

English Language Teaching: Teaching Pronunciation in Bangladesh in Focus

Farah Diba Yasmin¹

* Correspondence:

dibadueng@gmail.com

1. Bangladesh University, Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the treatment of pronunciation in English language teaching and presents the position of pronunciation teaching at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Many English language learners in Bangladesh have pronunciation problems both from production and perception perspectives. This research is mainly significant because it focuses on the key factors of effective pronunciation teaching implementation in the Bangladeshi context. Moreover, it explores the practical implications of learners' pronunciation development. This research includes a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data and research procedures. It represents data collected from a total of 111 students and 20 teachers at five private universities in Bangladesh through a questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. The results of this study show key elements for the upgrading of pronunciation education and recommend effective techniques of teaching and learning for improving knowledge of pronunciation. It reveals that English pronunciation classrooms should not only emphasize theoretical knowledge but also encourage learners to practice more for practical skills and suggests possible pedagogical implications for teachers, researchers and policymakers. Finally, this study emphasizes on effective approaches and techniques based on Bangladeshi learners' requirements.

Keywords: [Treatment of pronunciation](#), [speaking proficiency](#), [tertiary level](#), [internet-based material and motivation](#)

1. Introduction

Pronunciation has become one of the most challenging areas in the context of English language teaching and learning, and it is often found that learners' proficiency in pronunciation has not been properly achieved in spite of the introduction of pronunciation courses at tertiary level education in Bangladesh. Moreover, classes in different universities are conducted in English, and sometimes students fail to understand class lectures as they are not familiar with standard pronunciation. The genuine incorporation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can be seen at the university level in Bangladesh as the majority of public and private universities offer language-based courses along with core graduation courses so the course duration is only six to nine months and faculty members can teach speaking and listening with pronunciation (Tahereen, 2015, p.10).

Appropriate ways of pronunciation teaching and learning in the classroom and internet-based materials can develop the pronunciation of learners so tertiary-level pronunciation teaching should accentuate practical skills because the traditional way of teaching pronunciation does not have an effective impact on the learning procedure of students. This paper tries to focus on the status of pronunciation teaching in Bangladeshi tertiary level English Language Teaching (ELT) context and it shows the factual approaches of pronunciation teaching experience in Bangladeshi classroom contexts. Finally, it advocates the idea that pronunciation teaching can be an effective component in Bangladeshi ELT if appropriate synchronizations of essential factors are accurately implemented.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this research study are:

1. To exhibit the position of learning pronunciation in English language teaching in Bangladesh
2. To examine the function of pronunciation in the Bangladeshi tertiary-level classroom.
3. To assess the usefulness of learning pronunciation from teachers' and students' perspectives.

1.2 Research questions

Based on the requirements of the study, the research questions are:

1. To what extent is pronunciation received a significant position at tertiary-level Bangladeshi classrooms?
2. How can learning pronunciation in the classroom develop the language proficiency of students?
3. What effective impact does pronunciation education have on Bangladeshi teachers and learners?

1.3 Background of the Study

In Bangladesh, English language teaching has gone through the flavor of the CLT for many years but, it is evident that learners fail to communicate inside and outside of the classroom. One of the main factors that do not allow CLT to function effectively in Bangladesh is our mistreatment of the communicative competence philosophy. Moreover, our classroom teaching, textbooks, and assessment are not coherently designed to offer our learners the advantages of CLT. Grammar-translation method was followed traditionally so our teaching settings were not fully prepared to accommodate pronunciation-based speaking as an inseparable part of the English language curriculum as Uddin (2021) suggests that we can include pronunciation activities based on elementary English sounds so that our students get the awareness of pronunciation and can communicate intelligibly.

We cannot claim that our teachers and learners have a thorough understanding of digitalized blessings of learning even in digitalized settings. Bangladeshi pronunciation research usually covers regional varieties and their impact on pronunciation but fails to propose feasible ways that help our learners to overcome their problems. Furthermore, research-based teaching is not a common practice in Bangladesh so our teaching techniques hardly reflect the practical challenges and issues that our learners are facing every day inside and outside of the classroom regarding pronunciation and speaking. There are options for online materials for teachers in Bangladesh and students with Smartphone have an easy access to e-learning activities, for example, the Sounds Right app of the British Council is widely used in language classrooms that can assist learners to practice pronunciation outside of the classroom though for many learners online materials require to be properly facilitated by the teachers.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Pronunciation teaching is one of the most neglected areas of language teaching in mainstream education in Bangladesh though everyone would agree with the fact that it is a crucial factor for any kind of language teaching as it has a direct impact on the way we perceive and produce any language. One of the main reasons that make pronunciation an underrated skill is our attitude towards language teaching because we always try to confine our teaching inside the classroom without realizing the fact that traditional confinement of teaching within four walls cannot ensure adequate English language learning experience for our learners so integration of both inside and outside practice is much needed in our setting.

In Bangladeshi private universities, technological challenges are less as campuses are mostly well equipped with internet facilities so internet-based pronunciation should not be an issue if both teachers and learners realize the importance and the potential facilities that e-learning can offer to our students who are joining universities from diverse backgrounds with their local accents. In Bangladeshi classrooms, learners are usually reluctant to speak English. Bangladeshi mainstream pre- tertiary level course books have activities on the development of communication skills but as they are not usually tested with credits so when our learners come to tertiary level classes they do not possess perception and production skills of the English language and this kind of state of knowledge sometimes makes them face learning challenges because their lack of pronunciation perception prevents them from understanding advanced lecture delivery. The design of pronunciation teaching should not exclude speaking activities in Bangladeshi classrooms because our learners need to associate among segmental components, suprasegmental features, and speaking skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1 ELT in Bangladesh

The concept of communication in English language teaching is not exclusive to the Bangladeshi context because English is considered an important instrument of communication in Bangladesh and it is a mandatory subject up to higher secondary level but it is noticeable that Bangladeshi learners are unable to use four language skills even after receiving twelve years English language learning (Rahman, 2015). One of the main reasons for failures in effective language learning outcomes is a proper set to courses as learners in Bangladesh consider the English language difficulties and it is a foreign language so an appropriate application of the English language teaching curriculum is necessary for the Bangladeshi context (Hossain, 2016).

Moreover, English language learning requires students' active participation because it is skills development but we do not treat the English language as a practice of skills in Bangladeshi classrooms. As a result, students do not receive an adequate experience in practicing English inside and outside of the classroom (Akter & Ashiquzzaman, 2019). Furthermore, for successful pronunciation teaching and learning, students need to practice both inside and outside the classroom by using proper techniques because in the communicative process learners' role is to mediate among oneself, the system and materials of learning and communicative approach suggest learners share and consequently learners follow the individualistic process of learning (Breen & Candlin as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2016). However, our learners do not explore their journey with autonomy but depend on teachers for language proficiency.

2.2 CLT in Bangladeshi Context

Bangladeshi language teaching classrooms are experiencing a communicative language teaching approach for a long time but we cannot claim that we have achieved our goals by incorporating CLT in teaching techniques. The supremacy of the CLT approach is undeniable in the global context but the application of this process in Bangladeshi curriculum needs practical and sensible policies because CLT is challenged by conventional ways of education so reassessment of the appropriateness of CLT curriculum is needed and course books and teaching resources must act in accordance with the CLT (Rahman et al., 2019).

Moreover, our cultural understanding of teaching plays an important part in shaping our collaboration with communicating competence because the habit of traditional teaching does not allow us to appreciate CLT properly. In the Bangladeshi context, learners anticipate teachers to play dominating roles, and teaching systems are expected to be conventional and teacher-centered so learners follow instructors' commands and the CLT approach appears to be strange to learners. Moreover, they think that their teachers do not teach them properly in CLT classrooms and

class rules become unfamiliar to them. In addition, learners do not experience language skills improvement lessons at the tertiary stage (Chowdhury as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2016).

2.3 Position of Speaking in Bangladesh

As our approach to teaching English does not reflect priorities of communicative requirements, our students do not get adequate opportunities of speaking English. So for Bangladeshi learners speaking and pronunciation are common challenges as Haq (2014) in his study claims that Bangladeshi learners are shy when they are asked to speak and learners feel anxiety about pronunciation problems but this research does not shed light on the ways of overcoming pronunciation anxiety of our learners for becoming a better speaker. Furthermore, oral communication is a major part of language skills but teaching materials in Bangladesh do not reflect adequate attention to the speaking skills of learners as Rahman et al. (2015) mention that only trained teachers cannot ensure proper outcomes from teaching if teaching materials are not appropriate for the learning objectives and this study claims that mainstream pretertiary textbooks in Bangladesh are not effective for the required speaking skills of Bangladeshi students.

Similarly, learning proper methods of communication play an important part in any foreign language learning setting and the learning of verbal communication should be the central learning outcome in English as a foreign and second language (EFL/ESL) contexts. However, in Bangladesh speaking is not at the center of teaching English language skills because of traditional grammar-translation based teaching backgrounds as Islam and Stapa (2021) reveal that speaking classes in Bangladesh use grammar and vocabulary-based classroom activities and students are reluctant to do grammar tasks in speaking classes. So, we can make speaking mandatory for all classrooms by incorporating speaking evaluation as a part of the board exams because grade inclusion can motivate learners and institutions to give class time for speaking (Shurovi, 2014) as it seems that teachers are struggling to decide their priorities of teaching because in order to achieve grading success they are compromising with communicative skills development.

2.4 Motivation and Language Learning Techniques

As learners do not get enough opportunities in the classroom to practice pronunciation they can practice from online-based materials, though teachers need to introduce individualized learning techniques otherwise it would not be successful. Because of the educational cultural understanding, Bangladeshi learners rely on teachers and for this reason; they do not explore individualized learning (Huda, 2013). Moreover, our learners need motivation for using personalized pronunciation techniques that can enhance their speaking and pronunciation because individualized practice can bring success in pronunciation. According to Ellis (2017), motivation is a result of success in second language learning because students who experience positive results in the second language learning process grow to be more motivated to gain knowledge of second language (L2).

2.5 Pronunciation Teaching and Learning in Bangladesh

Research studies on pronunciation teaching and learning in Bangladeshi contexts reveal that teaching pronunciation is not considered as a major part of classroom activities. Osmany and Azad (2016) in their pronunciation research find that the majority of students at the tertiary level in Bangladesh are unable to use standard pronunciation and teaching pronunciation is not a priority in several classes. Moreover, this study mentions that learners should help themselves to learn pronunciation but it does not specify and elaborate on the ways of individualized learning.

Moreover, traditional classroom teaching does not allow adequate pronunciation practice as according to Wahiduzzaman (2017) teaching guidelines and learning ideas in Bangladesh do not reflect adequate priorities for pronunciation because of the traditional approach where grammar, reading, and writing are considered more important skills for EFL contexts. In addition, pronunciation teachers need specialized training on technology-based pronunciation instructions as Jahan (2011) suggests that pronunciation teachers should acquire knowledge regarding updated technologies so that they can utilize audio-visual to enhance learners' skills. Finally, for achieving practical outcomes of learning, students require practice-based learning from the early level as Ali (2016) suggests that we should include pronunciation instructions at the primary level so that our learners get the opportunities to learn proper accents from their primary stages of education.

2.6 Technology and Language Teaching

Using technology at the tertiary level should not be an impossible matter though there are challenges, it is feasible in our context and it is possible to transmit technology-based pronunciation teaching as Ivy (2010) states that Bangladeshi

educational settings do not have enough technology and language teachers do not receive training based on available technological amenities but she claims that teachers are receiving assistance from other colleagues and if teachers want they can avail outside training programs. Many of our learners are not familiar with technology-based learning because they do not get exposure of e-learning at the school level. Research shows that many teachers at school level are interested to apply digital devices for the development of their professional skills but they are not assured of the productive outcomes of technology in learning because of inadequate institutional infrastructure and learners' economic backgrounds (Hoque, Idrus, & Islam, 2018).

Moreover, language classrooms are integrating modern technologies to offer updated techniques of teaching, and technology-based learning promotes the ways of learning based on individual differences. The classroom contexts traditionally show learners with course books in majority of the teaching settings but traditional customs are offering scopes to technology based learning where learners can participate individually inside and outside of classroom settings. Moreover, technology adds autonomy to language learning because students can concentrate on their individualized options (Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

Finally, it is evident that there is no explicit investigation of individualized pronunciation development and its impact on the speaking and pronunciation skills of our learners. Moreover, integrating online materials for developing classroom pronunciation and speaking skills has not yet been addressed in our context. So for the development of pronunciation and speaking, we need to explore feasible ways for our context and identify techniques that can motivate our learners to speak English inside and outside of the classroom with proper pronunciation. Similarly, identifying closet links among pronunciation, speaking, and motivation can enhance the priorities of pronunciation teaching and learning in Bangladesh.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction to Methodology

This research followed the mixed method as data collection and analysis required both qualitative and quantitative methods and the incorporation of the mixed methods procedures help to grow progressively and incorporates intricate insight to research understanding. For proper research analysis, the instruments of this research include questionnaires for students and teachers, interviews for students and teachers, a focus group discussion for students, and classroom observation. As the participants had practical experiences of pronunciation teaching and learning, they were able to reflect required sincere responses.

