EXPLORING THE PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION: INSIGHTS FROM TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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Abstract
This study investigates EFL teachers' and students' perspectives on pronunciation correction, instructional practices, and accent preferences in postgraduate contexts. Drawing on thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 10 experienced EFL instructors and descriptive statistics from a 13-item Likert-scale questionnaire administered to 200 students, the research highlights key divergences and alignments in teacher-student perceptions. Findings reveal that while teachers generally overestimated students' confidence in pronunciation skills, students reported varied levels of self-assurance, often linked to socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Both groups prioritized intelligibility over native-like accents, though students exhibited a strong preference for American English models, influenced by media exposure. Discrepancies emerged in feedback preferences: students favoured private correction to avoid cultural discomfort, whereas teachers assumed openness to public feedback. Additionally, students perceived greater instructional emphasis on pronunciation than teachers reported, suggesting misalignments in pedagogical priorities. The study underscores the need for culturally responsive, student-cantered approaches to pronunciation instruction that reconcile pedagogical objectives with learner preferences.

Keywords: EFL pronunciation correction, Teacher-student perceptions, Accent preferences, Corrective feedback practices, Cultural sensitivity in EFL

1. Introduction

Teaching pronunciation in English classrooms is not just about drills and rules, it is shaped by what teachers believe, what schools expect, and the subtle cultural currents that ripple through every interaction. In places like Pakistan, where English is not just a subject but a gateway to better opportunities, students demonstrate complex needs: they want to sound confident, navigate academic demands, and stay true to who they are. But here is the problem - while we know teachers' beliefs shape their classroom teaching, we rarely ask how those beliefs line up or clash with what students actually want or need.

A language teacher might assume their students feel sure about their pronunciation, only to find out some are quietly embarrassed by their accents. Or a student might need feedback but hesitate to ask for it publicly because of cultural norms and peer pressure. These gaps matter. Past research tends to focus either on teachers' perspectives or students' experiences. In Pakistan, where students come from wildly different backgrounds: some from elite schools, others from state institutions or government schools or colleges. These divides shape confidence and needs in ways teachers might not fully realise. Add cultural values like *haya* (the quiet dignity of modesty) or *gherat* (a deep sense of honour), and an English language teacher got a classroom dynamic that is rich, complicated, and often overlooked.

This study digs into those unspoken values and practices inside language classroom which often causes anxiety. What are teachers' beliefs about pronunciation, what is important, how to correct mistakes, how 'good' English sounds like, are directly related to what students truly

want? Why do some students shy away from feedback while others beg for more? By listening to both teachers and learners in Pakistan's postgraduate classrooms, this study attempted to address the following research question:

- What relationships exist between EFL teachers' cognitions and classroom practices and their students' beliefs and perceptions of their teachers' practices?

2. Literature Review

1. What is Teacher Cognition?

Teacher cognition refers to the complex web of beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, and decision-making processes that shape how educators approach their craft (Borg, 2003). It is the "hidden curriculum" of teaching - the internalized principles that guide everything from lesson planning to classroom interactions. It is more like a mental blueprint teachers use to navigate their roles. For instance, a teacher who believes language learning thrives on cultural immersion might prioritize authentic materials over textbooks.

Recent studies highlight that teacher cognition is not static; it evolves through experience, training, and reflection. Nguyen (2020) notes that teachers often recalibrate their beliefs when faced with classroom realities, such as student resistance to grammar drills. This dynamism underscores why understanding teacher cognition is vital. It reveals how educators reconcile theory with practice, often in unpredictable ways.

2.1 Teacher Cognition in EFL Contexts

Teacher cognition significantly influences teaching of pronunciation in EFL classroom, where teachers' beliefs about 'correctness' and 'accent neutrality' guide the instructional methods and strategies. Previous studies highlight the confusion between teachers' adherence to native-speaker norms and learners' future and professional needs (Jenkins, 2000; Levis, 2005).

In EFL settings, teacher cognition is deeply rooted and intertwined with sociocultural and institutional pressures. For example, in Pakistan, where English is considered mandatory for academic and professional success, teachers often grapple with conflicting priorities: dealing with exam-centric curricula while developing communicative competence of the students (Yuan & Lee, 2021).

Recent research in the field reflect the tension between teachers' idealized methods and their pragmatic choices. A study in Saudi Arabia found that while EFL instructors valued student-cantered activities, however they are restricted to lecture-based teaching due to time constraints and large class sizes (Alharbi, 2022). Similarly, in Iran, teachers' belief in the importance of pronunciation hardly coincide with limited training and resources, leading to inconsistent classroom practices (Karimi & Norouzi, 2021). These findings suggest that EFL teachers' cognitions are often manipulated and guided by systemic barriers, such as rigid curricula or lack of support.

It is also important to mention that teacher cognition in EFL contexts is also shaped by native-speakerism: the privileging of Western linguistic norms. Many teachers internalize the notion that correct pronunciation aligns with British or American accents, sidelining local varieties of English (Jenkins, 2000; Sifakis, 2019). This bias can marginalize students' linguistic identities, a concern raised by scholars advocating for *Global Englishes* pedagogy (Rose et al., 2021).

2.2 Student Perceptions and Pronunciation Goals

Students' beliefs about pronunciation are shaped by factors such as future career trajectories,

identity negotiation, and exposure to global English varieties (Derwing & Munro, 2015). In multilingual settings like Pakistan, learners may prioritize intelligibility over accent mimicry, yet institutional curricula often prioritize standardized norms.

Students' beliefs about pronunciation are far from monolithic; they reflect a blend of personal aspirations, cultural identity, and pragmatic needs. While earlier research emphasized students' desire for "accent reduction" (Derwing & Munro, 2015), recent studies reveal a paradigm shift. Learners increasingly prioritize intelligibility, being understood in global contexts, over mimicking native speakers (Levis, 2018). For instance, Vietnamese students in a 2023 study viewed American accents as "useful" but resisted abandoning their Vietnamese intonation, which they tied to cultural pride (Tran & Pham, 2023).

