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**A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES FACED BY  
PRESCHOOL LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*English is clearly recognized as a tool of communication, and it is incorporated into the curricula of EFL schools, colleges, and institutions. Language, on the other hand, is regularly articulated and conceptualized in a variety of systems. If EFL students are to communicate effectively, they must master these systems together. The majority of language programs in the EFL context consider that teaching these components of language is important and should not be neglected. The study concluded that pronunciation has always been considered a tough area by foreign language teachers and learners. Pronunciation refers to how we make words sound. Pronunciation reveals the geographical and social origins of the speakers. It is an essential component of developing oral abilities in a second language. Pronunciation has traditionally been seen as a tough subject by EFL students. Learning a foreign language, on the other hand, has contributed to a variety of historical settings, educational demands, and considerations. Foreign language learning is increasingly required at all levels of education. One of the recommendations made was that preschool students should be encouraged to learn English as a key foreign language that will help them develop life skills.*

**KEYWORDS:** Pronunciation, Problems Encountered, Learners of English and Foreign Language

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## Introduction

English is generally accepted as a means of communication and is taught in EFL schools, colleges, and institutions. To engage in life skills, learners must learn English as a foreign language. Though many Arabs struggle with learning a foreign language, pronunciation is one of the most difficult parts. For many EFL students, pronouncing words may be a barrier to effective communication. Furthermore, pronunciation is an important part of spoken communication (Berry, 2021). As a result, verbal communication might be useless and significantly limited without accurate pronunciation. In recent years, there has been a remarkable increase in interest in and attention paid to pronunciation teaching. Many research studies on pronunciation in the context of EFL have been undertaken (Abdul-Abbas, Rashid, & Younus, 2021). While these studies on pronunciation have been conducted, this subject still needs to be researched, and additional research in Arab EFL classes is required. "Teaching pronunciation has not always been popular among instructors and language teaching theorists" (Roach, 2009). There is a growing interest in second language pronunciation and phonological perception and production from linguistic, cognitive, and social perspectives.

## Concept of Language

The ability to produce and interpret both spoken and written (and, in the case of sign language, signed) words is referred to as "language." Understanding how language works necessitates a broad understanding of psychology, encompassing everything from basic brain functioning to high-level cognitive processing (Lumen, 2021). Language impacts our social connections and helps us organize our lives. Complex language is one of the characteristics that distinguishes us as humans. Grammar and lexicon are two concepts that distinguish languages. Language refers to the system of traditional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols through which humans express themselves as members of a social group and participants in its culture (Robins & Crystal, 2021). Language functions include communication, identity expression, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release. Language is a fundamentally human and non-instinctive system for transmitting ideas, emotions, and wants through a system of voluntarily manufactured symbols. According to Evans and Levinson (2009), a language is a structured system of communication. A language's structure is its grammar, while its free components are its vocabulary. Humans' primary mode of communication is through language, which can be expressed by speaking (spoken language), signing, or writing.

Language is the system of conventional, spoken, or written symbols that humans use to communicate. Language is an arbitrary system of signs made up of the signifier and the signified (Hakim, 2018). In other words, language is first and foremost a system devoid of logic or reason; second, the system encompasses

both objects and expressions used for objects. Third, objects and expressions are linked randomly. Finally, expressions contain sounds and graphemes that people utilize to generate speech and writing for communication. Language is the system of sounds, words, and patterns that humans use to express their thoughts and feelings (Study Lecture Notes, 2022). Thus, language is the source of mental expression through speaking sounds. Language is the most powerful, practical, and lasting means and form of communication. Language is a wholly human and non-instinctive method of communicating thoughts, feelings, and desires via the use of a system of intentionally generated symbols. Language, according to Neo-English (2010), has so many interrelationships with many areas of human life that it may be examined from a variety of perspectives. All of them are valid, useful, and interesting.

### **Concept of Foreign Language**

A foreign language is one that is not extensively spoken or used in a community, society, or nation. In other words, it refers to any language that is not spoken by the people of a certain location (HASA 2018). A person residing in India, for example, would consider Spanish to be a foreign language. On the other hand, English is not normally a foreign language to an Indian; it is a second language. Learning a foreign language, according to Dick (2021), is all about learning how to properly interact and connect with others, a vital life skill that can only be gained by connecting with the people of the country. Foreign languages provide a competitive advantage in employment options where one can communicate in a second language. A foreign language is one that is not one's native language but is widely or officially spoken in a particular place. A foreign language is one that was established in a country other than the speakers' own. It is also a language that is not spoken in the individual's native country (STANDS4 2021). The terms "foreign language" and "language" are used interchangeably to refer to languages taught as academic subjects other than English. A foreign language is one that is not extensively spoken or utilized by the people of a certain community, civilization, or nation.

