

# Pronunciation Pedagogy Revisited: Voices From Omani B. Ed. Students

Konstantinos M. Pitychoutis

Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East, Egaila, Kuwait

**Abstract**—This article investigates the attitudes of Omani B. Ed. students towards various aspects of pronunciation pedagogy. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study captures students' preferences for pronunciation instruction methods, their attitudes towards different English accents, the role of technology in pronunciation learning, and the influence of extracurricular exposure to English. The findings reveal a strong preference for instructor-led methodologies, the use of technology, and a focus on communicative competence. Additionally, the study highlights a preference for Received Pronunciation among students, while views on American and International accents are polarised, reflecting the complex interplay of cultural, educational, and personal factors in accent choice. The research also underscores the significant role of extracurricular exposure to English in shaping students' attitudes towards pronunciation learning and correction. The study's insights have profound implications for curriculum design and teaching methodologies in English language teaching in Oman, emphasising the need for pedagogical approaches that are responsive to students' diverse linguistic backgrounds and experiences.

**Index Terms**—pronunciation pedagogy, Omani educational context, students' attitudes, English language teaching, extracurricular English exposure

## I. INTRODUCTION

The mastery of English pronunciation is a crucial aspect of language acquisition, particularly in non-native English-speaking contexts like Oman. This study delves into the attitudes of Omani Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) students towards various facets of pronunciation pedagogy. Understanding these attitudes is pivotal for designing effective teaching strategies that resonate with the learners' perspectives and needs.

The relevance of pronunciation in language learning has been increasingly recognised due to its direct impact on communicative competence. In the Omani context, where English is a crucial tool for global engagement, how students teach and perceive pronunciation can significantly influence their overall language proficiency. This research aims to bridge the gap between students' needs and current pedagogical practices, providing insights for more responsive and effective pronunciation instruction.

In exploring the attitudes of Omani B. Ed. students, this study considers several vital aspects: students' preferences for pronunciation instruction methods, their attitudes towards different English accents, the role of technology in pronunciation learning, and the influence of extracurricular exposure to English. By examining these dimensions, the study sheds light on how students perceive and interact with the components of pronunciation pedagogy.

Given the global status of English and its variations, the preference for specific accents (such as Received Pronunciation or American English) among Omani students provides valuable insights into their linguistic aspirations and cultural influences. Additionally, the increasing integration of technology in education prompts an examination of how digital tools reshape students' learning experiences in pronunciation.

Furthermore, the impact of extracurricular exposure to English – through media, social interactions, and self-study – is also a critical factor. This external engagement with the language can significantly affect students' attitudes towards pronunciation learning in formal educational settings.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from open-ended responses. Doing so aims to capture a comprehensive view of the students' perspectives, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their attitudes and preferences in pronunciation learning.

### A. Research Aim

The primary aim of this study is to explore and understand the attitudes of Omani Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) students towards various aspects of pronunciation pedagogy. This includes their preferences for instructional methods, attitudes towards different English accents, perceptions of the role of technology in pronunciation learning, and the influence of extracurricular English exposure on their learning process. By achieving this aim, the study seeks to provide insights that can inform and enhance pronunciation teaching practices in Omani educational contexts.

### B. Research Questions

1. What are Omani B. Ed. students' attitudes towards different pronunciation instruction methods? This question aims to investigate students' preferences for specific instructional strategies, such as explicit teaching, communicative

methods, or technology-based approaches, in the context of pronunciation learning.

2. How do Omani B. Ed. students perceive different English accents in terms of their preference and appropriateness as models for pronunciation teaching? This question explores students' preferences for accents such as Received Pronunciation (RP), American English, or other international accents and their reasons for these preferences.

3. How does extracurricular exposure to English influence Omani B. Ed. students' attitudes towards pronunciation learning and correction? This question examines the correlation between students' engagement with English outside the formal classroom setting (through media, social interactions, and self-study) and their attitudes towards pronunciation learning and correction in academic settings.

Finally, this research contributes to the field of English language teaching in Oman by highlighting the perspectives of B. Ed. students on pronunciation pedagogy. The findings offer valuable implications for curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and the incorporation of technology in pronunciation instruction. Ultimately, this study seeks to enhance the effectiveness of pronunciation teaching in Omani universities, aligning pedagogical approaches with the needs and preferences of the learners.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

University students' attitudes toward pronunciation pedagogy are crucial in shaping their language learning experiences. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing students' attitudes towards pronunciation teaching and learning, including corrective feedback, pronunciation course design, technology integration, practice of pronunciation, and preferred pronunciation accents.

### A. *The Importance of Student Attitudes in Pronunciation Learning*

Derwing and Munro (2005) emphasised the importance of greater collaboration between researchers and practitioners to undertake more classroom-relevant research, highlighting the need for research-based approaches to pronunciation teaching. This underscores the significance of aligning pedagogical practices with empirical evidence to address students' attitudes effectively (Derwing & Munro, 2005). In the context of Asian varieties of English, Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) investigated university students' accent perception, shedding light on attitudes towards pronunciation and preference for specific accents. Understanding students' preferences for particular accents is essential for designing pronunciation courses that cater to their linguistic needs and aspirations (Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011).

### B. *Student Perceptions and Attitudes Toward English Accents*

Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997) highlighted the necessity of considering students' reactions to different accents presented as models, emphasising the potential impact of negative feelings towards specific pronunciations on accent attainment. This underscores the importance of addressing students' attitudes and perceptions to create a supportive learning environment for pronunciation instruction (Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997). More specifically, Buckingham (2014) investigated the accent preferences and perceptions of nativeness among Omani students. The study's objective was to determine how students' beliefs about the native English speaker status of instructors influence their assessments of the teacher's accent as an appropriate model for pronunciation. Buckingham (2014) provided valuable insights into the influence of perceived nativeness on students' attitudes towards pronunciation pedagogy.