However, societal and institutional pressures still loom large. In Pakistan, postgraduate students often associate "good" pronunciation with career mobility, leading them to favour American English models (Ahmed & Mansoor, 2022). Yet, this preference coexists with frustration over teaching methods. As one student lamented, *"My teacher corrects my accent publicly, but I just want to speak clearly, not sound like a Hollywood actor"* (cited in Riaz et al., 2021, p. 34). Such sentiments highlight a disconnect between teacher practices and learner goals.

Notably, students also crave agency in their learning. A survey in Turkish EFL learners found that 78% wanted more collaborative feedback (e.g., group corrections) rather than teacher-dominated instruction (Demir & Şahin, 2022). This aligns with calls for humanistic approaches that honour learners' voices and reduce anxiety (Dörnyei, 2020).

3. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to explore perspectives on pronunciation correction in EFL instruction, combining qualitative insights from English language instructors with quantitative feedback from learners, ensuring a holistic understanding of instructional practices and student experiences.

3.1 Participants

The study engaged two distinct groups to capture a comprehensive perspective. First, 10 EFL instructors from postgraduate institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were purposively selected based on their expertise, each possessing a minimum of five years of teaching experience. For, anonymity, pseudo names were used as agreed in the consent form. This criterion ensured participants had sufficient familiarity with pronunciation challenges and pedagogical strategies.

Second, 200 undergraduate students were recruited from English Department with 20 students per participating instructor. The cohort included learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds to reflect the multicultural nature of postgraduate classrooms. This sampling strategy aimed to identify commonalities and variations in student preferences, ensuring findings were not limited to a single language group or academic field. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was maintained to encourage honest responses.

3.2 Instruments

Data collection relied on two complementary tools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, featuring open-ended questions that explored their beliefs about corrective feedback, the effectiveness of teaching materials, and their objectives regarding student accents. The flexible format allowed instructors to elaborate on their first hand

experiences, producing rich, narrative-driven data. Interviews lasted 30–45 minutes and were audio-recorded with consent.

A 13-item Likert-scale questionnaire was administered to students, designed to quantify their preferences for correction methods (e.g., immediate vs. delayed feedback), ideal accent models (e.g., native-like vs. intelligibility-focused), and perceived gaps in instruction. The survey was piloted with a small student group to refine clarity and validity. Closed-ended questions enabled efficient analysis of trends, while an optional open-response section captured additional insights.

3.3 Analysis

Interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and contradictions. This involved iterative coding and theme generation. To enhance reliability, emerging themes were reviewed by a second researcher, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

Questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics i.e., percentages to summarize student attitudes. Qualitative open-response entries were thematically categorized to supplement quantitative findings, ensuring a layered interpretation of results.

4. Data Analysis
### EFL Teachers Cognition about Learners

Language learners is the second half of the language classroom without whom there will be no teaching and learning. The role of learners is so crucial that although this study is mainly focused on teachers' cognition, yet it will incomplete with half picture until learners' voices are heard and recorded about pronunciation teaching and learning. For this purpose, first teachers' cognition about learners have been recorded. In second phase their students' beliefs were elicited using a questionnaire. After getting that from both teachers and learners, the information was compared to record the possible similarities and differences in teachers' and learners' beliefs about their teachers' practices.

Learners' confidence

When the EFL teachers were asked about the confidence they believed their students had regarding English pronunciation skills, almost all of them seemed to believe that their students were confident about their pronunciation skills. Abrar said he was quite satisfied with his students' pronunciation skills after talking to them in class. Similarly, Faiza also felt that her students were confident about their pronunciation skills. As indicated by the table (01) most students opted strongly agree, agree or may be in response to the statement 'I am confident about my pronunciation skills'. However, a considerable number of students chose to disagree in Tahir's class and some even chose strongly disagree in Alamgir and Asra class. The results are in line with the findings of Kang (2010) where he concluded that a large number of ESL students in USA and New Zealand reported to have low confidence about their pronunciation skills. Another reason for students' low confidence might be their schooling; most of them had their secondary education from state-run schools where, due to a number of reasons, English language teaching is on ventilator struggling to keep itself alive. On the other hand, students with public school (schools for elite class) background feel confident in English language skills including pronunciation giving them edge over students from state-run schools at postgraduate level.

Table. 01. I am confident about my English pronunciation skills
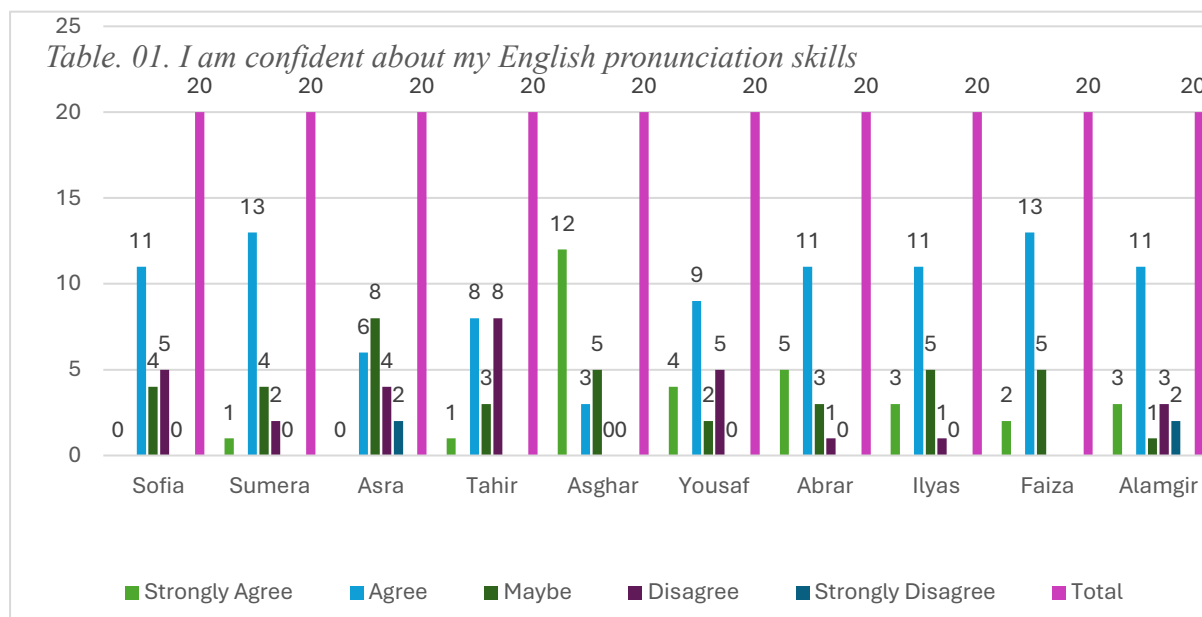
Similarly, for 'I want to improve my pronunciation', seven teachers said that their students were eager to improve their pronunciation. However, Sumera Yousaf and Tahir were not so sure about some of their students. Sumera commented "I don't say all but some of my students are more interested in securing good grades, they are less interested in pronunciation thing". Yousaf on the other hand thought that majority of students were not serious about pronunciation learning as it was not tested on exam perhaps". Unlike Sumera and Yousaf, Tahir considered 'lack of awareness' to be the root cause of their not taking interest in improving pronunciation. The lack of awareness is normally noted in students from remote areas with limited facilities and exposure to English language. Table (02) revealed that students were interested in improving their pronunciation because most of them chose either strongly agree or agree except a few who were not sure choosing Maybe. The results can be compared to Kang (2010) who found in their study that students wanted to improve their pronunciation. The findings further showed that cognition of Sumera's, Yousaf's and Tahir's students was fairly different from their teachers.