3.2 Participants

Table 1. Total numbers and male/female ratio of the students and teachers

Name of the Area	Number of Universities	Male: Female students	Number of students for questionnaire	Male: Female Teachers	Number of teachers for questionnaire	Male: Female students:	Number of students for interview	Male: Female Teachers	Number of teachers for interview	Male: Female students	Number of students for focus group discussion
Dhaka	4	38:23	61	3:4	07	4:7	11	3:5	08	4:8	12
Cumila	1	12:7	19	1:2	03	3:1	04	1:1	02	1:3	04
Total	05	50:30	80	4:6	10	7:8	15	4:6	10	5:11	16

The purposive sampling process was followed for conducting this research and all participants were from five private universities in Bangladesh and among these five universities, four were from Dhaka city and one from the divisional city Cumilla because the only capital city is not enough for adequate pronunciation scenario of Bangladesh as regional

accent affects pronunciation proficiency. For the students' questionnaire, eighty students participated (fifty male and thirty female students), and fifteen students were interviewed (seven male and eight female), and all students were from advanced level semesters as they completed their pronunciation courses because for responding to all statements and interview questions they needed a basic understanding of phonetics and phonology.

In addition, ten teachers were involved in the teachers' questionnaire and interview (four male and six female) and all of them have pronunciation teaching experience at the university level as this kind of study requires responses regarding practical challenges and recommendations for pronunciation teaching. For focus group discussion, sixteen students were selected and among them six were male and ten were female participants and all of them completed their basic pronunciation-related courses. Finally, two classes were observed to get practical insights into pronunciation classes in private universities and one class from a capital city and another from a divisional city were observed where classroom settings provide adequate data to support other data collection procedures.

3.3 Instruments

Questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observation were used as measuring instruments and these instruments helped to measure pronunciation treatment, function, and usefulness by yielding consistent outcomes from the responses of participants. In the student questionnaire, there were twelve questions for participants (Appendix A) and in the teacher questionnaire, there were six questions (Appendix B) for teachers where they provided their opinions. Moreover, to ensure content validity the questionnaire was mock-tested by pronunciation teachers and learners so it helped to avoid irrelevant content for assessment. For students, there were five questions (Appendix C) and teachers were asked four questions (Appendix D).

Interviews were face-to-face where students and teachers responded directly so that they could provide relevant information for research objectives, and responses were recorded and interview process followed both structured and unstructured methods and they assisted to ensure the authentication of the given responses. For the focus group discussion, there were five main questions (Appendix E) followed by some necessary follow-up questions for finding participants' beliefs and experiences regarding pronunciation learning. Both explicit and follow-up questions facilitated lower reliability issues. The objective of the focus group discussion was to identify detailed information that was not gained from other instruments and as it can provide well-built validity.

Two pronunciation classes were observed in order to find out the position of pronunciation at tertiary level classes of Bangladesh. Classroom observation questions (Appendix F) and observation sheets (Appendix G) were used to find out relevant information from the observed classes. There were twenty-five in first class and twenty-seven students in the second class. The excel charts in-depth and excel advanced formulas and functions were used for data analysis of this research. The qualitative data have been analyzed by categorizing various factors, classifying comparisons and contrasts, and tabulating percentages. It represents both narrative interpretations and thematic analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

First of all, in-person permission was sought for collecting responses from five private universities and they were willing to cooperate fully to achieve adequate and relevant responses. However, for interview teachers' time preferences were followed as they wanted to make sure their participation was without interruption. Both questionnaire and interview questions did not challenge teachers as they were pre-checked though students were given detailed instructions for their understanding of what they are required to do to obtain proper responses. It seemed that all participants enjoyed their experience as content reflected their issues of teaching and learning partnership. Moreover, focus group discussion was held in the university classroom with permission from authority and students who participated in the discussion were given basic instructions for focus group discussion.

At first, participants were introduced to the topic and students were instructed to use the English language but later they were suggested to use Bangla whenever necessary. As moderator, I asked clarification questions for better responses and it took thirty minutes for discussion and opinions, and as a facilitator I also took notes. For classroom observation, I discussed with teacher about lesson plans before the class and after the class, I also asked questions to teachers for further clarification of activities in the class. I went to the classes with course teachers and I was introduced to the students to make this observation process uninterrupted. Both classes took one hour and thirty minutes to finish lectures and activities based on pronunciation.

4. Findings

The findings from the students' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaires, students' interviews, teachers' interviews, students' focus group discussions and classroom observations are presented in this section.

4.1 Findings from Questionnaire for Students

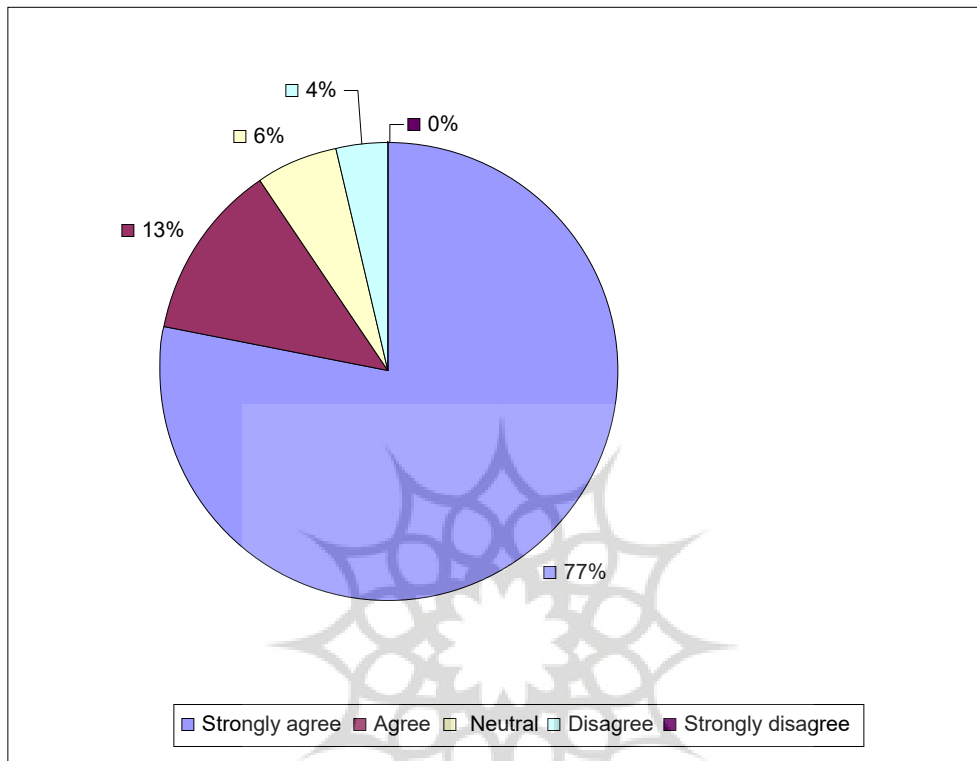


Figure 1. Importance for tertiary level

In Figure 1, more than half of the students (77%) “strongly agreed” that learning English pronunciation in the university level is essential and 13% “agreed” though 6% were “neutral” and 4% “disagreed.” It shows that our learners realize the significance of learning English pronunciation. In Figure 2, the majority of the students (37%) “disagreed” with the statement that pronunciation is equally treated as grammar, reading, and writing skills in the classroom and 16% “agreed” though 25% “strongly disagreed”, 14% “strongly agreed” where 8% were “neutral” so it reveals that pronunciation needs more priorities. In Figure 3, 42% of students “strongly agreed” that they are deprived of adequate learning of pronunciation and 33% “agreed”, 11% “disagreed” and 11% were “neutral” and it reflects the actual pronunciation learning scenario of Bangladesh.

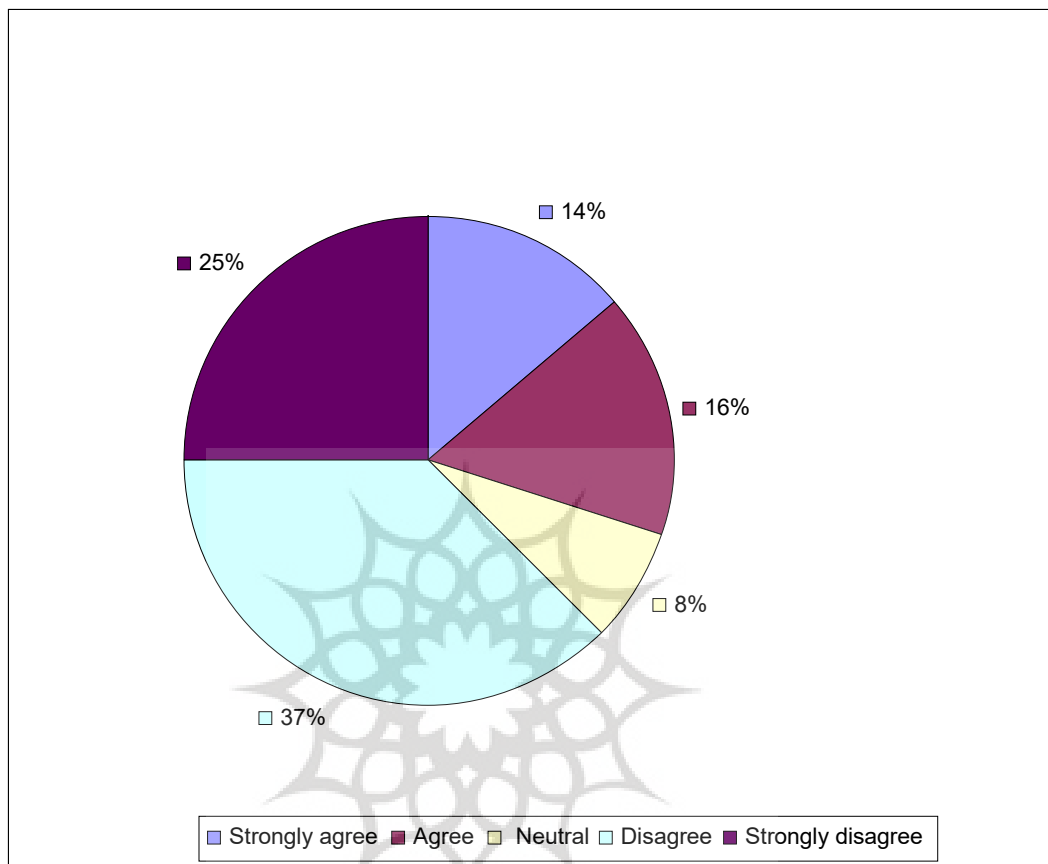


Figure 2. Pronunciation and other skills

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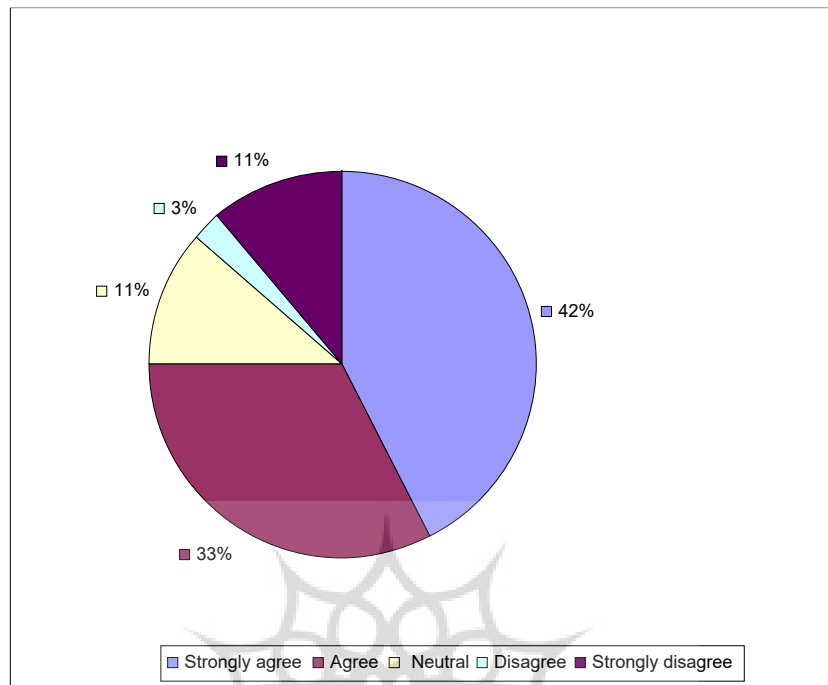


Figure 3. Learning in the classroom

Figure 4 reveals that the majority (38%) of tertiary level students “agreed” that they cannot speak in English with proper pronunciation inside the classroom and (26%) “strongly agreed” and 28% “strongly disagreed” with this statement which shows that some students can speak in English with appropriate pronunciation where 8% were “neutral.” So majority of students are unable to use proper pronunciation though they had exposure to English learning inside the classroom at least for twelve years at the school and college levels.