A foreign language is one that is not generally spoken in the speaker's own country. It is also a language that is not one's native language and is not utilized for communication among community members. Foreign languages are words that are mysterious and unfamiliar to the speaker's own country and culture. Furthermore, languages are unquestionably the most essential human achievements for a range of communicative objectives (Trigos-Gilbert, 2001). A foreign language is the process of acquiring a language other than one's native tongue (s). Language refers to a language studied in addition to one's mother tongue in situations when the target language is neither the official language nor used for communication (IGI Global, 2021). It is also a language that is learned purposefully and differs from one's mother tongue. A foreign language is one that is native to another country. "Foreign language" refers to any language other

than the agreed-upon language of arbitration (Law Insider 2020). Any language used in the pre-primary school context that is not the first or mother tongue, the language of instruction, or the second language is considered a foreign language.

### Concept of Pronunciation and Pronunciation Challenges

Pronunciation is an essential component of developing speaking abilities in a second language (L2). Because pronunciation has a significant social value, it should be associated with prestige, such as intelligence, professional skill, persuasiveness, diligence, and social privilege. Pollard (2008) (2008) Pronunciation is an important component of learning a foreign language. Some pupils struggle with pronunciation accuracy because English is a foreign language to them. Some teachers and students worry about challenges with pronunciation because it is regarded as one of the most complicated yet important aspects of second language (L2) teaching and learning (Zhang, 2009).Pronunciation refers to words that can be spoken in a variety of ways by different individuals or groups, depending on a variety of factors such as: the duration of their childhood cultural exposure; the location of their current residence; speech or voice disorders; ethnic group; social class; or education (Paulston & Tucker, 2003). However, pronunciation refers to how we make words sound. The act or effect of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, generally with reference to some standard of accuracy or acceptability, is known as pronunciation.

Pronunciation can provide information about the speakers' geographical and socioeconomic background, and it is often the most noticeable feature of non-native speakers. According to Ikhsan (2017), pronunciation has traditionally been regarded as a tough subject by both teachers and students. Pronunciation, like hearing, is sometimes overlooked in the process of language training in favor of reading and writing, which are more likely to lead to exam success. The act or consequence of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, sometimes with reference to some standard of accuracy or acceptability, is referred to as "pronunciation" (Dictionary, 2022).It is a recognized standard for the sound and stress patterns of a syllable, word, phrase, or other unit of speech. Pronunciation refers to how a word or language is spoken. This can refer to generally accepted sound sequences used in speaking a given word or language in a specific dialect (proper pronunciation) or simply the way a specific individual speaks a word or language. The manner in which a word or language is spoken is referred to as "pronunciation" (Wikipedia, 2018). This can refer to generally accepted sound sequences used in speaking a given word or language in a specific dialect (proper pronunciation) or simply the way a specific individual speaks a word or language.

According to Reed and Levis (2019), language is regularly articulated and conceptualized in different systems. The sound system is a collection of speech

units that students must pronounce properly and accurately. These parts of speech are sometimes referred to as "vocabulary." When speaking, students should utilize acceptable terminology (Syed & Abdelrady, 2021). Grammar is the meaning system that learners utilize to express meaning through words. Learners must master and comprehend both approaches since they work in tandem. If EFL students are to communicate effectively, they must master these systems together. The majority of language programs in the EFL context believe that teaching these components of language is crucial and should not be overlooked. The greatest approach to understanding people is to listen carefully to them in order to enhance their pronunciation. Many EFL students experience reluctance and dread when interacting in English. Because of inhibition, they lack the confidence to appropriately enunciate words (Nakazawa, 2012). Language learning and teaching environments that are pleasant to learners must be devoid of tension and anxiety so that students can feel less overwhelmed and engage in discourse during classroom engagement (Crystal, 2003). Another reason for the importance of pronunciation is that English has become the world's primary language for oral communication.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that pronunciation has always been considered a tough area by foreign language teachers and learners. Pronunciation refers to how we make words sound. Pronunciation reveals the geographical and social origins of the speakers. It is an essential component of developing oral abilities in a second language. Pronunciation has traditionally been seen as a tough subject by EFL students. Learning a foreign language, on the other hand, has contributed to a variety of historical settings, educational demands, and considerations. Foreign language learning is increasingly required at all levels of education.

### **Recommendations**

1. Preschool students should be encouraged to learn English as a key foreign language that will help them develop life skills.
2. Preschool English as a foreign language learner should be carefully directed with excellent foundations to assist them in studying efficiently with retention while also reducing the pronunciation challenges they encounter.
3. Preschool English language learners should be taught effective strategies for pronouncing various words in the English language.

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