### C. *Technology Integration in Pronunciation Pedagogy*

Integrating technology in pronunciation teaching has been a subject of interest. Haryadi and Aprianoto (2020) studied the effects of implementing an English Pronunciation application in a pronunciation course at Mandalika University of Education (UNDIKMA). Their goal was to enhance student engagement and independent learning. The research offers significant findings regarding how integrating technology can influence students' perspectives on learning pronunciation. Haryadi and Aprianoto (2020) investigated the impact of integrating an English Pronunciation app on students' participation and self-learning, highlighting the potential benefits of technology-assisted pronunciation pedagogy. Additionally, using songs and podcasts as facilitators for pronunciation enhancement has been explored, indicating their potential to influence students' attitudes and engagement with pronunciation learning (Rais et al., 2020; Al-Harbi, 2019).

The implementation of innovative approaches, such as video dubbing and online accent reduction software, has also been explored. Anh (2023) investigated the implementation of video dubbing in enhancing students' pronunciation, offering insights into the potential benefits of incorporating multimedia tools in pronunciation teaching. Additionally, Asmawati and Fitriingsih (2021) studied the implementation of online accent-reduction software, providing valuable insights into the potential impact of technology on improving students' pronunciation skills (Anh, 2023; Asmawati & Fitriingsih, 2021). Additionally, Ghounane (2019) examined the perspectives of second-year EFL students at Dr. Moulay Tahar University regarding acquiring English pronunciation through Mobile Assisted Language Learning. This investigation centred on the application of mobile technology in pronunciation education, potentially providing useful information about Omani students' attitudes towards technology-supported pronunciation teaching methods. AbuSeileek (2007) demonstrated that computer-aided instruction in pronunciation enhances learners' skills in producing and recognising accurate stress patterns and promotes a favourable disposition towards pronunciation teaching and related activities. Finally, Bin-Hady and Hazaea (2021) conducted a correlational study on EFL students' achievement and

attitudes towards flipped pronunciation classes in Yemen. The study provides insights into EFL students' attitudes towards innovative pronunciation pedagogy, which could be relevant to understanding Omani students' attitudes towards non-traditional pronunciation teaching methods. These studies offer valuable insights into students' attitudes towards pronunciation pedagogy, technology integration, and innovative teaching methods.

#### *D. Student Expectations and Experiences in Pronunciation Instruction*

Nowacka (2022) studied university students' preferences and expectations in an English phonetics course, providing insights into students' attitudes towards pronunciation instruction and shedding light on their expectations and priorities in phonetic learning. Understanding students' preferences and expectations is crucial for designing effective pronunciation courses that align with their learning goals (Nowacka, 2022). Moreover, Kang (2014) examined learners' perceptions towards pronunciation instruction in different circles of World Englishes, highlighting dissatisfaction with current pronunciation curricula due to confusion about various models and teachers' treatment of accent variation. This study emphasises the need to address students' dissatisfaction and confusion in pronunciation teaching to enhance their attitudes towards pronunciation pedagogy (Kang, 2014).

#### *E. Cognitive and Affective Factors in Pronunciation Instruction*

Burri et al. (2017) underscored the need to engage with students' preconceived notions and knowledge in pronunciation teaching to facilitate cognitive development and better prepare pronunciation educators. This highlights the significance of addressing students' cognitive and affective factors in pronunciation instruction (Burri et al., 2017). Research has shown that students' attitudes and concerns about achieving appropriate pronunciation are closely related to their ability to pronounce words accurately (Lord, 2008). Students and lecturers have also observed differences in attitudes towards pronunciation, highlighting the importance of understanding these varying perspectives in the teaching and learning process (Dağtan, 2020).

In particular, Dolmaci and Kiliç (2021) advised instructors that university students' perspectives on their foreign language pronunciation abilities should be examined to assess their pronunciation teaching needs and guide the development of the curriculum. AlAamri (2013) examined the impact of cultural and linguistic challenges on pronunciation teaching in an Omani tertiary education context, emphasising the need to address the students' attitudes and behaviour in the classroom and stressing the use of proper material and teaching methods to address the students' attitudes and behaviours. In the same vein, the influence of learning styles on pronunciation ability has been considered, highlighting the importance of tailoring teaching techniques to accommodate diverse learning preferences (Mu'in et al., 2017). Factors such as target language exposure and the inclusion of pronunciation in language curricula have also been identified as influential in shaping students' attitudes and perceptions of pronunciation learning (Mukmin & Banet, 2022; Moedjito, 2016).

#### *F. Factors Affecting Students' Attitudes Toward Learning and Teaching Pronunciation*

To understand the factors influencing students' attitudes toward learning and teaching pronunciation, it is essential to consider various aspects contributing to this complex process. Several studies have shed light on the multifaceted nature of pronunciation learning, highlighting the significance of factors such as self-efficacy, attitudes, motivation, age, exposure to the target language, individual differences, and the use of innovative teaching methods.

Sardegna et al. (2017) emphasised the role of perceived practical and linguistic values related to pronunciation learning in influencing students' intentional behaviour to improve their pronunciation skills. This underscores the importance of students' attitudes and beliefs in shaping their approach to pronunciation learning. Similarly, Lord (2008) highlighted the significant relationship between students' attitudes and their concern for achieving appropriate pronunciation, indicating that attitudes play a crucial role in pronunciation accuracy.

Additionally, Mukmin and Banet (2022) determined that age, attitude, motivation, exposure to the target language, and individual effort are key elements affecting students' English pronunciation. This comprehensive view underscores the multifaceted nature of pronunciation learning, encompassing psychological, sociological, and individual factors. Likewise, Ikhsan (2017) emphasised the influence of factors such as age, prior pronunciation instruction, aptitude, learner attitude, and motivation on students' pronunciation mastery, further highlighting the diverse range of factors at play.