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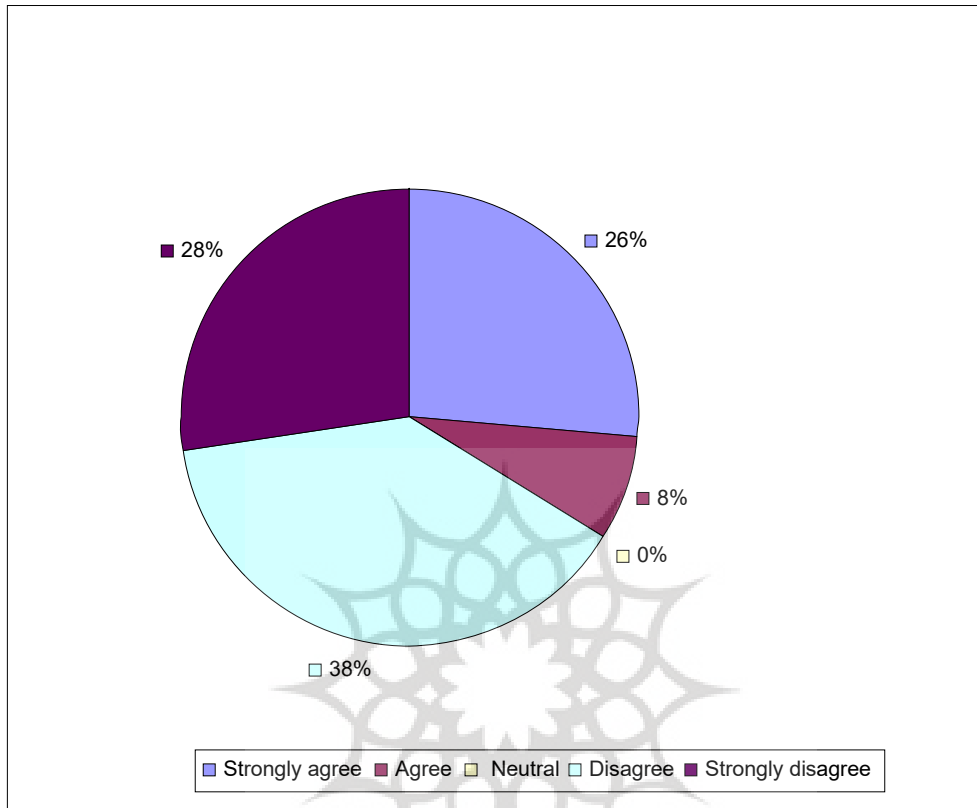


Figure 4. Speaking and proper pronunciation

In Figure 5, the majority (54%) of students “strongly disagreed” with the statement that they are conscious about their pronunciation learning from the beginning of their university courses and, 25% “disagreed” though 14% “strongly agreed” with the same statement. It shows that learners need more exposure to pronunciation from the initial stage of their tertiary level.

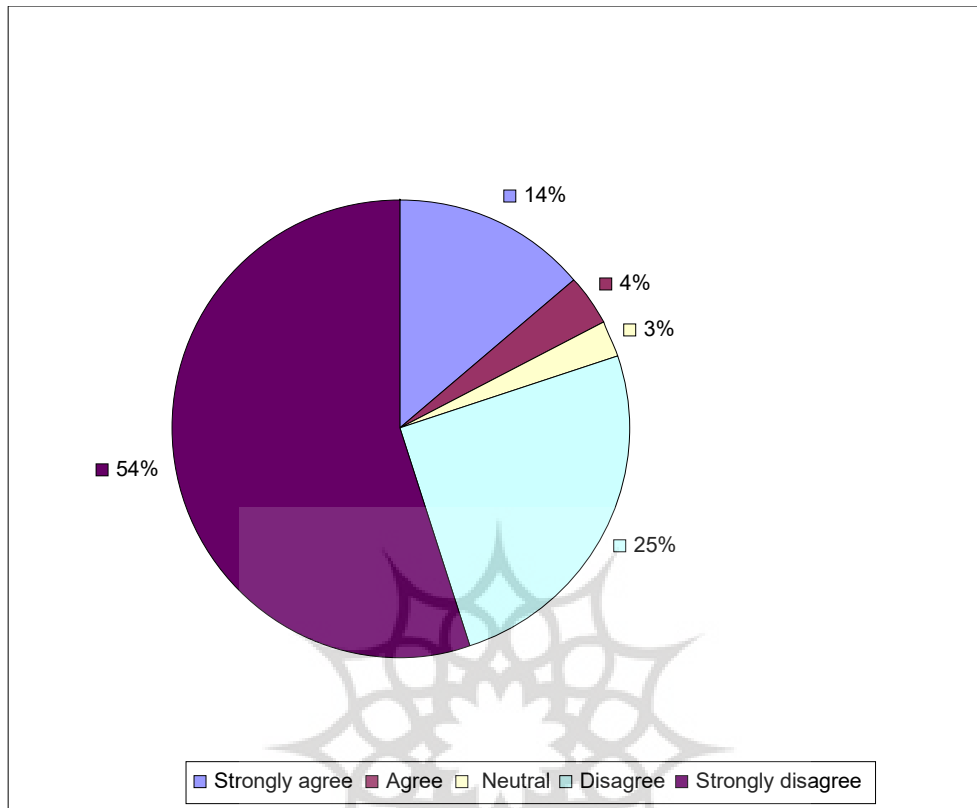


Figure 5. Pronunciation consciousness

However, in Figure 6 majority of the students (39%) “disagreed” that pronunciation exercise inside the classroom develops the speaking skill of students and 15% “strongly agreed”, 15% “agreed” though 25% “strongly disagreed” and 6% were “neutral” so it reveals that outside practice opportunities are also essential. In Figure 7, (21%) “strongly agreed” that pronunciation errors are corrected by teachers inside the classroom while (31%) “strongly disagreed” with the same statement, and (1%) was “neutral” so students should receive more assistance regarding pronunciation errors as part of their classroom activities. In Figure 8, 31% of students “strongly disagreed” that pronunciation courses are enough for learning better speaking skills though 29% “strongly agreed” with the same statement and 31% “disagreed”, and 9% “agreed” which reveals the fact that courses should be designed resourcefully.

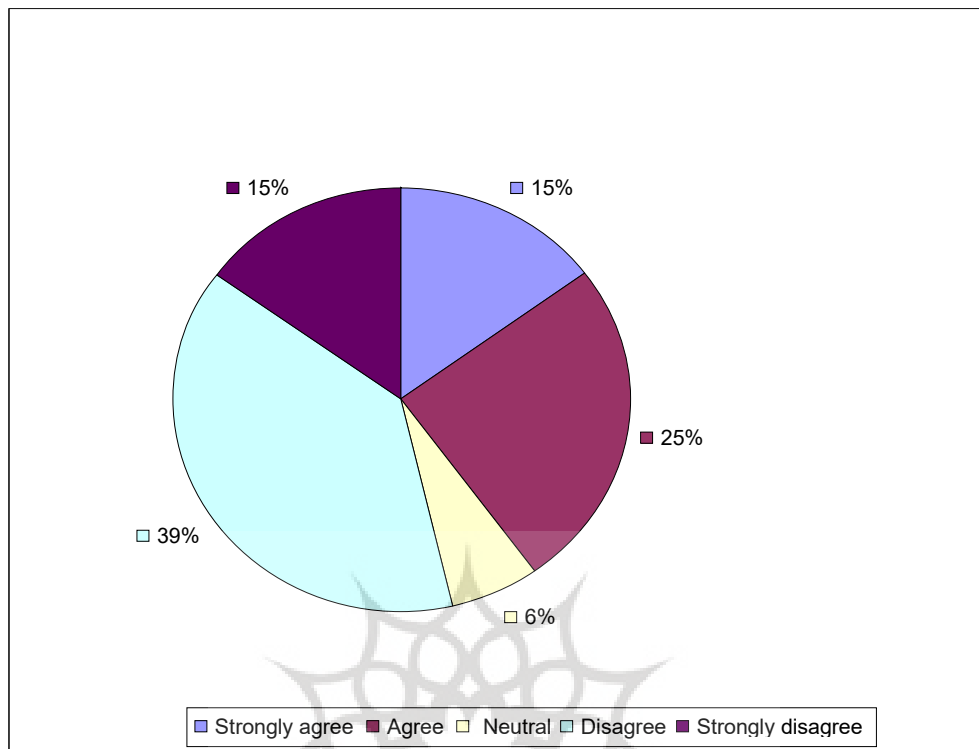


Figure 6. Pronunciation exercise & speaking

In Figure 9, about 56% of learners “strongly agreed” that if students get more pronunciation activities in the classroom, it will encourage them to communicate with teachers and classmates by using the English language, and 20% “agreed”, 11% “disagreed” where 9% were “neutral” so it provides evidence that more pronunciation tasks can be incorporated. In Figure 10, the majority (37%) of the students claimed that they try to practice pronunciation by using internet-based material and we can see from the same table that (21%) of the students reported that they are not taking part in pronunciation activities based on internet and 18% “agreed”, 11% “strongly disagreed” where 13% were “neutral” with the same statement. So it illustrates that learners are trying to practice from outside classroom sources.

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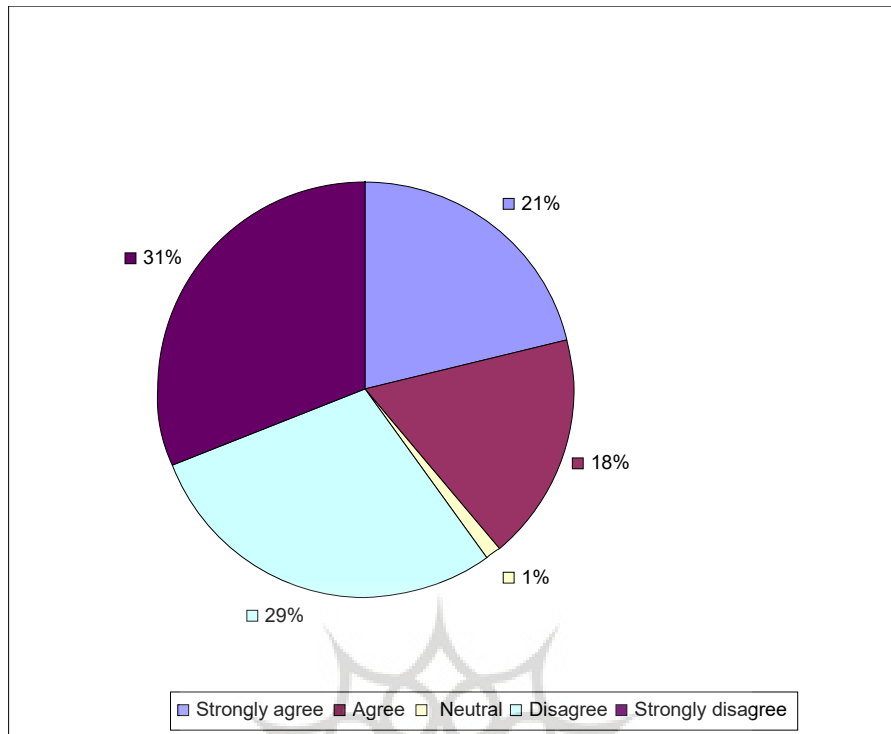


