and simple intonation.
- Teachers should keep using drills and minimal pairs, as these are useful and familiar.
- They might add short communicative tasks, such as brief dialogues, role plays or simple information gap activities that use target sounds.

- Teachers should give clear, simple articulatory explanations and then ask students to listen and repeat.
- They may use the board, hand gestures or quick sketches to show tongue and lip positions.
- Teachers should use Arabic only when it helps to explain difficult sounds or to compare English and Arabic patterns.
- Most pronunciation practice and feedback should stay in English.
- Teachers might set one or two clear pronunciation goals for each lesson.
- They should give small homework tasks linked to these goals and offer brief feedback in the next class.
- Teachers should notice which activities seem most effective and write a short note after the lesson.
- They might share successful ideas and materials with colleagues in informal discussions or joint planning.

These recommendations are drawn from the data in this study and are intended to support steady, realistic improvement in phonetics teaching at Zawia University and in similar EFL settings.

### 5.8 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the sample size and scope were limited. The questionnaire involved 20 teachers, and the qualitative data were drawn from 12 interviews and six observed lessons within faculties affiliated with a single university. The results therefore provide a detailed picture of one context rather than a comprehensive account of all EFL phonetics teaching in Libya.

Second, much of the evidence is based on self-report. Teachers' answers in questionnaires and interviews may have been influenced by social desirability or imperfect recall. Although classroom observations helped to balance this, teachers may have adapted their behaviour because they knew they were being observed, potentially presenting more careful or "ideal" versions of their usual practice. Third, the study adopted a cross-sectional design, capturing a snapshot of teachers' methods, perceptions and challenges at one point in time. It did not examine how these might change with additional experience, training or curricular reform, nor did it follow students'

pronunciation development over time. As a result, firm conclusions about long-term impact cannot be drawn. Finally, the study concentrated on teachers' perspectives and classroom behaviour. Students' own views of phonetics teaching, their preferences and their sense of what helps them most were not systematically collected. This leaves an important part of the teaching learning relationship unexplored. Recognising these limitations does not diminish the value of the findings; rather, it clarifies the boundaries of their applicability and points the way toward complementary future research.

### 5.9 Suggestions for Further Research

Considering the limitations and gaps identified in the current study, several avenues for future research are proposed. A primary recommendation is to undertake large-scale, multi-site investigations involving educators from various universities and regions. Such research would facilitate the differentiation between patterns unique to Zawia University and those that are more representative of Libyan higher education as a whole.

A second research direction involves examining learners' perspectives on phonetics instruction. Investigations focusing on students' experiences in phonetics courses, their perceived challenges, attitudes toward pronunciation training, and evaluations of teaching methodologies would provide a valuable complement to the teacher-centred approach of the present study. This learner-focused inquiry could reveal areas of convergence or divergence between instructional practices and student needs. A third potential line of inquiry encompasses intervention and longitudinal studies. These might include the design and assessment of targeted professional development programs addressing vowels, suprasegmentals, or the integration of basic technological tools, with subsequent monitoring of their effects on classroom practices and student outcomes over time. Additionally, small-scale action research projects, wherein teachers systematically implement and assess modifications in their phonetics instruction, could foster a culture of reflective practice and generate context-specific evidence regarding effective pedagogical strategies.

Finally, comparative studies between Libyan universities and institutions in other English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context could elucidate the influence of varying curricular frameworks, resource availability, and teacher education systems on phonetics teaching. Such comparative analyses may identify adaptable practices suitable for implementation within the Libyan educational environment.

## 5.10 Overall Conclusion of the Study

This chapter has examined the findings of the study in relation to its two research questions, considered their implications, and outlined the study's contributions, limitations and suggestions for further inquiry. The research set out to discover what teaching methods EFL teachers at Zawia University use when teaching phonetics and what challenges they face in doing so.

The evidence shows that teachers draw on a limited but meaningful mix of intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic techniques, with some tentative steps towards integrative practice. Their teaching is heavily centred on consonant drills and phonics-type activities, with much less systematic attention to vowels, stress, intonation and connected speech. At the same time, teachers confront considerable challenges: many have received little specialised training in phonetics, work under tight time and syllabus constraints, manage large classes with few resources, and must address strong first language interference.

Despite these constraints, teachers hold strongly positive attitudes towards phonetics, see it as essential for learners' communicative competence and express confidence in many aspects of their practice. Their commitment ensures that pronunciation is not entirely neglected, even under pressure. Yet their work remains narrower in scope than what is envisaged in current pronunciation pedagogy (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2015), and important areas of the sound system are only partially addressed. Taken together, these findings underscore the need for more balanced, integrated and well supported phonetics teaching in Libyan higher education. They point to the importance of modest but steady improvements, better alignment between curricula and pronunciation goals, practical professional development in areas teachers find difficult, and basic resources that make richer forms of phonetics teaching possible. If such steps are taken, the benefits may extend beyond current cohorts of students: today's undergraduates, equipped with a stronger grounding in phonetics, are likely to become tomorrow's teachers, carrying improved practices into schools and universities across the country.

In this sense, the study not only describes the present state of phonetics teaching at University of Zawia, but also gestures towards a more confident and communicatively oriented future, in which learners are better able to use English clearly and intelligibly in academic, professional and international settings, in line with the importance of intelligible pronunciation highlighted in Chapter Two (Gilakjani, 2012).