The significance of learners' attitudes and perceptions was also underscored by Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999), who discovered that learners view interaction with native speakers and aural training as significant elements in mastering pronunciation. This highlights the importance of learners' attitudes toward different learning experiences and strategies in pronunciation learning. Furthermore, the influence of individual differences, such as intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation, and learning style, on pronunciation learning was highlighted by Mu'in et al. (2017). This suggests that a personalised approach considering individual differences is crucial in addressing students' attitudes toward pronunciation learning.

#### *G. Impact of Extracurricular Exposure to English*

The impact of exposure to English outside the classroom is a crucial factor in the language proficiency and communication skills of students, particularly in tertiary education. Several studies have shed light on the significance

of exposure to English outside the classroom and its influence on students' language proficiency, willingness to communicate, and overall language learning experience. Erling et al. (2020) offered perspectives on how teachers' convictions and methodologies influence student achievements in English language learning. The research stressed the connection between teachers' perceptions of students' opportunities to engage with English outside school and the reduced English proficiency observed in middle schools. Bala (2020) underscored the beneficial link between students' participation in English language activities beyond the classroom and their linguistic proficiency. The research indicated that activities like watching films and videos and interacting with English materials online positively affect students' language abilities. This emphasises the significance of varied and stimulating extracurricular language activities in improving students' English language competencies. Furthermore, Fahim and Dhamotharan (2016) emphasised the challenges faced by students exposed to English for 11 years in primary and secondary schools, indicating that despite the lengthy exposure, students still encountered difficulties related to language proficiency. This suggests that the quality and nature of exposure to English outside the classroom are crucial factors that influence language learning outcomes. Maqsood et al. (2020) emphasised the limited opportunities for students in non-English speaking countries to practice English outside the classroom. This highlights the need for innovative approaches and practices that facilitate exposure to English in various contexts beyond traditional classroom settings. Lastly, Youssef (2016) highlighted the role of early exposure to the English language and family support in shaping students' views and competency in English. This underscores the long-term impact of exposure to English outside the classroom, starting from an early age and within the family environment.

In exploring practices of keeping in touch with English outside the classroom, it is essential to consider innovative approaches such as integrating English into daily activities, leveraging technology for language practice, and creating opportunities for authentic language use. For example, integrating English into entertainment activities, utilising language learning apps, and promoting English language clubs and events can provide students with diverse and engaging opportunities to practice English outside the classroom. It also accentuates the importance of fostering an environment that promotes and facilitates exposure to English beyond the classroom setting.

Additionally, Smit (2012) shed light on the unique aspects of tertiary education taught in English and the possibility of conceptualising English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the classroom context. This perspective underscores the significance of establishing a language-enriched setting in tertiary education, where English serves not just as a subject of study but also as a means of communication and interaction.

#### *H. Teachers' Attitudes Toward Pronunciation Pedagogy*

The attitudes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers toward pronunciation pedagogy play a crucial role in shaping students' language learning experiences. Several studies have explored the beliefs, practices, and challenges EFL teachers face in pronunciation pedagogy, shedding light on the factors influencing their attitudes and the implications for language instruction. Buss (2016) studied Brazilian EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding pronunciation pedagogy. The findings revealed that while the teachers expressed insecurity about their teaching and desired more training in pronunciation pedagogy, their attitudes and practices significantly impacted pronunciation instruction quality. This underscores the importance of addressing teachers' training needs and enhancing their confidence in pronunciation pedagogy to improve language instruction. Tran and Nguyen (2020) focused on EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching pronunciation in a Vietnamese setting. The study emphasised the significance of pronunciation pedagogy and highlighted the need to address the challenges teachers face in effectively teaching pronunciation, as well as the importance of understanding the specific contextual factors that influence teachers' attitudes and practices in pronunciation instruction.

Nguyen and Newton (2020) carried out a case study in Vietnam, which disclosed that even EFL teachers who are confident in their teaching capabilities showed a significant interest in having additional training opportunities in the field of pronunciation teaching methods. This highlights the ongoing need for professional development and support to enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills in pronunciation instruction.

Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2021) explored teachers' and learners' beliefs about pronunciation instruction in tertiary EFL education. The study demonstrated that targeted professional learning led to changes in teachers' beliefs about pronunciation teaching, indicating the potential for professional development to influence teachers' attitudes and practices in pronunciation pedagogy positively. Burri and Baker (2019) emphasised the influence of a postgraduate course in pronunciation teaching on aiding student teachers in emphasising the value of different varieties of English and comprehending that the instructional goal is intelligibility, not mimicking native pronunciation. This suggests that targeted training and professional development programs can significantly influence teachers' attitudes and practices in pronunciation instruction. Lastly, Luan (2022) examined EFL teachers' cognitions and classroom practices in pronunciation instruction in Vietnamese tertiary settings. The findings revealed positive attitudes among teachers toward pronunciation teaching for communicative purposes, emphasising the importance of aligning pedagogical practices with communicative language learning goals.

In conclusion, this literature review explores university students' attitudes towards pronunciation pedagogy, examining factors such as corrective feedback, course design, technology integration, accent preferences, and innovative teaching methods. It underscores the importance of aligning pedagogical practices with empirical evidence and highlights the impact of technology, extracurricular exposure to English, and individual differences on students'

pronunciation learning experiences. Additionally, the review addresses teachers' attitudes, emphasising the need for their professional development to enhance pronunciation instruction. Overall, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors shaping students' attitudes and experiences in pronunciation learning, offering valuable insights for effective course design and teaching practices.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

A convenience sample of 100 students of the Bachelor of Education programme participated in this study. The participants were predominantly females (89%) who used to stay in the university's dormitories. The students are in their early 20s (age  $M=20.06$ ), and all the participants are from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, the majority of them from Muscat. The students are in their first year of studies of the four-year B. Ed. programme. Before joining the bachelor programme, students attended the preparatory year studies and took English courses. The participants reported that they have been studying English since elementary school ( $M= 8.37$  years old), and 93% of them attended public schools, whereas only 6% attended private schools. Most participants reported that their parents do not speak English (51% reported that their fathers do not know English, and 79% reported that their mothers do not know English).