Figure 7. Classroom errors correction

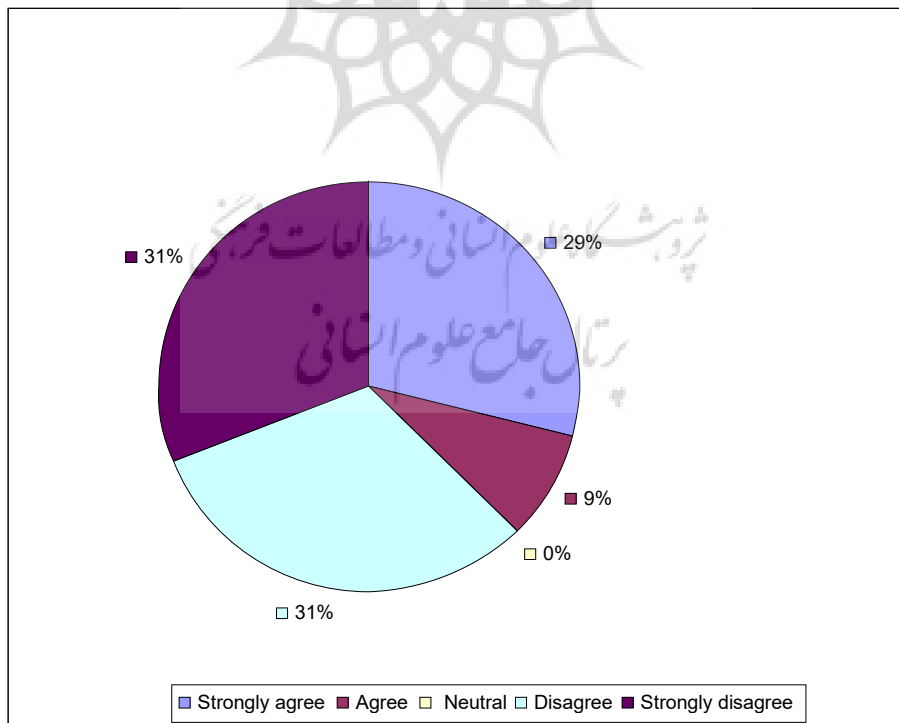


Figure 8. Pronunciation courses & speaking

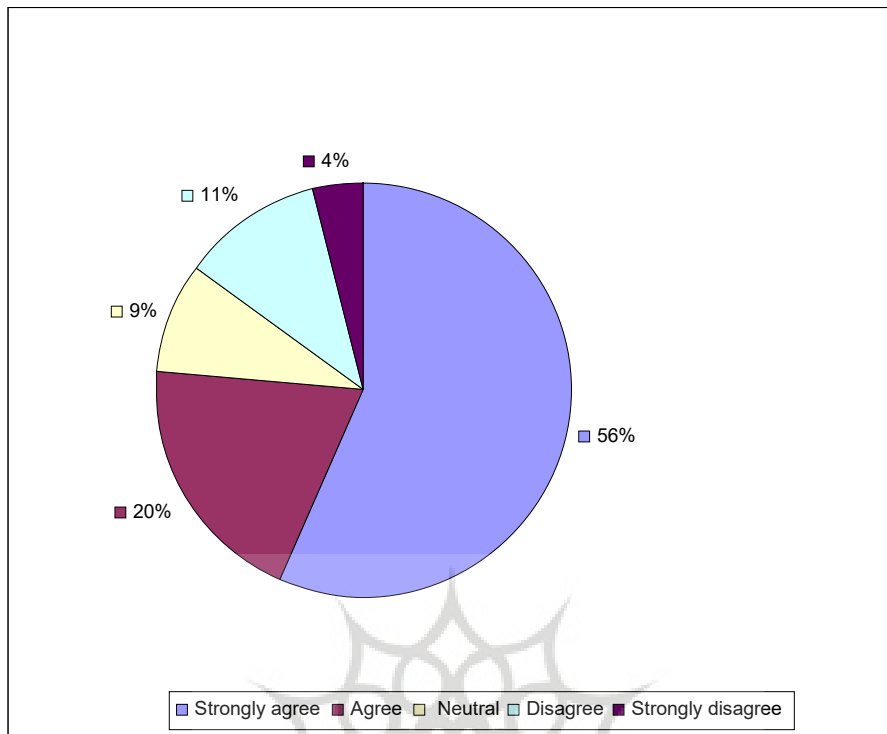


Figure .9 Pronunciation & classroom communication

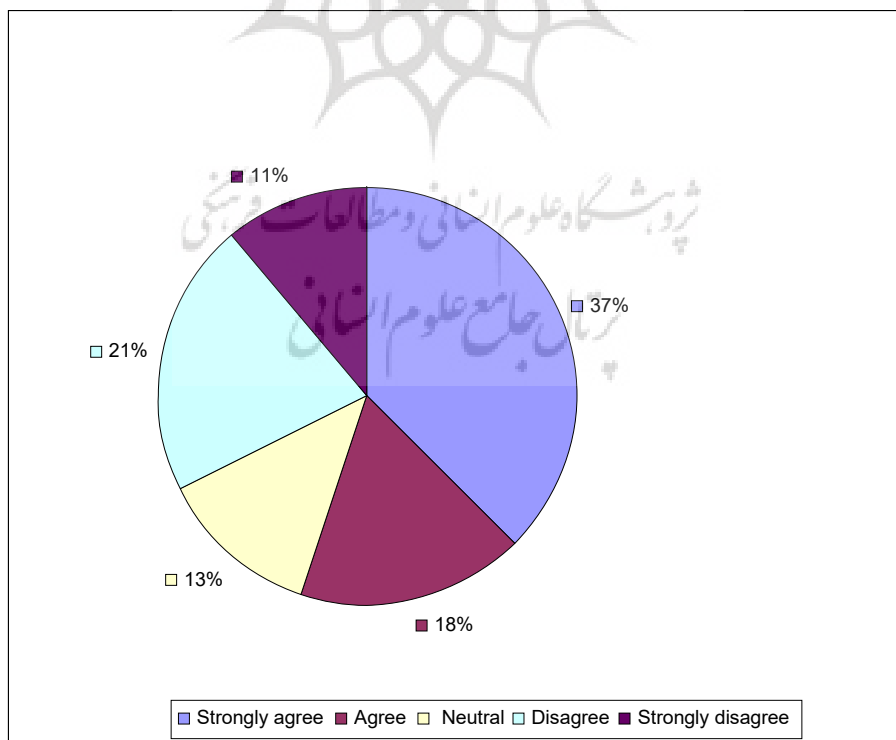


Figure 10. Internet learning material

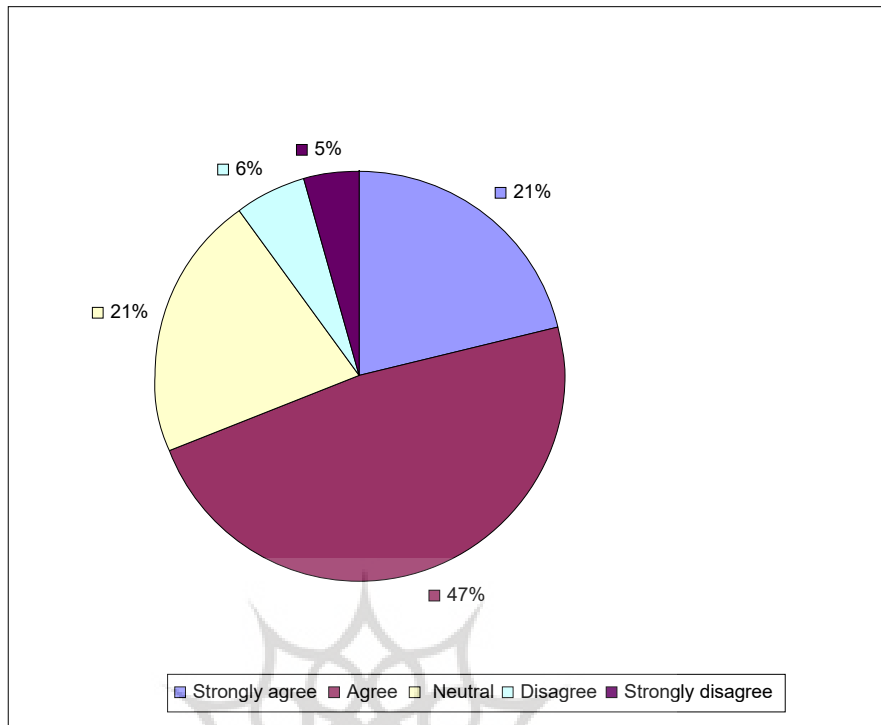


Figure 11. E- material for individual

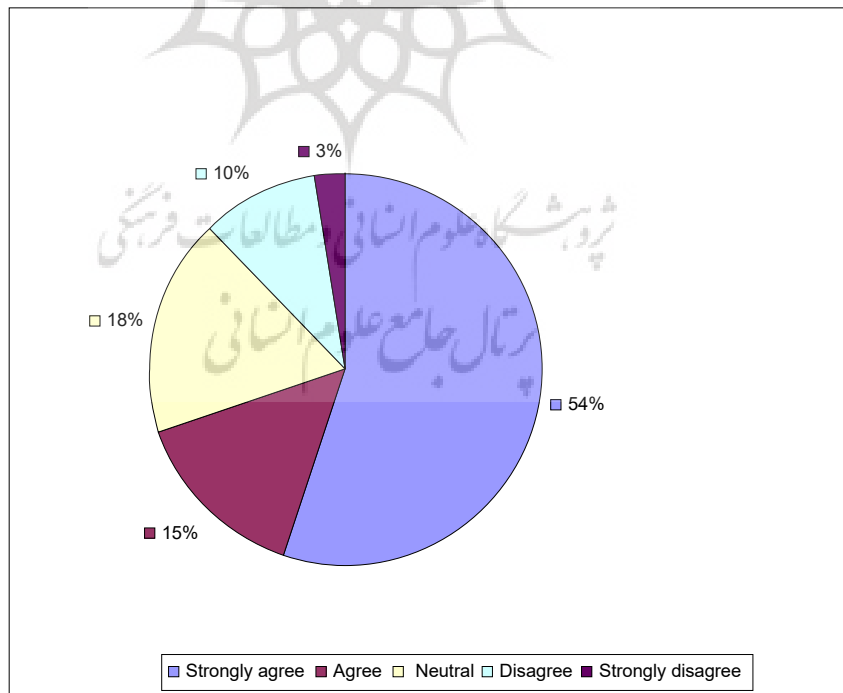


Figure 12. Motivation & online learning

Figure 11, shows that 47% of participants “agreed” about the statement that pronunciation is better learned when students use online material for their individual problems and 6% “disagreed” and 21% were “neutral” so, it reveals that technology-based materials can support learning effectively. From Figure 12, we can see that 54% of learners “strongly agreed” that students are motivated to improve their speaking skills from online learning sites and 10% “disagreed” and, 18% were “neutral” so informal learning can motivate learners for doing better practice.

4.2 Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire

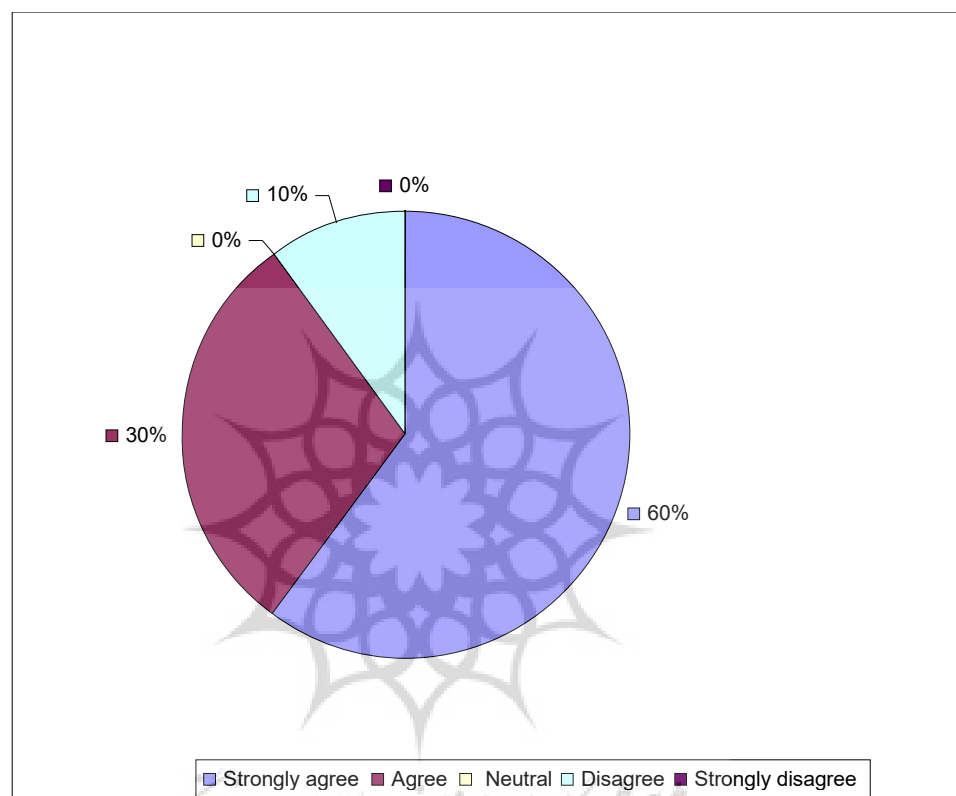


Figure 13. Challenging academic setting

From Figure 13, we can see that majority of the teachers (60%) “strongly agreed” and 30% “agreed” that effective pronunciation teaching is challenging in our academic setting. In Figure 14 more than half of the teachers (60%) “strongly disagreed” that students are getting sufficient courses for developing pronunciation skills and 30% “agreed” with the same statements so more pronunciation courses can be included.