Table 02. I want to improve my pronunciation skills in English
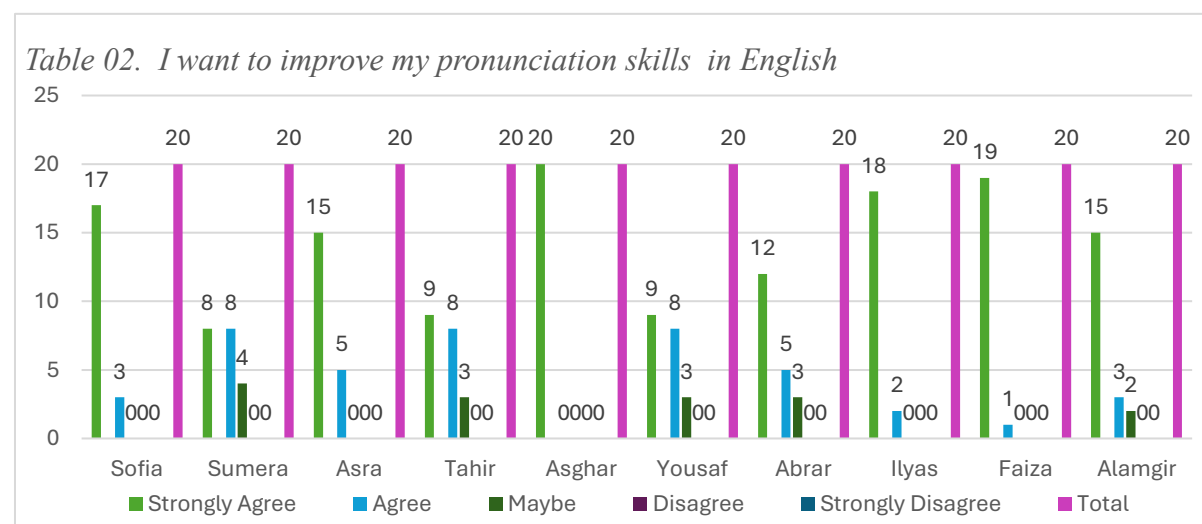
Pronunciation Instruction and correction/feedback

In response to a question about student's desire that their teacher should teach them pronunciation, all EFL teachers responded in 'yes'. Alamgir enthusiastically commented:

> *What to talk about inside the class, some of my students even want to talk about pronunciation when they are with me in the café or even on the bus. I don't mind receiving them at my flat on weekends if they insist, of course male students. Sometimes if I cover a class for my colleague, they want me talk about pronunciation and I give them tips for improving their pronunciation. Even in literature or communication skills classes, students want me to teach them as much pronunciation as possible, but I can't because I need to cover course content and other thing more important than teaching pronunciation, you know well what I mean (a smile 😊). But my students love to teach them pronunciation.*

Similarly, Abrar said that new generation wanted to use near native pronunciation, they wanted me to teach them. Asghar connected that to prestige 'when you speak in accent, people respect you and listen to you and perhaps that is the reason that students wanted me to teach them pronunciation'. Table (03) showed that all students wanted their teachers to teach them pronunciation with a few who chose to disagree, and some seemed to be unsure about themselves whether they wanted to or not. These students might be more interested in scoring good grades exam than learning pronunciation. As mentioned before, pronunciation is not tested on exam, it therefore, is taken, by some, as waste of time and hence did not want their teachers to teach the pronunciation. However, the overall impression of students' responses revealed that they wanted their teachers to teach them pronunciation confirming the findings of (Couper, 2003; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002) study where they concluded that students wanted their teacher to teach them pronunciation.