#### B. Research Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was slightly adapted from Pawlak (2013). The researcher asked all the course instructors to review the Pawlak (2013) questionnaire and refine statements they thought were crucial in the particular context. The adapted questionnaire had 34 5-point Likert scale statements from 5= strongly agree, to 1= strongly disagree. The statements were about students' attitudes toward pronunciation in general, optimal instruction of pronunciation: error correction, classroom activities, instructors' practices, use of technology, and varieties of English pronunciation. Apart from the 34 Likert scale statements, two open-ended questions were added to find the students' contact with English outside the class.

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic and reviewed by two faculty members specialising in Arabic-English translation. In statement 11, the pronunciation features, e.g. "vowels, consonants, stress, etc." were not translated into Arabic, as students knew these terms only in English. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was piloted by five students who had taken the pronunciation course the previous semester. These five students were briefly interviewed after they piloted the questionnaire to highlight potential problems. The Cronbach's alpha, for internal reliability, was satisfactory. A back-translation from Arabic to English was done to ensure that the Arabic version was accurate to the original English version. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was distributed to the participants to minimise potential problems with English, as the participants were in their first year.

#### C. Data Collection

The pronunciation course instructors explained the study's goals and informed the participants that the questionnaire was optional and anonymous. Of 137 students in the pronunciation course, 102 agreed to participate and complete the questionnaire. These 102 students received the questionnaire, read the cover page that explained the study's goals and signed the consent form. The students needed approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it to their instructors.

#### D. Data Analysis

After the questionnaires were handed to the researcher, a careful analysis took place to verify that the participants had answered the statements. The researcher removed two questionnaires as the participants had answered less than 20% of the statements. Thus, the final number of questionnaires used in this study was 100. Apple's Numbers was used for the statistical analysis of the 34 Likert-scale statements; more specifically, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations for each statement were calculated. For the two open-ended questions, Atlas.ti (8th ed) was used to find the major themes.

The findings will include one Likert-scale statement with a high standard deviation ( $SD>1.40$ ). However, it shows that the participants' opinions were polarised, and definite conclusions are difficult to be drawn.

### IV. RESULTS

The section below presents the quantitative data of the questionnaires. It is followed by the qualitative data and the comparative analysis of the students' practices to keep in touch with English outside the university compared to their pronunciation attitudes.

Quantitative results: Students' attitudes toward pronunciation pedagogy

#### A. General Attitudes Towards Pronunciation Teaching

The study revealed a predominantly positive attitude towards pronunciation teaching among Omani B. Ed. students (Table 1). With a mean ( $M$ ) score of 4.39, students expressed a keen interest in learning English pronunciation. They

firmly believed that mastering pronunciation would enhance their overall English language competency ( $M=4.33$ ) and improve listening comprehension ( $M=4.44$ ). Additionally, students recognised the value of pronunciation in enhancing their communicative abilities ( $M=4.31$ ). However, there was a comparatively lower confidence ( $M=3.83$ ) in the belief that good learners possess extensive knowledge about pronunciation.

TABLE 1  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PRONUNCIATION INSTRUCTION

No	Statement	M	SD
1	Knowing a lot about pronunciation helps my listening comprehension.	4.44	0.79
2	I believe that my English will improve quickly if I learn and practice pronunciation.	4.33	0.76
6	I like learning English pronunciation.	4.39	0.84
9	Good learners know a lot about pronunciation.	3.83	1.00
10	Knowing pronunciation helps communication in English.	4.31	0.82

### B. Attitudes Towards Error Correction in Pronunciation Classes

The participants underscored the importance of error correction in pronunciation learning (Table 2). A high preference was shown for instructors to correct students' pronunciation errors ( $M=4.69$ ), with a significant inclination towards immediate correction ( $M=4.34$ ) as opposed to delayed correction post-activity ( $M=3.77$ ). Students were more receptive to instructor feedback ( $M=4.53$ ) than peers ( $M=2.26$ ). Ambiguity was observed regarding the correction of only those pronunciation mistakes that hinder communication ( $M=3.19$ ).

TABLE 2  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD ERROR CORRECTION

No	Statement	M	SD
3	Instructors should correct students when they make pronunciation errors in class.	4.69	0.54
4	When I make pronunciation errors in speaking, I like my instructor to correct them.	4.53	0.73
21	I like the instructor to correct my pronunciation mistakes as soon as I make them.	4.34	0.92
22	I like the instructor to correct my pronunciation mistakes after an activity is completed.	3.77	1.29
23	I prefer to be corrected by other students rather than the instructor.	2.26	1.18
24	I believe the instructor should only correct errors which impede communication.	3.19	1.28

### C. Students' Perspectives on Pronunciation Course Design

Responses (Table 3) indicated a positive attitude towards the inclusion of terminology in pronunciation teaching ( $M=4.43$ ). Authentic communication as a tool for learning pronunciation features received considerable favour ( $M=4.37$ ), alongside the preference for a predefined list of features to be taught in the course ( $M=4.31$ ). Technology integration, such as mobile applications, was also viewed positively ( $M=4.18$ ).