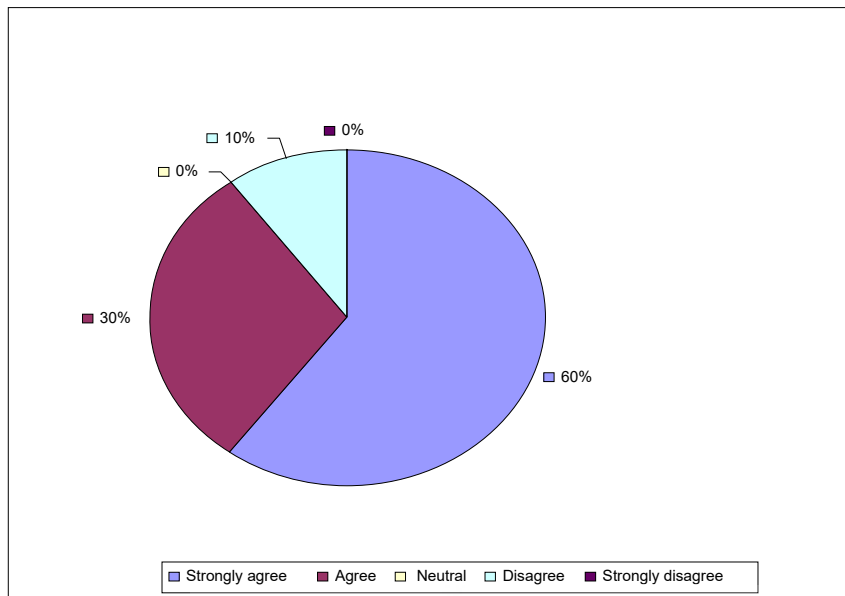


Figure 14. Sufficient pronunciation courses

In Figure 15, 50% of teachers “strongly disagreed” that classroom teaching is enough for successful pronunciation learning and 40% “disagreed” and 10% “agreed” with the same statement that shows the importance of informal learning techniques. In Figure 16, the majority (40%) of teachers responded that pronunciation teaching materials are not based on students’ needs and aptitude level, and 20% “agreed”, 10% “strongly agreed” and 30% “disagreed” which illustrates that teaching materials need contextual adjustment. In Figure 17, half of the teachers (50%) “disagreed” that it is possible to provide feedback inside the classroom while students are making mistakes and 30% of teachers “agreed” with the statement and 10% “strongly agreed” and 10% “strongly disagreed” so time allocation is needed for feedback while developing lesson plans.

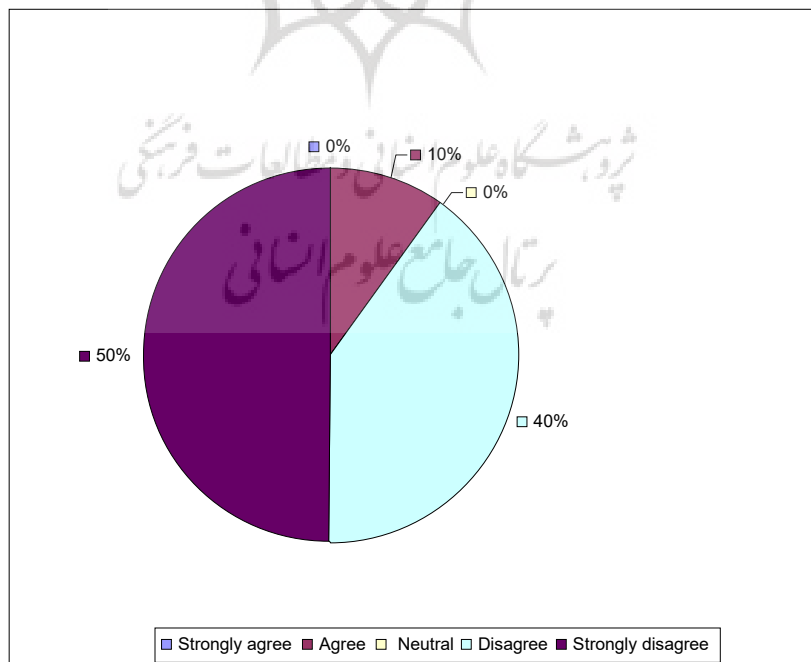


Figure 15. Classroom teaching

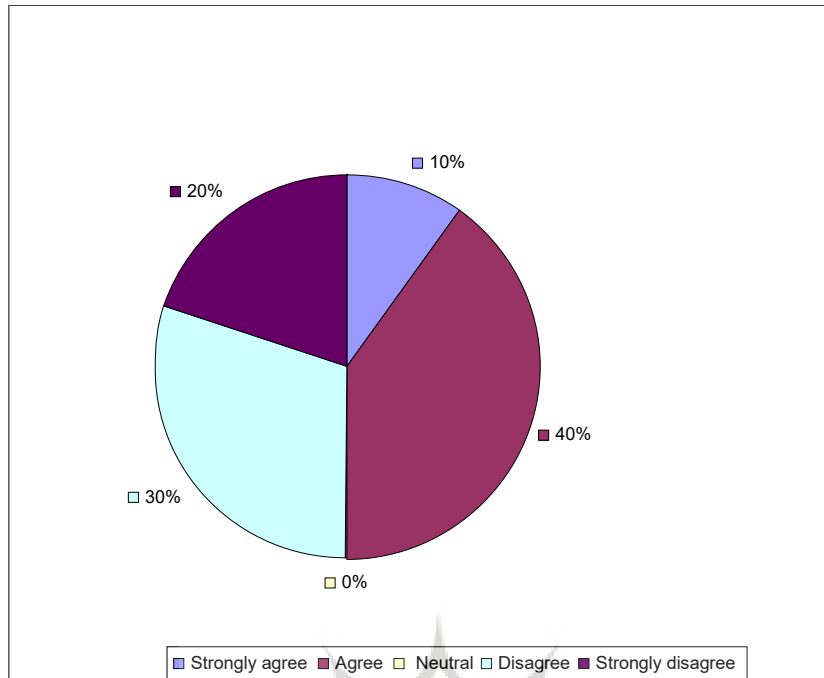


Figure 16. Need & aptitude level

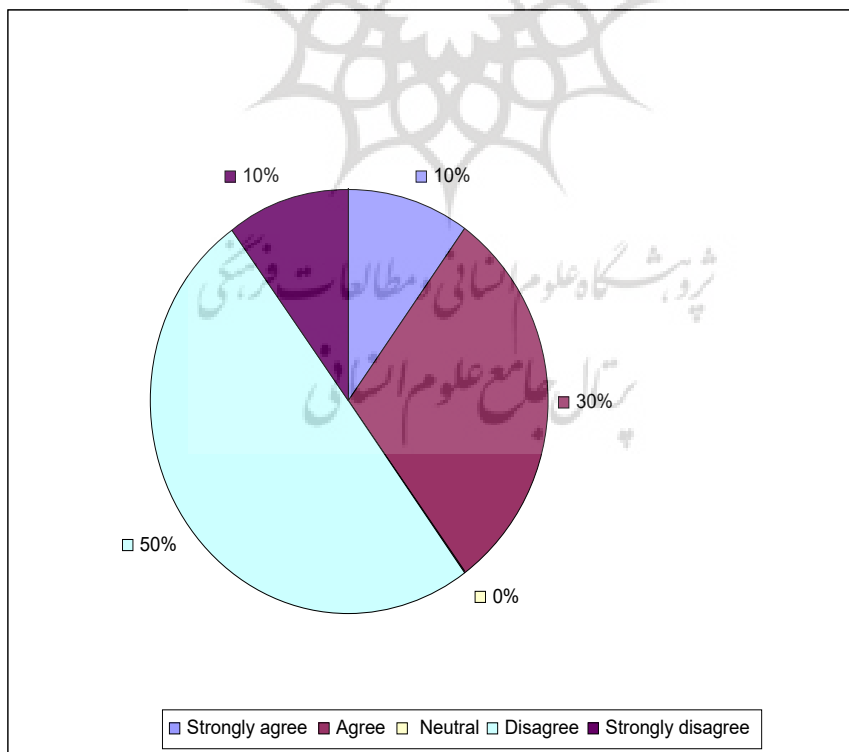


Figure 17. Feedback in the classroom

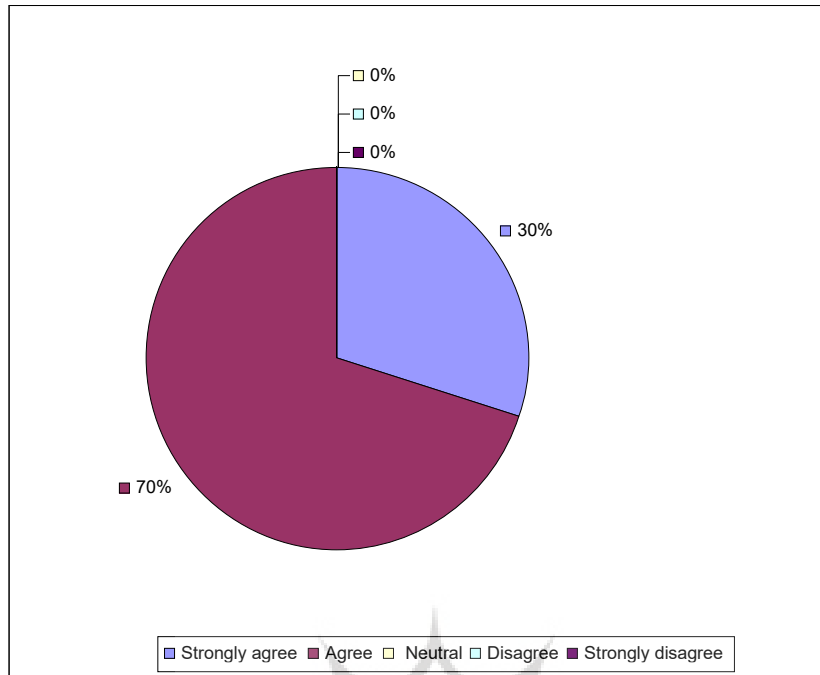


Figure 18. E-material & individual difficulty

In Figure 18, 70% of teachers “agreed” with the statement that internet-based material can motivate learners to improve individual difficulty and 30% “strongly agreed” so it shows the significance of technology-based pronunciation learning materials.

4.3 Findings from Students’ Interview

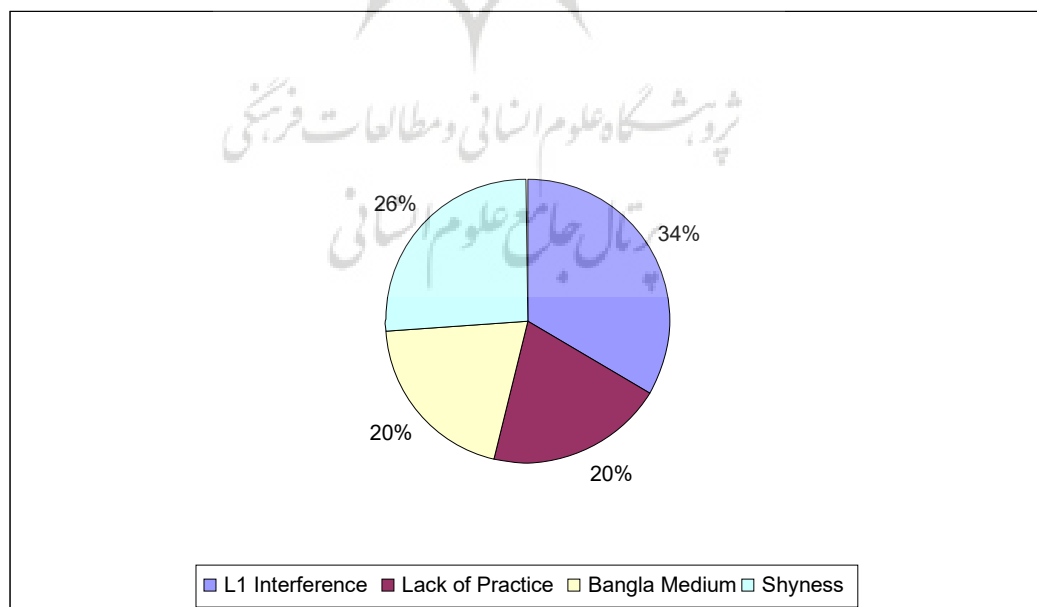


Figure 19. Learning difficulties

In response to the first question (Figure 19) about difficulties that students face regarding learning pronunciation 5 (34%) answered that L1 has interference with English pronunciation and 3 (20%) said that lack of practice in school and college level and 3 (20%) reported that Bangla medium background and lack of proper environment and 4 (26%) answered that shyness is another problem. For the second question (Figure 20) students were asked about the sufficiency of materials from classes for practicing pronunciation, and 8(54%) students said they did not get enough materials and 4 (27%) emphasized inadequate practical materials on pronunciation and 2 (13%) mentioned technology-based materials can help them and 1(6%) answered that materials are good enough for learning.