*Table 03. I want my teacher to teach pronunciation*
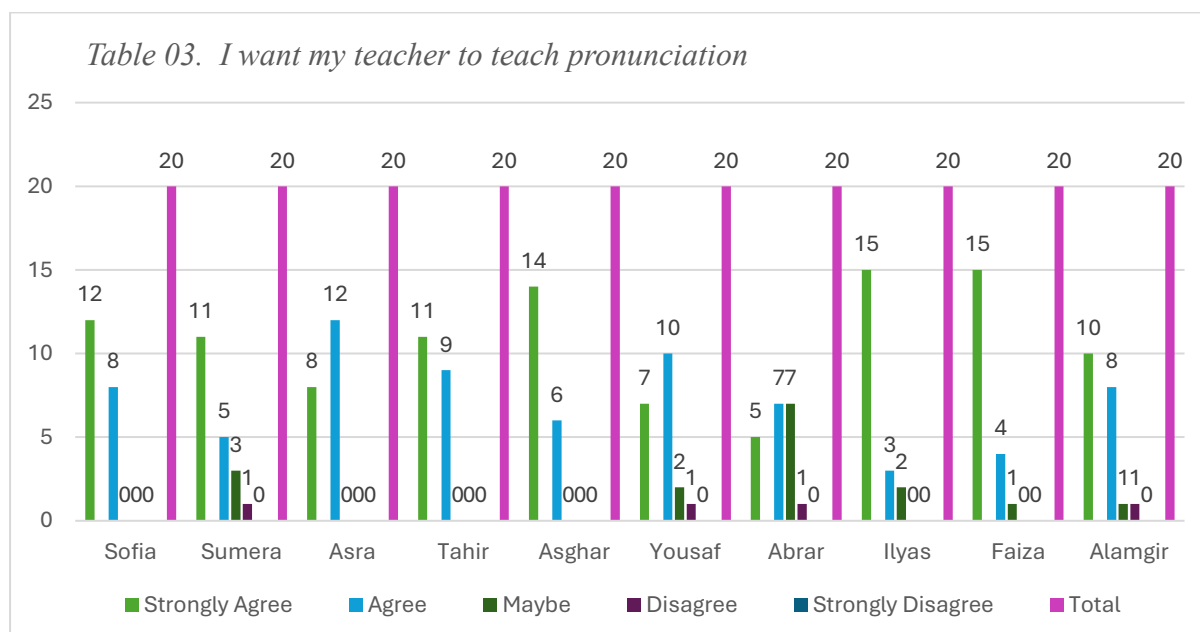
When teachers were asked about if their students liked to correct their pronunciation, everyone responded in yes with varying degree of excitement and confidence. Tahir continued in as follows:

The current generation of students is more aware and conscious than ours. They know the importance of spoken English with good pronunciation. When I correct them, they are happy, and they ask for more corrections. Some of them are keen enough that they write the corrections and new words in their smart phone. Sometimes, my students come to me showing me a word with more than one pronunciation. I explain to them why it is so. I have seen my students they are enthusiastic about pronunciation and get excited when I correct them

Similarly, Sophia, Asghar and Ilyas and others also gave a short description of their students' willingness for being corrected. When the same question was asked from students, as indicated in table (04), all of them chose to strongly-agree or agree except a few who chose Maybe. Quite a few encircled disagree or strongly disagree. These were probably again those students who were grades aspirants showing less interest in either non-graded contents of language or speaking language with an accent. This study and other study (Madden & Moore, 1997) found that majority of students wanted their teachers to correct their pronunciation.

Table 04. I want my teacher to correct my pronunciation
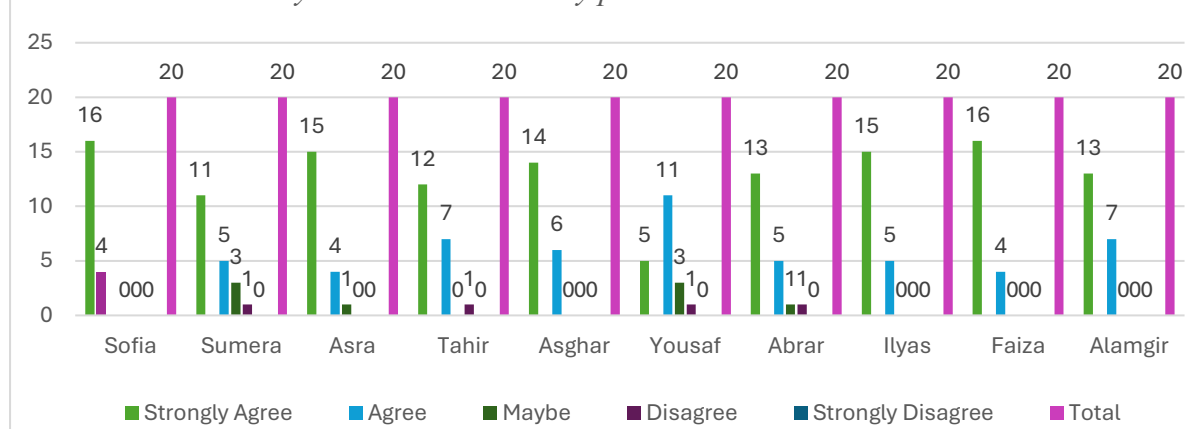
In interviews with EFL teachers, when asked about whether students like to be corrected in front of class? They did not seem to say yes, their response was rather careful. It was a mix of yes and no. It was perhaps the setting they were teaching in, a rigid Pashtoon culture where students are normally shy and feel embarrassed in front of their class fellows. Therefore, a general reply was like some students like that others avoid being corrected inside classroom, especially female students. For students' response as shown in table (05), majority though chose to strongly-agree or agree, a considerable number of students also chose to disagree and disagree. Similarly, a small number also chose Maybe as they were unsure about themselves. Students with choosing either strongly-disagree or disagree are presumed to be mostly female because Pashtoon girls, due to culture, feel more embarrassed than male students.