TABLE 3  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRONUNCIATION COURSE DESIGN

No	Statement	M	SD
14	I believe that the use of terminology is important in teaching pronunciation.	4.43	0.85
20	I like to listen to authentic communication in order to learn pronunciation.	4.37	0.82
25	I like to get a list of pronunciation features that will be taught in a course.	4.31	0.89
26	I like to use pronunciation applications on my phone (e.g. Sounds).	4.18	0.94

### D. Preferred English Accents

A preference for Received Pronunciation ( $M=4.19$ ) was prominent among the participants (Table 4). However, when comparing Received Pronunciation with the Standard American Accent, views were polarised ( $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ). Similarly, attitudes were divided regarding exposure to an international accent ( $M=3.02$ ,  $SD=1.64$ ).

TABLE 4  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PREFERRED ACCENT

No	Statement	M	SD
31	The British accent of English is beautiful.	4.19	0.90
32	I prefer the American accent of English to the British accent.	3.37	1.40
33	The British accent of English is formal.	3.96	1.03
34	I prefer to learn an international accent.	3.02	1.64

### E. Views on Pronunciation Lesson Design

Participants (Table 5) expressed a preference for a clear understanding of specific pronunciation features they were learning ( $M=4.34$ ), followed by an explanation and practice in communicative activities ( $M=4.57$ ). A lesser degree of certainty was noted regarding the importance of intonation and rhythm over individual sounds ( $M=3.77$ ).

TABLE 5  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DESIGN OF THE PRONUNCIATION LESSON

No	Statement	M	SD
18	I believe that intonation and rhythm are more important than individual sounds.	3.77	1.01
27	I like to know exactly which pronunciation feature I am learning.	4.34	0.82
28	I like learning pronunciation by communicating in English.	4.34	0.81
29	I like learning pronunciation by seeing the explanation, and then practicing.	4.57	0.66
30	I prefer to learn pronunciation as I work on different skills and activities.	4.10	0.84

F. Preferred Methods for Introducing New Pronunciation Features

As can be seen in Table 6, the study found a strong preference for instructors to explain pronunciation features ( $M=4.46$ ) and utilise demonstrations ( $M=4.22$ ). There was less enthusiasm for discovering pronunciation rules independently ( $M=3.56$ ) or collaboratively ( $M=3.67$ ). The introduction of new features through spoken texts was moderately favoured ( $M=4.00$ ), with divided opinions on the use of the mother tongue in class for explaining new features ( $M=3.58$ ,  $SD=1.34$ ).

TABLE 6  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD OPTIMAL WAYS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF PRONUNCIATION FEATURES

No	Statement	M	SD
5	I like to discover pronunciation rules by myself.	3.56	0.92
7	It is best to discover pronunciation rules together with other students.	3.67	1.07
8	I prefer to be given spoken texts with new pronunciation features rather than rules.	4.00	1.07
11	It is best when the instructor explains pronunciation features (vowels, consonants, stress, etc).	4.46	0.76
12	I find it helpful when the instructor uses my mother tongue to explain pronunciation.	3.58	1.34
17	It helps me when instructors use demonstration in teaching pronunciation (e.g. charts).	4.22	1.00

G. Attitudes Towards Practicing Pronunciation Features

A preference emerged, as can be seen in Table 7, for beginning practice with individual sounds ( $M=4.22$ ) and discrete-point exercises ( $M=4.12$ ) before engaging in communicative activities ( $M=4.37$ ). The findings suggest a solid eagerness to apply pronunciation features in meaningful communication ( $M=4.05$ ).

TABLE 7  
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD OPTIMAL WAYS TO PRACTICE PRONUNCIATION FEATURES

No	Statement	M	SD
13	I prefer to first understand how a sound is made before I have to produce it.	4.37	0.77
15	I believe it is important to use pronunciation features in communication.	4.05	0.99
16	I prefer to practice individual sounds before I use them in speech.	4.22	0.92
19	Doing typical exercises (e.g. minimal pairs) is the best way to learn pronunciation.	4.12	0.96

This results section provides a comprehensive overview of the attitudes and preferences of Omani B. Ed. students regarding various aspects of pronunciation learning and teaching. It effectively captures the nuances of their perceptions and practices in this domain.

H. Qualitative Results: Contact With English Outside the Classroom

This section delineates the patterns of English language engagement among Omani university students outside the academic environment. The qualitative analysis is based on responses from 100 participants, categorised into distinct forms of English contact: no contact, social media usage, interaction with peers, watching films/TV, reading English literature, and other varied methods.

(a). Limited Exposure to English

A noteworthy 33% of the participants reported no engagement with English in their daily routines. This is exemplified by a student's remark:

“No speech in English...nobody speaks home in this language” - Student 1

This highlights a substantial segment of the student population needing more exposure to English outside their educational settings.

(b). Social Media as a Learning Tool

Social media emerged as a significant medium for English engagement, with 31% of students incorporating it into their language practice. A participant's comment illustrates this:

“...chatting with friends... in Oman everyone is on social media...” - Student 86

This indicates social media's potential as a beneficial platform for enhancing English proficiency among students.

(c). Peer Interaction in English

Approximately 15% of respondents indicated that conversing with classmates was a method of engaging with

English. Particularly, students residing in university dormitories mentioned using English in conversations with peers and with international individuals in public spaces:

“When I go out of the campus, to the mall, I talk to foreigners...when I want to buy something” - Student 36

This underscores the importance of social interaction in language acquisition and the need for more structured opportunities for English conversation outside the classroom.

(d). *Media Consumption*

About 14% of students engaged with English through listening to or watching English-language media:

“I like watching TV, I like films, and I learn new words, I can watch YouTube and see how to speak... I like listening to songs” - Student 25

This suggests that English media consumption plays a vital role in language development.

(e). *Reading in English*

A smaller proportion, 4%, reported reading English novels as a method to enhance their language skills:

“I go to the library, and I get my books from there” - Student 9

“I like reading English, even the traffic signs when I drive” - Student 100

This points to reading as a beneficial practice for vocabulary and comprehension improvement.