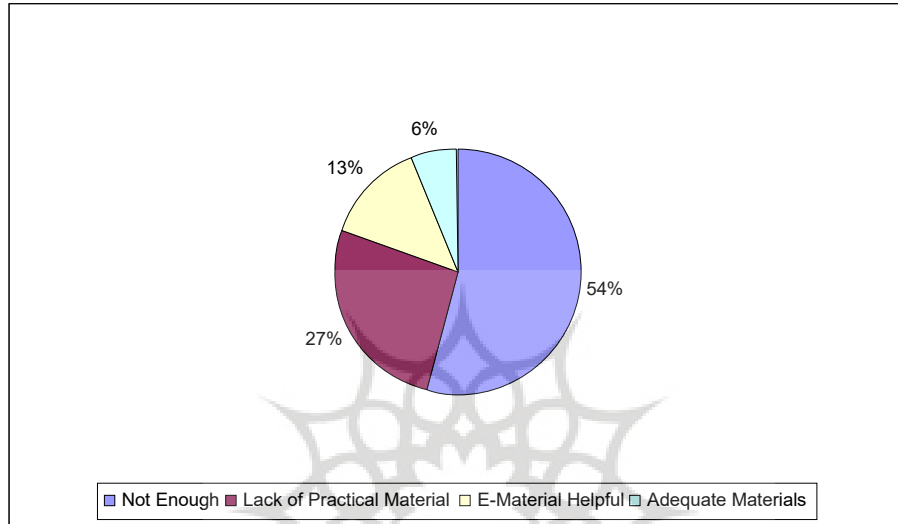


Figure 20. Practice materials

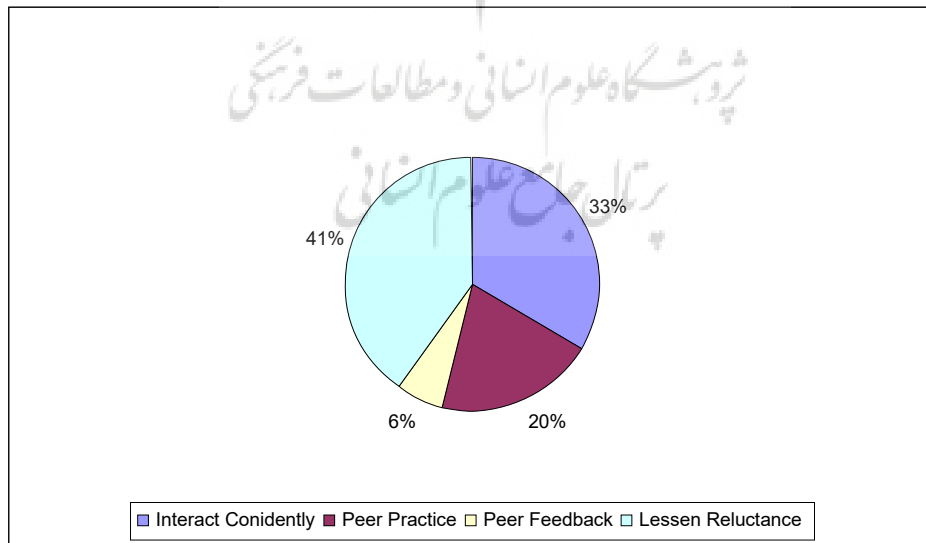


Figure 21. Classroom speaking & pronunciation

After that as a third question (Figure 21), they were asked to give their opinions on learning pronunciation inside the classroom and its effect on students speaking skills, and 5 (33%) participants agreed that they can interact confidently and 3 (20%) emphasized on practice with classmates and 1(6%) said peer feedback motivates them to learn speaking and 6 (41%) claimed that better pronunciation lessens reluctance for speaking.

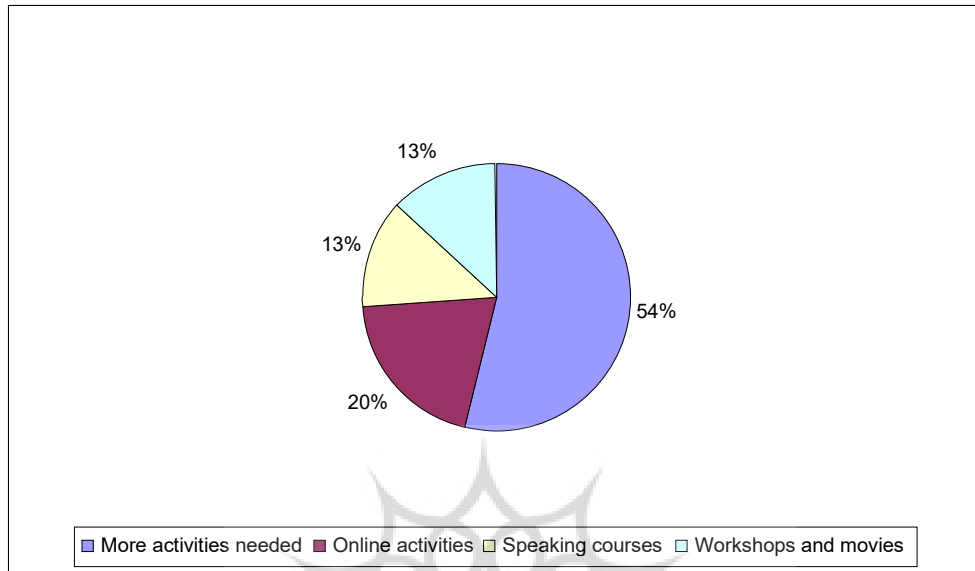


Figure 22. Types of activities

The fourth question (Figure 22) was about the type of activities that help students to learn pronunciation, and 8 (54%) suggested more activity-based pronunciation courses are needed and 3 (20%) responded that internet-based activities can partially help and 2 (13%) claimed speaking course is helping them and 2 (13%) expressed that workshop and movies can help them. Finally, in the fifth question (Figure 23), they were asked to provide their opinions on the help of internet-based materials on learning techniques for pronunciation and 5 (33%) said they had no idea about internet-based materials and 5 (34%) mentioned u-tube can help and 1 (6%) said movies on pronunciation can help them and 4 (27%) suggested English pronunciation classes on the internet.

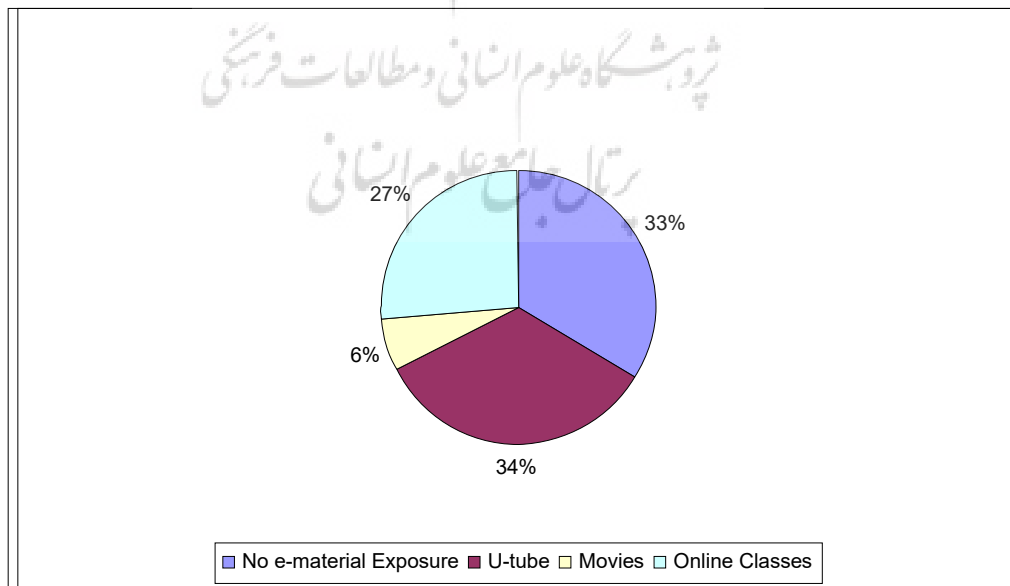


Figure 23. Internet materials & learning technique

4.4 Findings from Interview Response of Teachers

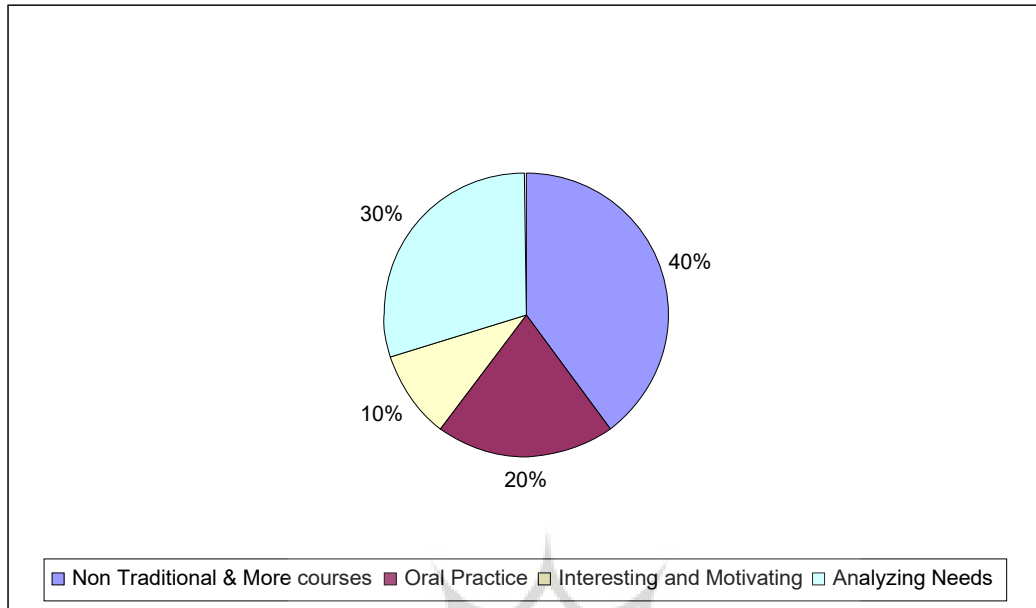


Figure 24. Syllabus changes

For teachers, the first interview question (Figure 24) was about syllabus changes that can be made to improve teaching pronunciation inside the classroom and in response to that question majority of the teachers 4 (40%) said that the traditional syllabus should be changed and more courses should be included while 2 (20%) stressed on syllabus based on oral practice and 1(10%) emphasized on interesting and motivating syllabus whereas 3 (30%) answered that syllabus can be designed by analyzing the needs of students.