Tabe 05. I like it when my teacher corrects my pronunciation in front of the class
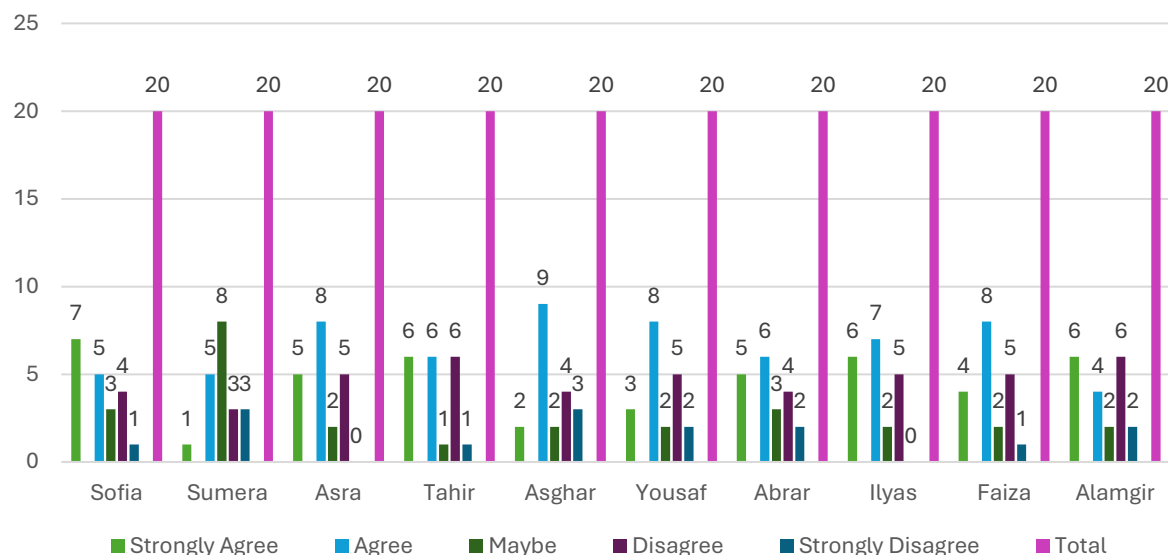
In the same line, when teachers were asked if students want them to correct them privately, again a mixed response was recorded from different teachers. Alamgir thought that he normally did not get such request from students to correct their pronunciation in private. On the other hand, Asghar, Asra and Sumera confessed that some students, mostly females, requested them to provided them feedback in private. On students' questionnaire, as indicated in table (06) majority chose to strongly-agree and agree. However, almost equal number of students chose to disagree or strongly disagree which means that a considerable number of students wanted to be corrected in private which was confirmed in certain interviews with teachers. A considerable number of students also chose to Maybe. They might be male and female students with Pashtoon cultural mind-set who were uncertain about what they wanted – sandwiched between cultural values and academic needs.

*Table 06. I like it when my teacher corrects my pronunciation privately*
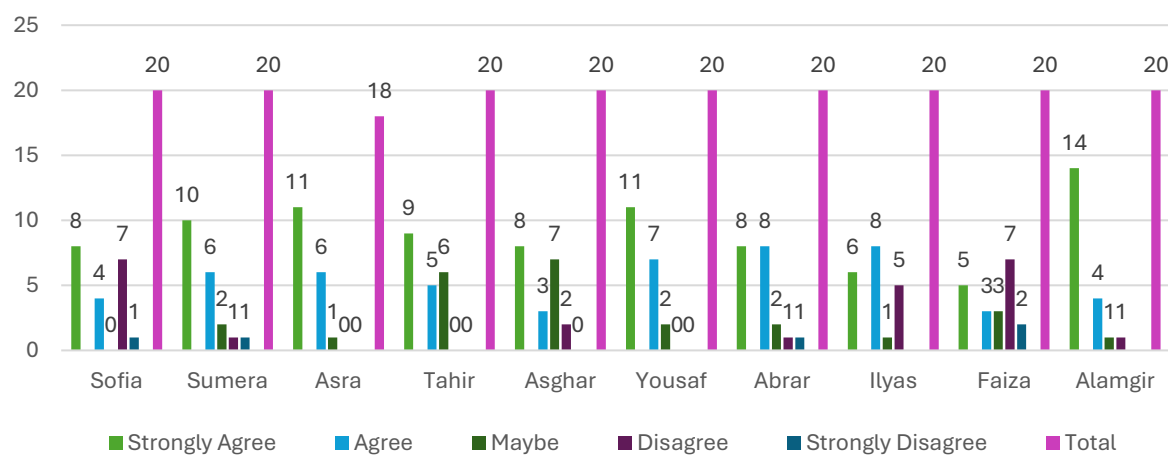
When asked how your students would like if they were to be corrected as a group in class. Teachers came up with different responses. For example, Abrar said:

> *It depends on the nature of group. If the consists of male or female students, I think students usually don't have any problem to be corrected. But if it is a mix group, they will perhaps show reservation because if female feel shy in front of male class fellows, male equally feel embarrassed before female. But the nature of the embarrassment is different, for female is it is more of the matter of 'haya' while male take it as a matter of 'gherat'.*

For Alamgir, students are fine with correcting them whether in group, private or classroom. On the other hand, Faiza thought that if they feel shy or embarrassed in front of class, they would also feel the same in groups. Such students liked to be corrected in private. For the same question, as shown in table (07), majority of students chose to strongly-agree or agree while a handful of them chose to other options such as Maybe, disagree and strongly-disagree. considering the Pashtoon culture, EFL teachers manage to form two types of groups: male and female. This was the reason that majority appeared to agree with the statement as they perhaps feel comfortable with their fellows of the same gender than the opposite one.


Table 07. I like it when my teacher corrects our pronunciation as a group in class.
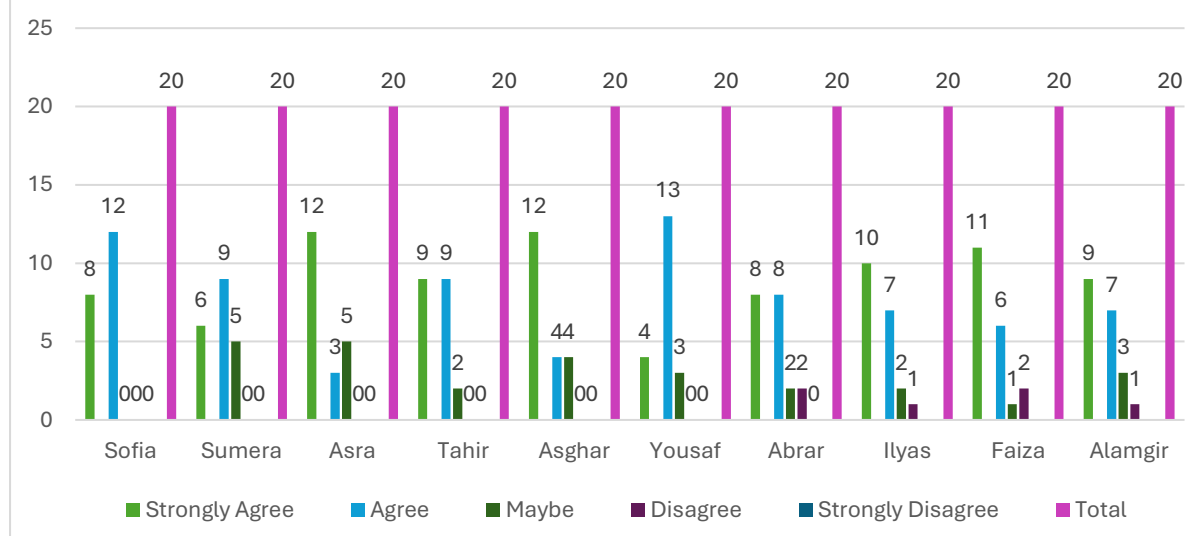
Material/books used for pronunciation teaching