(f). *Alternative Engagement Methods*

In the 'other' category, 2% of participants mentioned alternative methods like self-learning and practising with family members.

(g). *Time Spent Engaging With English*

A significant 82% of students who engage with English outside the university reported spending up to two hours daily in such activities.

In conclusion, the findings reveal a spectrum of methods employed by Omani students to engage with English outside their formal education, underscoring the roles of social interaction and media exposure in language skill enhancement.

I. *Comparative Analysis: Pronunciation Corrective Feedback*

The study aimed to explore the attitudes of Omani university students towards the correction of pronunciation errors by instructors about their engagement with English outside of the university. Five distinct groups were compared based on their reported contact with English: No Contact, Social Media, Films/TV, Talking with Friends, and Reading Books. A one-way ANOVA was conducted on responses to the statement, "Instructors should correct students when they make pronunciation errors in class".

The results of the ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference among the groups,  $F(4, 90) = 2.69$ ,  $P\text{-value} = 0.03$ . This P-value is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, suggesting that how students keep in touch with English outside of the university influences their attitudes towards pronunciation correction in the classroom.

Post hoc analyses are needed to determine which specific groups' means are significantly different. However, the descriptive statistics provide an initial insight into the group differences. Students who engage with Films/TV and those who speak with friends reported the highest average agreement with the statement ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $SD = 0.06$  and  $M = 4.93$ ,  $SD = 0.07$ , respectively), indicating a strong belief in the importance of corrective feedback from instructors. Students who reported No Contact and those who use social media exhibited slightly lower agreement ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 0.5076$  and  $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ , respectively). The Reading Books group's average agreement was intermediate ( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = 0.16$ ).

These findings suggest that exposure to English through media and conversation with peers may contribute to a greater appreciation for pronunciation correction in the academic setting. Conversely, those with less contact with English outside the classroom may be less inclined to value such correction, highlighting the potential influence of extracurricular exposure to the language on learners' pedagogical preferences.

Given the significant F-statistic and the observed differences in means, further research is warranted to explore this phenomenon in greater depth, ideally with a larger sample size and consideration of additional factors that may impact students' attitudes. The implications for pronunciation teaching suggest that awareness of students' extracurricular language practices can inform more targeted and effective pedagogical strategies.

TABLE 8  
INSTRUCTORS SHOULD CORRECT STUDENTS WHEN THEY MAKE PRONUNCIATION ERRORS IN CLASS

Group	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
No Contact	33	149	4.51	0.50
Social Media	21	98	4.66	0.23
Film/TV	16	79	4.93	0.06
Talking to Friends	14	69	4.92	0.07
Reading Books	11	53	4.81	0.16

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	2.91	4	0.72	2.68	0.03	2.47
Within Groups	24.41	90	0.27			
Total	27.32	94				

J. Comparative Analysis: Post-Activity Pronunciation Correction

The current investigation sought to ascertain the preferences of Omani university students regarding the timing of pronunciation corrections by instructors (Table 9), contingent upon their methods of English engagement outside the academic environment. Five groups were delineated based on their reported English contact: No Contact, Social Media, Films/TV, Talking with Friends, and Reading Books. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to discern variations in their preferences.

TABLE 9  
I LIKE THE INSTRUCTOR TO CORRECT MY PRONUNCIATION MISTAKES AFTER AN ACTIVITY IS COMPLETED

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
No Contact	31	113	3.65	2.03
Social Media	21	91	4.33	0.93
Film/TV	16	63	3.93	1.12
Talking to Friends	14	45	3.21	2.48
Reading Books	10	34	3.4	1.15

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	13.28	4	3.32	2.07	0.09	2.47
Within Groups	139.45	87	1.60			
Total	152.73	91				

Although the ANOVA results demonstrated no statistically significant difference in preferences across the groups,  $F(4, 87) = 2.07$ ,  $P\text{-Value} = 0.09$  marginally exceeds the conventional alpha level of 0.05. The value indicates a trend towards significance, suggesting that while there may be differences in students' preferences for when pronunciation corrections should be made, these differences are not pronounced enough to reach traditional levels of statistical significance.

Regarding group averages, students who use Social Media expressed the highest preference for post-activity pronunciation correction ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), followed by those who watch Films/TV ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). The No Contact group ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ) and the Reading Books group ( $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) indicated a moderate preference, while the group engaging in Talking with Friends reported the slightest preference for this approach to correction ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 2.49$ ).

Although the differences did not reach statistical significance, the observed tendencies suggest that students' outside-of-class English activities subtly influence their attitudes toward corrective feedback in the classroom. Specifically, the students immersed in social media platforms, where immediate feedback is typical, may carry over those expectations to the classroom setting.

Given the  $P\text{-value}$ 's proximity to the threshold of significance, it may be inferred that these preferences could manifest more distinctly with a larger sample size or additional variables. Therefore, it is advisable for future studies further to examine these trends with a more robust sample and to consider other factors that may contribute to these attitudes.

The implications for English pronunciation teaching in Omani universities include the potential for integrating student preferences regarding feedback timing into instructional design, particularly concerning students' engagement with English in various out-of-class contexts.