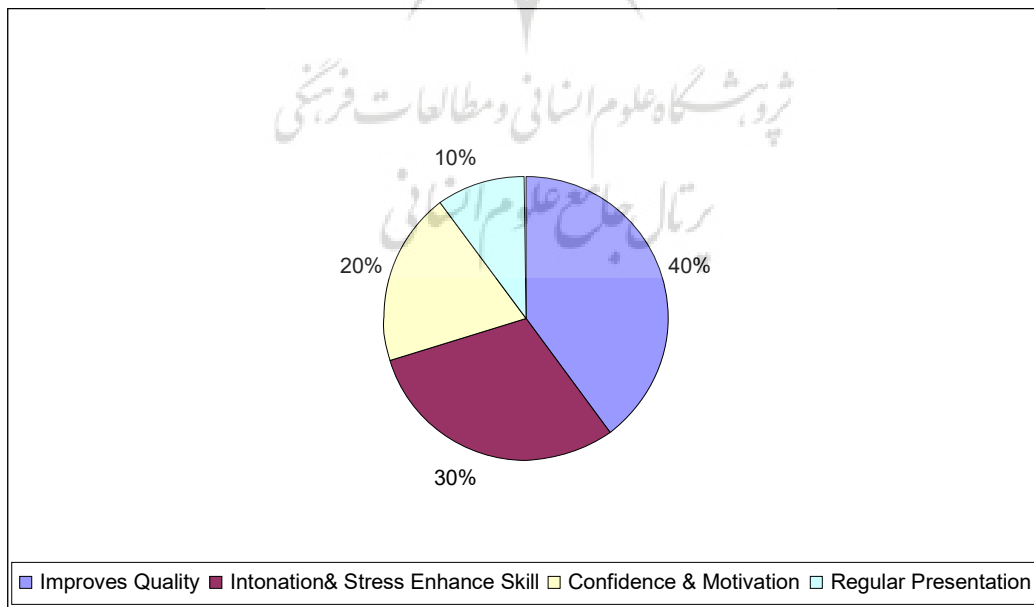


Figure 25. Pronunciation & speaking

After that the second question (Figure 25) was asked on pronunciation and the way it can change the speaking skills of our learners and 4 (40%) claimed that correct pronunciation improves the quality of speaking, 3 (30%) said proper intonation and stress enhance speaking skill, 2 (20%) agreed that standard pronunciation gives confidence and motivation and 1 (10%) said pronunciation develops fluency. The third question (Figure 26) was on types of assessment that can be incorporated to motivate learners inside the classroom and 5 (50%) said that assessment should not be traditional and should be practical while 1 (10%) emphasized individual assessment and language lab test and 3 (30%) suggested both theory and practice and 1 (10%) stressed on the assessment by taking regular presentation.

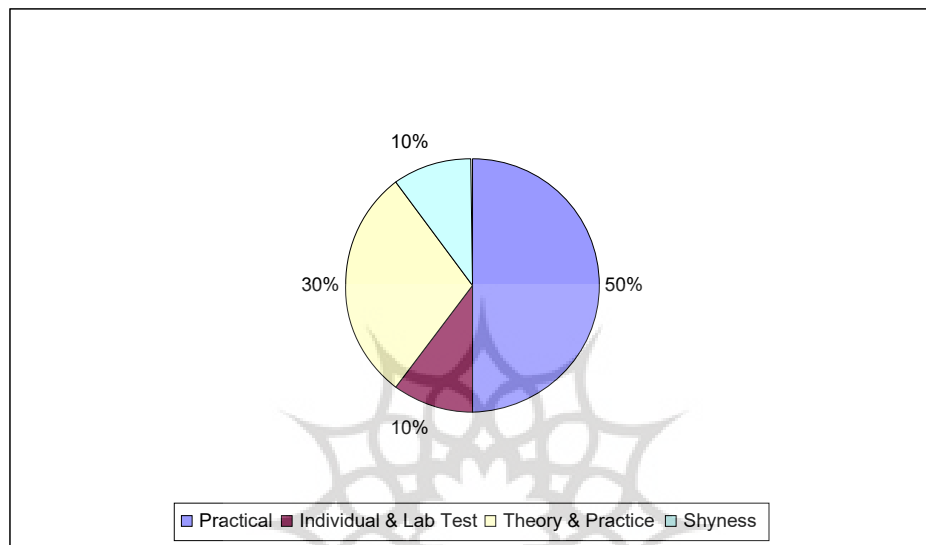


Figure 26. Assessment & motivation

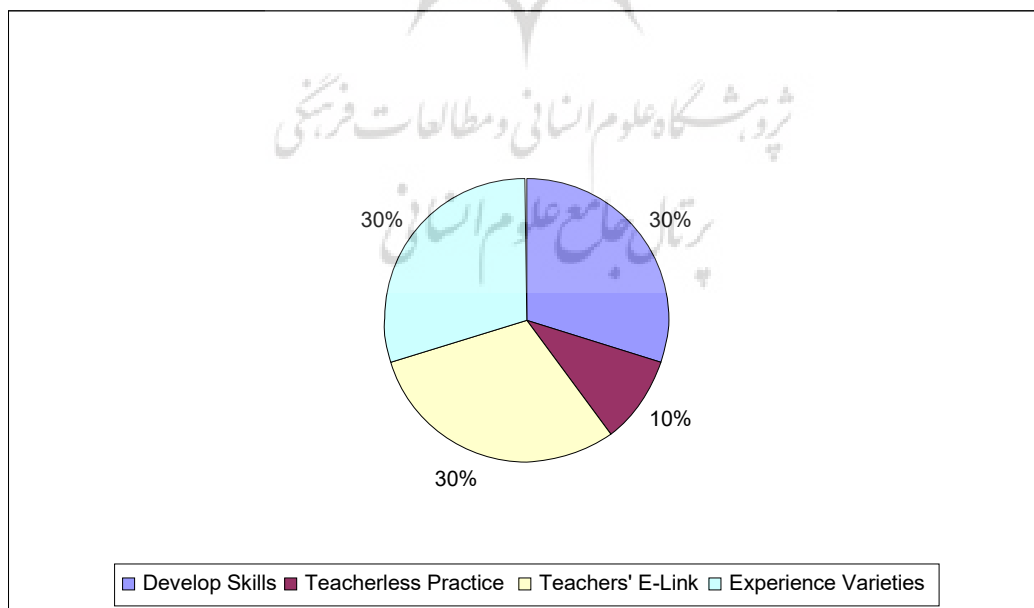


Figure 27. E-materials & individual skills

Finally, teachers were interviewed on the fourth question (Figure 27) regarding the benefits of internet-based materials for individual skill development and 3 (30%) said that lots of materials can develop language skills and 1 (10%) claimed that without the help of teachers, students can practice whereas 3 (30%) said that teachers also can give students link so that they can practice at home and 3 (30%) answered that students can experience varieties of pronunciation from internet-based materials.

4.5 Findings from Classroom Observation

Table 2. Classroom observation sheet

	First class	Second class
Aims and objectives	To develop learners' awareness of the pronunciation	To feel confident in speaking with good pronunciation
	To become aware of common mistakes in pronunciation	To become familiar with phonetic symbol
Warm up activities	Teacher asked students about the importance of pronunciation by giving some examples how wrong pronunciation may bring embarrassment	Teacher asked to work in pairs telling days of week giving different expression like angry way, very happily, as a question, loudly, quietly, nervously, suspiciously.
Main activities	Based on theory	Based on theory
Teachers' talk time	20 minutes	30 minutes
Students' talk time	30 minutes	25 minutes
Number of students	27	25
Materials	Phonetic symbol, Phonemic chart and handout	Phonetic transcription, Phonemic chart and handout
Students' activities	Based on handouts	Based on handouts
Methods of teaching	Traditional	Traditional
Practical pronunciation activities	Minimum	Not satisfactory
Communication between teachers and students	Students struggled with interaction	Some of them interacted satisfactorily
Pronunciation difficulties of students	Influence of local accent was noticeable	Few students showed sense of appropriate pronunciation
Pronunciation skills of teachers	Standard	Standard

4.6 Findings from Focus Group Discussion

4.6.1 Standard Pronunciation

Total of 16 students participated in two focus group discussions, and in the first part the group was asked a very general question to break the ice, and the question was about their idea about standard pronunciation and this question also introduced the main idea for discussion. Five students responded that for them standard pronunciation means pronunciation like British or American people, and two of them focused on the avoidance of local accents of

pronunciation to ensure successful pronunciation skills. All students showed attention to this question which shows that our tertiary-level students are concerned about pronunciation.

4.6.2 Pronunciation Performance

After that, they were asked to describe their performance regarding pronunciation inside the classroom and in reply to this question they discussed their feeling of shyness in front of teachers and classmates because they experience that if they speak with local accents then their classmates laugh at them; one of them said he is from Rangpur and his classmates sometimes imitate him because he has a local accent for English pronunciation. Three of them mentioned that sometimes they try to speak English by imitating native speakers which they have learned from English movies and they reported that they recognize that their imitation is not perfect and sometimes other classmates are not encouraging towards their endeavor to articulate accurately because they consider they are unusual. They think that they do not have enough ideas about appropriate pronunciation and for this reason; they are making mistakes and three of them showed the attitude that they do not have proper instructions for improving pronunciation proficiency. For this reason, they are not satisfied with their pronunciation skill though they know that it is essential to develop their pronunciation ability.

4.6.3 Formal and Informal Learning

After that, they were asked to provide their opinion on the process of learning pronunciation inside and outside the classroom and five of them felt that sometimes they are practicing presentations and from presentation classes, they are getting exposure to diverse types of pronunciation skills. Nine of them also shared that in pronunciation learning classes they practice pronunciation by doing pair work and group work and these methods are also helping them to practice pronunciation difficulties, and they were also asked to discuss their opinion on learning pronunciation outside of the classroom and seven of them replied that sometimes they try to learn pronunciation from YouTube learning channels and they also follow pronunciation dictionary for learning pronunciation though three of them mentioned that they are not very familiar with phonetic symbol. Eleven of them shared that they are listening to English songs and that is helping them to learn pronunciation.

4.6.4 Lack of Practical Pronunciation

Then they were asked to share their opinion regarding students who are passing pronunciation courses without learning proper pronunciation and as moderator, I was surprised that fourteen students confessed the reality that students are passing pronunciation courses without learning proper pronunciation and they were asked to analyze some reasons behind this situation. They mentioned that they are learning theoretically and memorizing for passing pronunciation courses and sometimes they are not focusing on practical pronunciation, and often theoretical questions are predictable so they memorize some fixed questions and pass in pronunciation courses.

4.6.5 Online Based Pronunciation

Moreover, they were asked about the types of websites they find helpful for learning pronunciation. Five of them mentioned that they have no idea about internet-based pronunciation websites. Eleven of them mentioned that they are mostly following You Tube based pronunciation tutorials for learning pronunciation.

5. Analysis

This section presents an analysis of results from students' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaires, students' interviews, teachers' interviews, students' focus group discussions, and classroom observations. The analysis of all responses is discussed by segmenting key features of research questions and finally, discussion part clarifies and connects the main ideas of this research study.

The first research question was set to find out the extent of significance that pronunciation receives in the Bangladeshi context and from the findings of the students' questionnaire, it is evident that our tertiary level students realize the significance of learning pronunciation but it is our reality that the position of pronunciation inside the classroom is not satisfactory because only classroom teaching is not ensuring successful pronunciation learning and our tertiary level students still need help from outside sources for improving their speaking skill. From the teachers' questionnaire, we can say that teaching pronunciation should get more priority because without proper knowledge about pronunciation our language teaching cannot be called successful.

From the interview responses of teachers', it can be said that pronunciation teaching needs systematic and realistic approaches because students need to understand and produce sounds by following the proper place and manner of pronunciation of different sounds but traditional syllabus does not allow our teachers to incorporate modern ways of teaching in pronunciation classes. So our traditional syllabus should be changed so that teaching pronunciation can achieve more success in the language teaching arena of Bangladesh. If we plan our pronunciation classes attractively then pronunciation teaching will acquire more attention from learners. As proper pronunciation and stress can amend the speaking skills of students so roles of pronunciation inside the classroom should be increased.

The second research question was about learning pronunciation in the classroom and the language proficiency of students. The findings reveal that classroom teaching will provide maximum help to our students so that they can improve pronunciation and speaking but since in our tertiary level education students are not getting adequate courses so only classroom teaching cannot develop the satisfactory speaking ability of our students. For this reason, teachers can help students by advising them to take help from online based learning materials so that they can improve their personal pronunciation barrier of individual sounds. It is also comprehensible that internet-based materials are useful because students are receiving help from various pronunciation classes on the internet and these individual learning techniques are motivating them to develop their speaking skills because pronunciation is a basic part of standard speaking. We also found that learners are not receiving enough pronunciation courses and for this reason students are taking help from online based English pronunciation classes outside the classroom, and these classes are motivating learners to develop their speaking skills and at the same time on internet-based learning sites they are getting exposure to different native speakers' pronunciation.

The third research question tries to find out the effective impact of pronunciation education on Bangladeshi teachers and learners. From the students' interview, it is noticeable that learning pronunciation is not an easy task for tertiary-level students of Bangladesh and in our teaching environment, our students do not get adequate materials for learning pronunciation. So we should ensure effective learning materials which will enhance the standard of students' pronunciation. From students' response, we can say that more pronunciation courses are needed so that students get more exposure to learning appropriate pronunciation skills. As our students take assessment very seriously, so if we can integrate pronunciation assessment based on realistic and scientific ways then our students will acquire the motivation to learn pronunciation inside the classroom, and learning pronunciation appropriately will eventually build our students' speaking better.

Moreover, the findings show that internet-based materials can enhance learners' inspiration in speaking because there are many materials available on the internet that can develop learners' pronunciation and speaking skills. In addition, without the help of teachers, students can practice from different sources so that they can solve their individual difficulties regarding different sounds. Furthermore, the findings of the students' questionnaire reflect that in today's techno-based life students can easily learn pronunciation from internet-based resources and that can motivate them to enhance their verbal communication.