When asked about material/books whether it was helpful in improving pronunciation, Teachers response was diverse: some were satisfied with the material/books recommended by HEC, others showed reservations. Some teachers claimed to use books or material other than recommended by the HEC. When students were asked the same question, their response reflected their teachers views regarding the query. As indicated in table (08), majority of students chose strongly- agree and agree on side, a range of students found uncertain choosing May be. Similarly, a considerable number of students also chose to disagree and strongly-disagree.

*Table 08. The text books/material is helpful in improving my English pronunciation.*
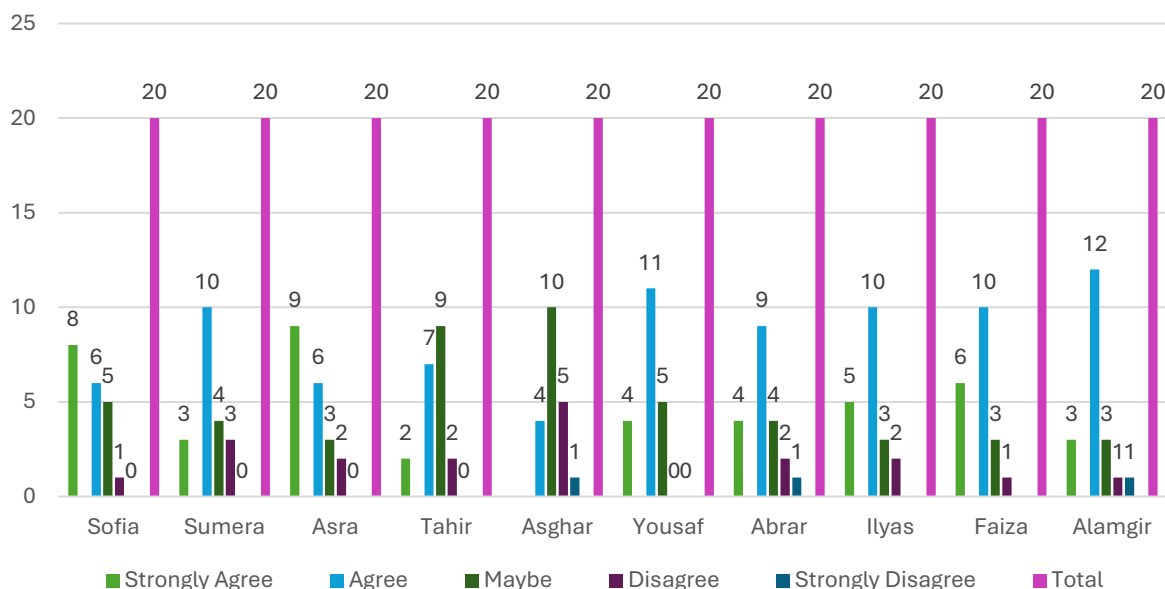
Pronunciation Model

When asked '*Do your students want to listen to American English speech?*' Majority of teachers said that their students wanted to listen to American speech. Tahir explained :

> *English is not first language of people in our country. The only means students have is media and internet. I think no need to debate on which language is used on mainstream and social – of course American. Students grew up listening to American speech and they like that. They also know that it is the language of the most successful people on earth. If they want to succeed in life, they should speak like them. That's why my student prefer to listen to American English speech.*

On the other hand, Alamgir and Yousaf claimed that a number of their students prefer other English speeches than American. However, they also added that they as a teacher favoured British English speech and the same was suggested to students. When students were inquired the statement *'I want to listen to American English speech'* table (09), clearly shows that many students chose to strongly-agree and agree. However, a notable number also disagreed with the statement. At the same time, students who were unsure or who perhaps wanted to listen to multiple Englishes speech chose to Maybe. Another reason might be the lack of awareness among students regarding different English speeches or dialects. Students from state-run schools would be a good example to quote where students only learnt that English is language without having a knowledge of different dialects and accents English language has, where each one of them is spoken and the difference among them.

Table 09. I want to listen to American English speech
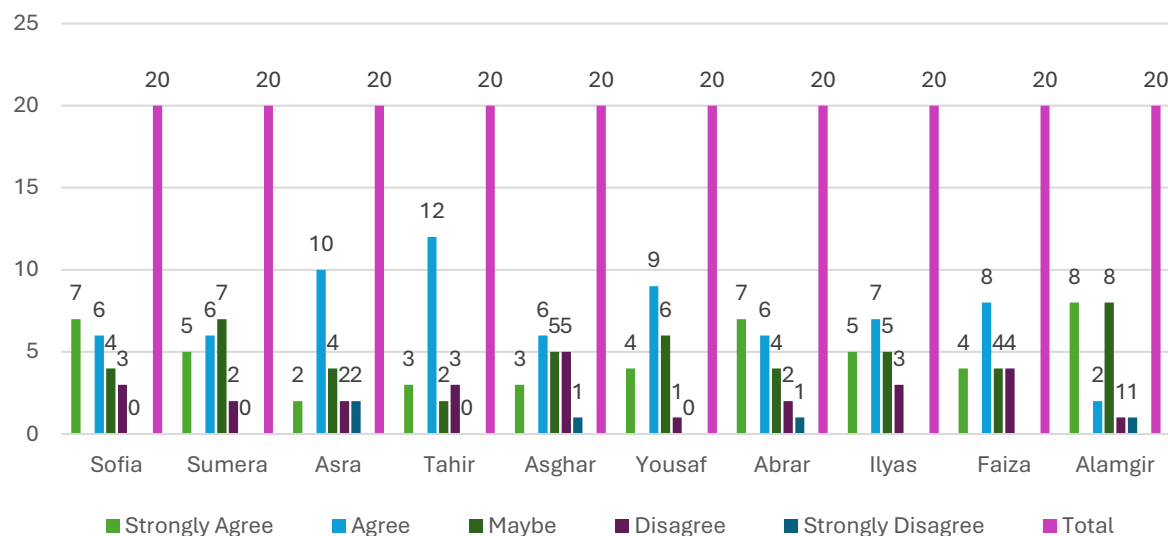
When asked what other English language speeches your students wanted to expose to? Those who did not suggest American, expected their students to listen to British English speech. Alamgir and Yousaf believed that their students wanted to listen to British speech. Rest of the teachers either suggested American or both. There were responses when teachers said that it depends on students. When students were asked the same questions, as indicated in table (10), a large number of students chose to strongly-agree or agree. However, almost equal number chose to disagree, strongly disagree or maybe. Students who disagreed were probably those students who wanted to listen to American speech. Similarly, those who were uncertain about their choice went for Maybe. Although, the statement included other English speeches such Australian, Canadian and other varieties of English, the general impression remained that students wanted British speech. It is because of certain historical and political facts and reasons. However, in terms of handy access to the language material and use in mainstream and social media – American dialect/accent is leading the race.