This section of the article addresses the nuances of the findings, the need for further research given the near-significant results, and the potential practical implications for teaching practices.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a generally positive attitude towards pronunciation teaching among Omani B. Ed. students. This aligns with the literature emphasising the importance of positive attitudes for effective language learning (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011). The students' recognition of the role of pronunciation in enhancing communicative abilities supports Buckingham's (2014) findings on the influence of perceived nativeness on students' attitudes towards pronunciation pedagogy. The strong preference for instructor-led correction resonates with the literature emphasising the significance of immediate and direct feedback in pronunciation learning (Haryadi & Aprianoto, 2020; Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997). The positive view of technology integration, such as the use of pronunciation apps (i.e. Sounds), corroborates with the findings of Nowacka (2022) and Anh (2023), who highlighted the benefits of technology in pronunciation pedagogy. The preference for Received Pronunciation (RP) and the polarised views on Standard American Accent and International Accents suggest a complex interplay of cultural, educational, and personal preferences influencing accent choice. This complexity is mirrored in the literature that explores students' reactions to different accents as models (Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Buckingham, 2014).

#### A. *Implications for Course Design and Pedagogical Practices*

As indicated by this study, the preference for clear, structured pronunciation courses with explicit instruction on features points towards the necessity for curriculum designers to incorporate these elements. This aligns with the studies emphasising the importance of course design in pronunciation pedagogy (Mukmin & Banet, 2022; Lord, 2008). The inclination towards communicative activities for learning pronunciation is consistent with the broader trend in language pedagogy prioritising communicative competence (Kang, 2014; Sardegna et al., 2017).

#### B. *Extracurricular Influence on Pronunciation Learning*

The correlation between students' exposure to English outside the classroom and their attitudes towards pronunciation correction highlights the significance of extracurricular English engagement. This finding is a novel contribution to the field and suggests the need for educators to consider students' out-of-class experiences in designing pronunciation instruction (Fahim & Dhamotharan, 2016; Youssef, 2016).

#### C. *Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research*

The results of the present study are based on a small-scale project of 100 participants from a particular university in rural Oman, which might not apply to a different context, i.e. an urban area, where students might have more opportunities to practice the language outside the university. Also, the sample was predominantly female students, which makes the generalisation of the results somewhat quixotic. For future researchers, a study to explore the impact of different teaching methodologies on students with varied extracurricular English exposures could be a fruitful avenue.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study offers a nuanced exploration of the attitudes of Omani Bachelor of Education students towards pronunciation pedagogy, revealing several pivotal insights. Primarily, it underscores a clear preference among students for specific instructional methodologies, notably those that are instructor-led, utilise technology, and emphasise communicative competence. The findings also reveal a marked preference for Received Pronunciation, albeit with polarised views regarding American and International accents. This accentuates the cultural, educational, and personal dimensions influencing accent choice and suggests a complex interplay between these factors.

The study highlights the role of extracurricular exposure to English in shaping students' attitudes towards pronunciation learning and correction. This exposure, ranging from media consumption to social interactions, appears to significantly influence preferences for pronunciation pedagogy within the classroom. This insight is crucial for educators and curriculum designers, suggesting that considering students' out-of-class experiences can lead to more effective and responsive teaching strategies.

Moreover, the research contributes to the broader discourse on pronunciation pedagogy, particularly in the context of English language teaching in Oman. It reaffirms the importance of aligning pedagogical approaches with students' needs and preferences and recognises the dynamic nature of language learning influenced by both in-class and extracurricular factors.

However, the study has its limitations. The sample, predominantly female and from a specific rural university context, may only partially represent the diversity of attitudes across different regions or genders. Therefore, future research could explore these attitudes in varied settings, comparing rural and urban contexts or examining the impact of different teaching methodologies on students with diverse extracurricular English exposures.

Finally, this study sheds light on the multifaceted nature of pronunciation pedagogy from the perspective of Omani B. Ed. students. It calls for an approach that is not only grounded in sound pedagogical principles but also responsive to the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the learners. As the field of English language teaching continues to evolve, insights such as those provided by this study will be invaluable in shaping effective and inclusive language education practices.