So it seems that pronunciation is not receiving priority in our English language learning classroom and this illustrates the causes of the incompetence of students in the field of pronunciation. As a result, we can say for this reason students are not getting satisfactory prospects for learning pronunciation in the classroom. Finally, online learning materials can enhance pronunciation education if we can incorporate proper learning techniques and materials.

6. Discussion

This study shows the position of pronunciation education at the tertiary level in Bangladesh and reveals different ways such as improvement of practical pronunciation practice instead of solely theory-based pronunciation teaching and learning to the improvement of students' skills and successful techniques such as incorporating effective assessment processes so that learners can ensure efficiency in pronunciation before passing this course at the same time teachers should use useful software based on pronunciation teaching and learning for improving knowledge on pronunciation. From the above findings, we can say that pronunciation is not getting the proper place in our teaching-learning context.

If we analyze our culture of education then we will find that our learners come to classes with the expectation that they will learn everything from the classroom but it is factual that only teaching and learning based on the classroom will not give us a rewarding effect in the future so we should encourage our learners to become confident about their own strategies of learning. Moreover, sometimes our tertiary-level classrooms are focusing on phonetics and phonology as separate skills and we are not showing the relevance of learning pronunciation with speaking skills.

There are so many students who attend English classes with local accents and they are not confident enough to speak in front of the class because of their pronunciation problems. For example, we have students from indigenous areas and they sometimes struggle to pronounce their personal names properly in front of the class when they are asked to participate in the class or they give any form of presentation.

In Bangladesh, private universities are trying to use English as the medium of instruction in academic settings so that they can maintain quality education and ensure better job placement. The aspiration for teaching and learning correct pronunciation will enhance our students' language proficiency and develop learning environment of the private university. Evaluation of the needs of both teachers and learners can be conducted regularly by the stakeholders of the private universities for making pronunciation, speaking, and overall English language learning valuable for our country.

From the findings of classroom observation, it is obvious that in our tertiary level education we are trying to achieve our objectives of developing students' awareness about pronunciation and enhancing students' speaking with good pronunciation but students are not receiving enough time for learning pronunciation and like other language classes of our country pronunciation classes also have a tendency to become teachers-centered because teachers were busy with explaining phonetic rules and theories where learners were deprived of adequate chance to explore their problems with individual sounds. From the observation of phonetics classes, it seems that students were getting partial depiction of phonetics and phonology domain and teaching methods were not based on solving problems of students. In addition, teachers were following teaching content that provided students with common ideas but it was not influencing their speaking skills fully because many students were not completely aware of the implications of pronunciation teaching and their speaking skills.

As university teachers get four to six months to complete their assigned courses and for this reason, they were focusing on contents which were important for examinations and inside the classroom, therefore students' activities were based on books and handouts and learners were deprived of making practical sounds. It was also observed that sometimes students were smiling because they found standard pronunciation strange and different from their traditional ways of pronunciation. From the classroom observation it is logical to say that pronunciation teaching and learning are not providing enough effective scope for teachers and learners for accommodating pronunciation as practical skills because we have traditional methods of teaching pronunciation which should be improved to make pronunciation classes effective.

From the above discussion we can say that in tertiary-level English education pronunciation is not getting enough attention and for this reason, our students are struggling with proper pronunciation skills, and they realize the importance of pronunciation but they are not getting enough guidelines for pronunciation practice. One of our main focuses of this research is to find out learning pronunciation in the classroom and the development of students' speaking proficiency, and we find that students are learning more theory and they are not getting enough chances for practicing pronunciation practically and they are memorizing for passing courses. Therefore, effective pronunciation teaching is still required for developing students' pronunciation proficiency. Another purpose of this research was to find out the relationship between internet-based material and learners' motivation towards speaking, and from focus group discussion we found that our learners are trying to get help from online-based learning materials because many of our students are aware of the fact that pronunciation is important and they do not have proper pronunciation skill and if they can produce pronunciation properly it can change their speaking skill.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The teaching techniques of pronunciation along with speaking skills are necessary for Bangladeshi learners because they can motivate them to speak confidently. Students are usually coming from different backgrounds in English departments of our country so there is possibility of not receiving the opportunities of listening to standard pronunciation, so lectures in university classes often challenge them to understand advanced contents that they are required to process in order to achieve academic success. So students are highly challenged when teachers explain class contents in English and one of the main reasons for this situation is that they do not understand the pronunciation patterns of their teachers. Private university students need English speaking proficiency because almost all private universities are following the English language as the medium of instructions so understanding English is not an option for students.

Moreover, students are expected to communicate in English for classroom communication, presentation, and viva examinations where they need speaking skills with intelligible pronunciation. Sometimes students fail to understand the speaking of their classmates who have standard pronunciation skills. Furthermore, the learning styles of our learners are taking digitalized shapes as this generation belongs to the digitalized version of learning so online learning materials can be appropriate and feasible for the improvement of their learning habits and techniques. If students can acquire proper pronunciation skills from learning apps by following individualized learning with the implicit assistance of teachers then they can have the resultative motivation to practice pronunciation inside and outside the classroom because success in pronunciation learning has possibility of inspiring them to speak confidently.

This study aimed at finding the proper place of pronunciation in our academic setting and it has found many important factors for consideration in our pronunciation teaching and learning context. The findings reflected some of the common limitations of classroom practice regarding pronunciation. It is also important to note that pronunciation cannot be improved by doing theory courses only because practical practice is also mandatory. Moreover, in an advanced classroom setting teachers should encourage learners for improving their self-learning strategies regarding pronunciation and speaking. Furthermore, teachers need proper training for teaching pronunciation accurately because it was observed that teachers who had only theoretical knowledge about pronunciation are not very effective inside the classroom and inside the classroom teacher should show a serious attitude toward learning pronunciation.

As pronunciation teaching needs visual aid, classrooms should be well-equipped with advanced technological resources. University can offer language labs to practice pronunciation outside of classroom. As English is not our native language, students are not getting proper knowledge about pronunciation practice, and for this reason considering the needs of the students' pronunciation courses should get priority in the classroom. Bangladeshi private universities need more courses on phonetics and phonology and courses should make the connection with speaking proficiency. Even in pronunciation courses learners are not tested on their pronunciation proficiency and that is one of the main reasons for not getting sufficient attention from students. So pronunciation courses should include a direct test of pronunciation skills at the end of the course.

Proper technique and classroom approach can change teachers' experience in pronunciation classes and course design and procedure should take into account students' needs if we want to make our teaching successful. In addition, this research reveals that students are focusing on passing pronunciation courses rather than acquiring standard pronunciation. If we want to focus on communication then pronunciation skills cannot be avoided. A major reason for students' problems with pronunciation is that they are not encouraged at school and college level to practice pronunciation skills, if students get awareness that improving pronunciation skills will give them confidence to communicate more inside and outside of the classroom then they will take practicing pronunciation as an important part of their tertiary level education. As age is a factor for pronunciation learning and tertiary-level students have passed puberty, so regular practice cannot be avoided. When I collected data students came up with the idea that more pronunciation courses should be included in their course design.

Ensure students' participation in classroom interaction pronunciation can play an important role. Universities should provide necessary resources for students so that they can develop their own understanding of pronunciation. Resources should be made available in language labs so that learners pay attention to learning pronunciation. In our teaching context, we are emphasizing reading, writing, and grammar skill but performance in these areas does not confirm proficiency inside and outside of the classroom. There are so many students who realize that they have problems with their pronunciation and because of technological advancement they are exposed to different varieties of pronunciation and they can compare it with their pronunciation level. Learning pronunciation depends on learners' willingness to improve their skill of speaking so internet-based pronunciation material can help them outside of the classroom to improve their speaking skills. We can say that speaking is an important skill for communication and sometimes effective communication is impossible without correct pronunciation so it is really important to make our classroom pronunciation teaching effective through proper techniques and methods.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Students:

Dear Participants

I am Farah Diba Yasmin, Mphil researcher, department of English, university of Dhaka. I would like to know your pronunciation learning experiences. This questionnaire has 12 questions and it will take 10 minutes. Your responses will be used for research purposes. Thank you.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Practicing Standard English pronunciation is very important for tertiary level students of Bangladesh.					
Pronunciation is equally treated as grammar, reading and writing skills in the classroom.					
Students are not receiving satisfactory chance for learning pronunciation in the classroom.					
Student can speak in English with proper pronunciation inside the classroom.					
Students are conscious about their pronunciation learning from the beginning of their university courses.					
Pronunciation exercise inside the classroom develops speaking skill of students.					
Pronunciation errors are corrected by teachers inside the classroom.					
Pronunciation courses are enough for making students better speaker.					
If students get more activities on pronunciation in the classroom, it will inspire them to communicate more in English.					
Students Practice pronunciation by taking help from internet learning material.					
Pronunciation are better learned when students use online material for their individual problem.					

Students are motivated to improve speaking skill from online learning sites.					
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Appendix B

Questionnaire for Teachers:

Dear Participants

I am Farah Diba Yasmin, Mphil researcher, department of English, university of Dhaka. I would like to know your pronunciation teaching experiences. This questionnaire has 6 questions and it will take 5 minutes. Your responses will be used for research purposes. Thank you.

Name:

Designation:

Institution:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Effective pronunciation teaching is challenging in our academic setting.					
Students are getting sufficient courses for developing pronunciation skills.					
Classroom teaching is enough for successful pronunciation learning.					
Pronunciation teaching materials are not based on students' need and aptitude level.					
It is possible to provide feedback inside classroom while students' are making mistakes.					
Internet based materials can motivate learner to improve individual difficulty.					

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Students:

1. What are the difficulties you face regarding learning pronunciation?
2. Do you get sufficient materials from classes for practicing pronunciation?
3. Do you think learning pronunciation inside classroom has an effect on your speaking skill?
4. What type of activities help you to learn pronunciation?
5. Do you think internet based materials can help you to learn technique for pronunciation learning?



Appendix D

Interview Question for Teachers:

1. What syllabus changes can be made to improve teaching pronunciation inside classroom?
2. How does pronunciation change speaking skills?
3. What type of assessment can be incorporated to motivate learners inside classroom?
4. What are the benefits of internet based materials for individual skill development?



Appendix E

Questions for Focus Group Discussion:

1. What is your idea about standard pronunciation?
2. How will you describe your performance regarding pronunciation inside classroom?
3. How do you learn pronunciation inside and outside of classroom?
4. Why do you think students are passing pronunciation courses without learning proper pronunciation?
5. What type of websites do you find helpful for learning pronunciation?



Appendix F

Classroom Observation

Name:

Date:

Lesson/Module:

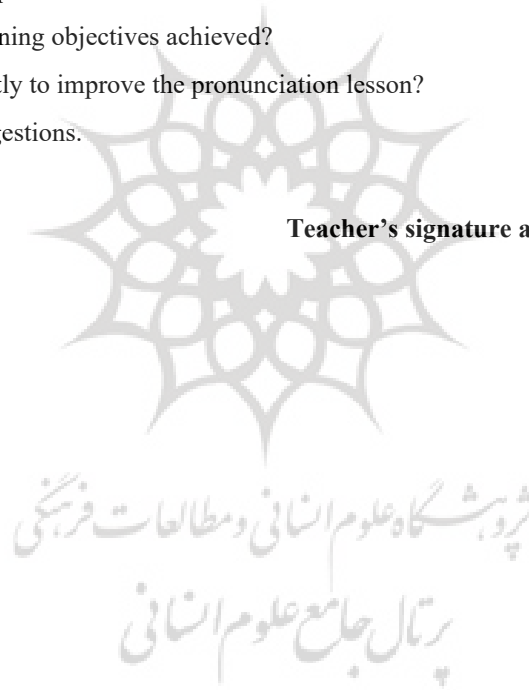
No of Students:

Observer:

1. What are your objectives for the pronunciation lesson?
2. What in your opinion went well in the pronunciation lesson? Why?
3. What in your opinion could be improved or developed? How might this be achieved?
4. How did you feel about the pronunciation lesson?
5. Were the pronunciation learning objectives achieved?
6. What would you do differently to improve the pronunciation lesson?
7. Any other comments or suggestions.

Observer's signature:

Teacher's signature and date:



Appendix G**Classroom Observation Sheet**

		Remarks
Aim and objectives		
Warm up activities		
Main activities		
Teachers' talk time		
Students' talk time		
Number of students		
Materials		
Students' activities		
Methods of teaching		
Practical pronunciation activities		
Communication between teachers and students		
Pronunciation difficulties of students		
Pronunciation skill of students		

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