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What teaching methods do you use when teaching English phonetics?
2. What challenges do you face when teaching phonetics to EFL students? And What is the most difficult lesson in phonetics?
3. What aspects are so difficult about vowel sounds? (What about vowel sounds?)
4. Is teaching phonetics to freshmen easy? Why is that?
5. When learners don't understand your lesson, what clarification do you provide and on what kind of Method?
6. In your opinion, Is this method successful according to you? In what basis do you confirm what you said?
7. Have you received any training related to teaching phonetics?
8. What resources or materials do you find most helpful in teaching phonetics?

## Appendix B: Classroom Observation Checklist

| Observation Criteria | Observed (✓/✗) | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Use of IPA and phonetic transcription | | |
| Repetition and drilling exercises | | |
| Use of audiovisual aids (charts, videos) | | |
| Student participation and interaction | | |
| Teacher feedback on pronunciation | | |
| Integration of communicative activities | | |
| Use of L1 for explanation | | |
| Techniques used for segmental features | | |
| Techniques used for suprasegmental features | | |

## Appendix C: Teacher Questionnaire

### Section A: Personal Information

1. Age: _____
2. Teaching Experience: _____ years
3. Educational Qualification: _____
4. Have you received training in teaching phonetics? Yes / No

**Section B: Teaching Practices** (Rate from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. I find teaching phonetics to freshman students easy and manageable.
2. I re-explain phonetics lessons using different methods when students struggle.
3. I use a combination of analytical, imitative, and integrative approaches.
4. My teaching method helps students understand intonation, stress, and articulation.
5. My phonetics teaching improves student outcomes.
6. I use student feedback to assess teaching effectiveness.
7. Students respond positively to my phonetics instruction.
8. I adapt my methods depending on students' comprehension levels.
9. I have attended training or workshops related to phonetics.
10. I believe combining multiple methods is more effective than a single approach.

## 11. Questionnaire: Teaching Methods Used by EFL Teachers in Teaching Phonetics at Zawia University

12. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by marking one option in the table below.

| No. | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I find teaching phonetics to first year (freshman) EFL students to be easy and manageable. | | | | | |
| 2 | When students face difficulties in understanding phonetics lessons, I usually re-explain the material using a different method. | | | | | |
| 3 | I rely primarily on a specific teaching method (e.g., analytical, imitative, or integrative) when teaching phonetics. | | | | | |
| 4 | The teaching method I use helps students better understand complex phonetic features such as intonation, stress, and articulation. | | | | | |
| 5 | In my experience, the method I apply in teaching | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | phonetics has been successful in improving student outcomes. | | | | | |
| 6 | I assess the effectiveness of my phonetics teaching method through student feedback and performance. | | | | | |
| 7 | Students respond positively to the teaching methods I use in phonetics classes. | | | | | |
| 8 | I adapt my teaching method depending on the learners' level of comprehension during the lesson. | | | | | |
| 9 | I have received training or attended workshops on different methods for teaching English phonetics. | | | | | |
| 10 | I believe that a combination of methods is more effective for teaching phonetics than relying on a single approach. | | | | | |

**Appendix D: Pilot Study Questionnaire Responses**

**Participants:** 5 EFL Teachers from [Zawia University]
**Findings:**

1. Average completion time: 12–15 minutes
2. Minor revisions were made to clarify wording.
3. Feedback indicated that the Likert-scale format was clear and easy to respond to.
4. Pilot helped confirm the reliability of questionnaire content.

**Appendix E: Interview Transcripts (Selected Extracts)**

**Participant 3:**

"I often find myself explaining phonetics in Arabic because students get confused. Especially with vowel sounds those are the hardest for them."

**Participant 6:**

"We use minimal pair activities sometimes, but the large class sizes make it difficult to correct everyone."

**Participant 9:**

"There's not enough time to cover phonetics in depth. We are expected to focus more on grammar."

**Appendix F: Observation Notes.**

**Date:** [3rd.Nov.2024]
**Class:** Phonetics for EFL – Level 1
**Duration:** 60 minutes
**Key Observations:**

The teacher used IPA symbols on the board.

Students were engaged during drilling of consonant sounds.

Minimal attention given to vowel practice.

Teacher reverted to L1 (Arabic) when students did not understand diphthongs.

The group pronunciation activity was attempted but not well managed due to classroom noise.

**Appendix G: Questionnaire Data (Raw and Coded)**

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Item 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| … | … | … | … | … | … | … | … |

**Appendix H: Consent Forms and Ethical Approval**

This research followed ethical guidelines and secured consent from all participants. The following documents were signed:

**Informed Consent Form** – Included details of study aims, confidentiality assurance, and voluntary participation.

**Ethical Approval Letter** – Issued by the research committee of [ Managers of Departments of the faculties of Education affiliated with the university of Zawia].

**Post graduate studies**

**University of Zawia**

Request for permission to collect data for thesis work.

Respected doctor.

I am a postgraduate student at Zawia University. I have been assigned to do thesis work. I am writing to request your permission to collect the required for my research.

I assure you that the data collection process will adhere to ethically treated confidentiality, all the information gathered will be used solely for academic purposes.

Your support and cooperation in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for considering my request. I look VI forward to your positive response.

**Researcher:** ***Widad Imbayyah Ali***

**The Department manager.**