## REFERENCES

- [1] AbuSeileek, A. F. (2007). Computer-assisted pronunciation instruction as an effective means for teaching stress. *The JALT CALL Journal*, 3(1-2), 3-24. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v3n1-2.33>
- [2] Al-Harbi, G. (2019). Podcasting for Saudi EFL learners: Evaluating new strategies for pronunciation enhancement. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 8(5), 27-38. Retrieved February 17, 2024, from: <https://journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJALEL/article/view/5909>
- [3] AlAamri, K. S. S. (2013). Western teachers face cultural and linguistic challenges in teaching the English language in the classroom. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal*, 4(3), 1140-1148. <https://doi.org/10.20533/licej.2040.2589.2013.0151>
- [4] Anh, N. T. Y. (2023). The implementation of video dubbing in enhancing students' pronunciation at a high school in Vietnam. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 6(2), 1254-1262. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i2-61>
- [5] Asmawati, N., & Fitriingsih, F. (2021). The implementation of online accent reduction software to improve pronunciation of English and Arabic department students. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, 3(12), 26-37. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jhss.2021.3.12.4>
- [6] Bala, E. (2020). The impact of out-of-class language activities on English as a foreign language proficiency of private university students - (a case of Erbil). *Journal of Education in Black Sea Region*, 6(1), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.31578/jeb.v6i1.217>
- [7] Buckingham, L. (2014). Recognising English accents in the community: Omani students' accent preferences and perceptions of nativeness. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(2), 182-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.909443>
- [8] Burri, M., & Baker, A. (2019). "I never imagined" pronunciation as "such an interesting thing": Student-teacher perception of innovative practices. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 29(1), 95-108. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12247>
- [9] Burri, M., Baker, A., & Honglin, C. (2017). "I feel like having a nervous breakdown": Pre-service and in-service teachers' developing beliefs and knowledge about pronunciation instruction. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation*, 3(1), 109-135. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.3.1.05bur>
- [10] Buss, L. (2016). Beliefs and practices of Brazilian EFL teachers regarding pronunciation. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(5), 619-637. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815574145>
- [11] Cenoz, J., & Lecumberri, M. L. G. (1999). The acquisition of English pronunciation: Learners' views. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(1), 3-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.1999.tb00157.x>
- [12] Dalton-Puffer, C., Kaltenboeck, G., & Smit, U. (1997). Learner attitudes and L2 pronunciation in Austria. *World Englishes*, 16(1), 115-128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971x.00052>
- [13] Dağtan, E. (2020). ELT students' and lecturers' beliefs about pronunciation instruction: The case of a Turkish ELT department. *Dicle University Journal of Ziya Gökalp Faculty of Education*, 37, 142-156. <https://doi.org/10.14582/duzgef.2020.148>
- [14] Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2005). Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 379-397. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588486>
- [15] Dolmaci, A., & Kiliç, A. (2021). Teaching English pronunciation to prep-classes students: A needs analysis study. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 29(3), 550-558. <https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.763949>
- [16] Erling, E. J., Radinger, S., & Foltz, A. (2020). Understanding low outcomes in English language education in Austrian middle schools: The role of teachers' beliefs and practices. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 44(5), 412-428. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1829630>
- [17] Fahim, A., & Dhamotharan, M. (2016). Willingness to communicate in English among trainee teachers in a Malaysian private university. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(2), 105-112. <https://doi.org/10.3844/jssp.2016.105.112>
- [18] Ghounane, N. (2019). The attitudes of second year EFL students at Dr Moulay Tahar University towards learning English pronunciation through mobile assisted language. *Arab World English Journal, CALL*(5), 110-123. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call5.9>
- [19] Haryadi, S., & Aprianoto, A. (2020). Integrating "English pronunciation" app into pronunciation teaching: How it affects students' participation and learning. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 8(2), 202-212. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v8i2.2551>
- [20] Ikhsan, M. K. (2017). Factors influencing students' pronunciation mastery at English department of STKIP PGRI West Sumatera. *Al-Ta'Lim Journal*, 24(2), 110-117. <https://doi.org/10.15548/jt.v24i2.279>
- [21] Kang, O. (2014). Learners' perceptions toward pronunciation instruction in three circles of world Englishes. *TESOL Journal*, 6(1), 59-80. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.146>
- [22] Lord, G. (2008). Podcasting communities and second language pronunciation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(2), 364-379. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2008.tb03297.x>
- [23] Luan, D. M. (2022). Pronunciation instruction in Vietnamese tertiary settings: Insights from EFL teachers' cognitions and classroom practices. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(5), 115-136. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v7i5.4485>
- [24] Maqsood, S., Shahid, A., Nazar, F., Asif, M., Ahmad, M., & Mazzara, M. (2020). C-POS: A context-aware adaptive part-of-speech language learning framework. *IEEE Access*, 8, 30720-30733. <https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2020.2972591>
- [25] Moedjito. (2016). The teaching of English pronunciation: perceptions of Indonesian school teachers and university students. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 30-41. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n6p30>
- [26] Mu'in, F., Amrina, R., & Amelia, R. (2017). Tongue twister, students' pronunciation ability, and learning styles. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(4), 365-383. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/fce2r>
- [27] Mukmin, & Banet, I. (2022). Factors influencing Banggainese learners English pronunciation. *LingLit Scientific Journal for Linguistics and Literature*, 3(3), 135-147. <https://doi.org/10.33258/linglit.v3i3.750>
- [28] Nguyen, L., & Newton, J. (2020). Enhancing EFL teachers' pronunciation pedagogy through professional learning: A Vietnamese case study. *RELC Journal*, 52(1), 77-93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220952476>

- [29] Nguyen, L. T., Hung, B. P., Duong, U. T. T., & Le, T. T. (2021). Teachers' and learners' beliefs about pronunciation instruction in tertiary English as a foreign language education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.739842>
- [30] Nowacka, M. (2022). English phonetics course: University students' preferences and expectations. *Research in Language*, 20(1), 71-84. <https://doi.org/10.18778/1731-7533.20.1.05>
- [31] Pawlak, M. (2013). The Effect of Explicit and Implicit Corrective Feedback on Eliminating Pronunciation Errors. In: Waniek-Klimczak, E., & Shockey, L. (eds) *Teaching and Researching English Accents in Native and Non-native Speakers. Second Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 85-101). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-24019-5\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-24019-5_7)
- [32] Rais, B., Pranowo, D. D., & Sari, R. P. I. P. (2020). The use of song in teaching English pronunciation. *Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Language, Literature, and Arts Education*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200804.025>
- [33] Sardegna, V. G., Lee, J., & Kusey, C. (2017). Self-efficacy, attitudes, and choice of strategies for English pronunciation learning. *Language Learning*, 68(1), 83-114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12263>
- [34] Smit, U. (2012). Conceptualising English as a lingua franca (ELF) as a tertiary classroom language. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics*, 39, 59-74. <https://doi.org/10.5774/39-0-4>
- [35] Tokumoto, M., & Shibata, M. (2011). Asian varieties of English: Attitudes towards pronunciation. *World Englishes*, 30(3), 392-408. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971x.2011.01710.x>
- [36] Tran, D. P. T., & Nguyen, H. B. (2020). EFL teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching pronunciation in a Vietnamese setting. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(12), 7022-7035. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.081270>
- [37] Youssef, A. F. (2016). Willingness to communicate in English: Academic motivation and using English outside the classroom as predictors. *American Journal of Applied Sciences*, 13(12), 1365-1376. <https://doi.org/10.3844/ajassp.2016.1365.1376>

**Konstantinos M. Pitychoutis** FHEA FRSA MCIL is an assistant professor of English at the American University of the Middle East. Konstantinos has extensive experience in teacher education and language teaching, as evidenced by his roles at various universities across the Middle East and Europe. Konstantinos's research interests include second language acquisition, teacher cognition, and intercultural communication. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2761-5764>