Table 10. I want to listen to British, Australian, Canadian or other native-English speech
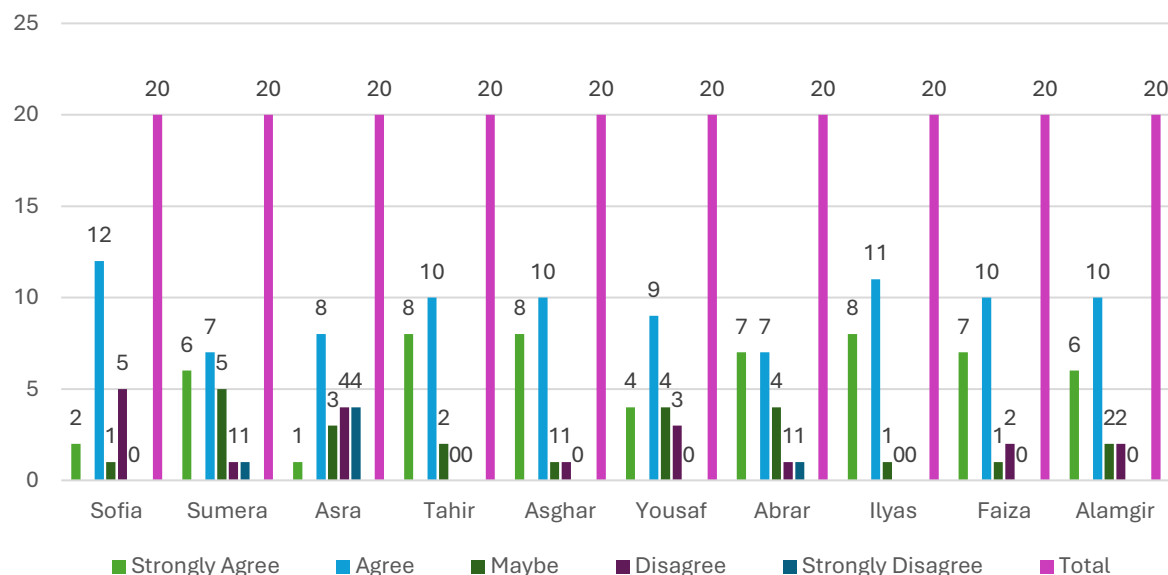
When asked what type of accent your student wanted to use in their speech. Majority of them replied that due to certain political reasons and use of American English on different medias especially TV channels and social media, students prefer to model their speech on American model. However, unlike others, Alamgir and Yousaf claimed that their students hardly wanted to use American accent, they like to use British accent. However, when if students' responses are analysed, as table (11) shows, half of Tahir's and Yousaf's students chose to strongly-agree and agree when asked whether they liked to use American accent. It is again the impact of media; especially social media where American accent is used all over the social media. Similarly, the young generation is fond of watching Hollywood movies getting a huge input from American English every day. Similarly, majority of students chose to strongly-agree and agree. Students who chose the opposite are assumed to like British accent. It is interesting to note that a notable number of students chose to Maybe. They were either uncertain or did not want to use any of them.

Table 11. I want to speak English with an American accent
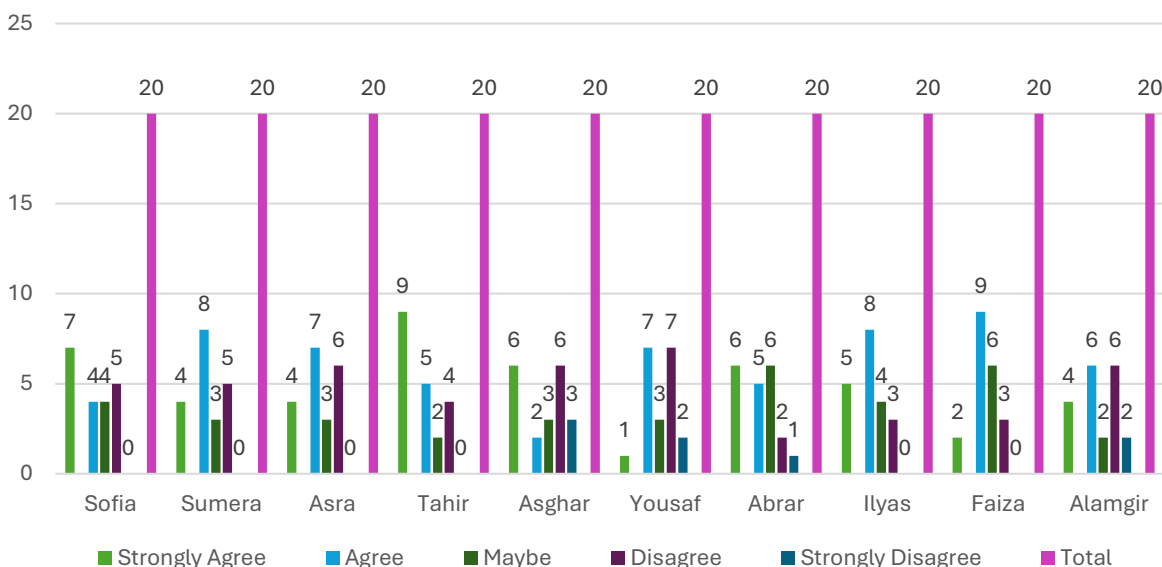
Regarding speaking English with native (L1) accent, all teachers unanimously declared that hardly any students would like to 'willingly' speak English with their native accent. Faiza expressed:

> It is not our age, it is the age of information technology, competition and the age when everyone is chanting and believing on 'survival for the fittest'. And take my words, students have realised that … they know that for survival and success they need to speak like native speakers. So, I don't think any of them would go for native (L1) accent unless they fail to do so. In Pakistan two accents are very famous and are used out there … American and British. Though new generation like American accent very much due to many reasons…reasons that we all know well.

Asghar and Tahir seconded Faiza's views saying that students strived hard to shape their accent on near native model and mocked at those students who used local accent. When the same question was asked from students, as indicated in table (12), a huge number chose to strongly-disagree and disagree. Quite a few chose to agree with the statement showing they were not certain about what they wanted. Students who agreed with statement or who were uncertain about themselves might felt themselves incompetent to shape their speech on native model. Again, it is suggested that they were the ones with state-run schools' background and who failed to develop their English language competency during their school/college days. However, there are cases, where students from state-run school showed an exceptional performance surpassing the students from public schools, although happened rarely.

Table 12. I want to speak English with my native language accent
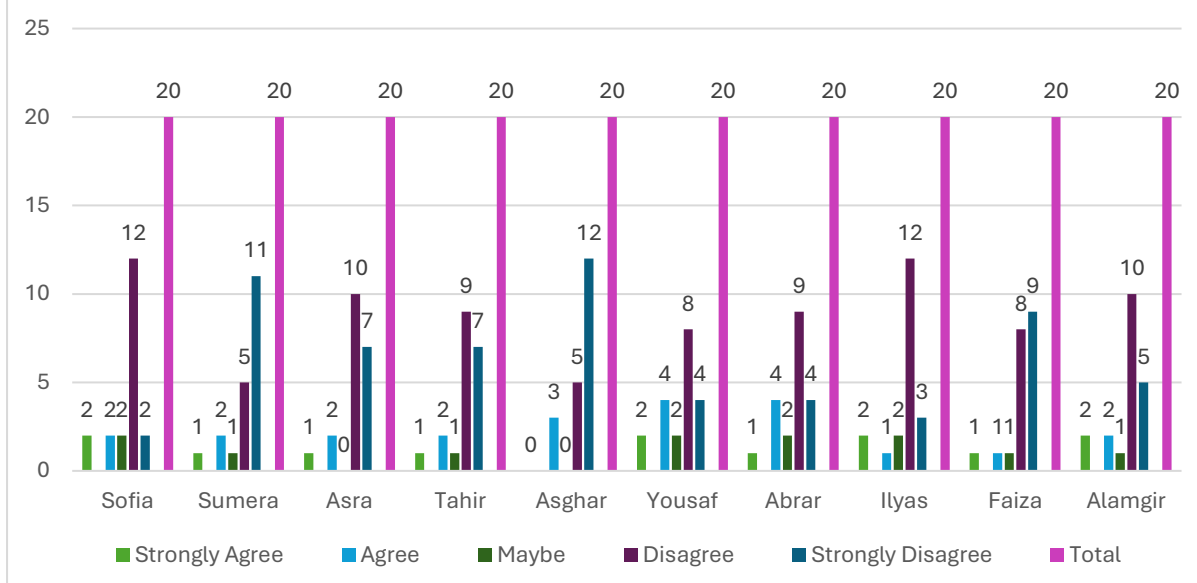
On the other hand, when students were asked the same question, their responses, shown in table (13), were quite different from their teachers. For Sophia, 11 students said 25%, five 50% and four said less than 25% their teachers spent on teaching pronunciation. Similarly, 17 of Sumera students opted 25 % and three of them said she spent 50 % of class time teaching pronunciation. For Asra, 11 students said she spent 25 % time while nine thought 50% class time their teacher spent on teaching pronunciation. For Tahir, 13 students ticked 25%, six 50% and one said 75%, Asghar's 12 students said he spent less than 25%, six said 25% and only two of them said that their teacher spent 50% of class time on teaching pronunciation. Similarly, for Yousaf, eight students said 25%, nine opted 50%, one 75% while two said less than 25% their teacher allotted for teaching pronunciation. In the same line, Abrar students were also found with quite different responses as nine students thought he spent 25% of class time on teaching pronunciation, seven opted 50% and four of them said less than 25%. For Ilyas, 11 students said 25%, six opted 50% and three of them thought their teacher spent less than 25% of class time on teaching pronunciation. Faiza's students' responses are no different from others, 11 of her students were of the view that she spent 25% of class time on teaching pronunciation, five opted 50% and four opted for less than 25% time. Similarly, nine of Alamgir's students recorded that their teacher spent 25% of class time on teaching pronunciation, seven of the other hand said 50% while four opted for less than 25%. Looking at both figures, one can note a huge difference between the views of teachers and students about the percentage of class time spent on pronunciation teaching. It might be because of the difference in level of understanding of the terms and pronunciation and pronunciation teaching. Teacher, being practitioner, exactly know when and where they start and stop teaching pronunciation. On the other hand, for students, anything that involve sounds, stress and teacher pronunciation correction during general discussion is pronunciation teaching. sometimes, even during a talk, in classroom, when a teacher sound like native, intentionally or internationally, students may take that for pronunciation teaching. This might be the reason(s) that students opted for higher percentage of time their teachers spent on teaching pronunciation.

Table 13. Time (percentage) your teacher spend on pronunciation in your class.
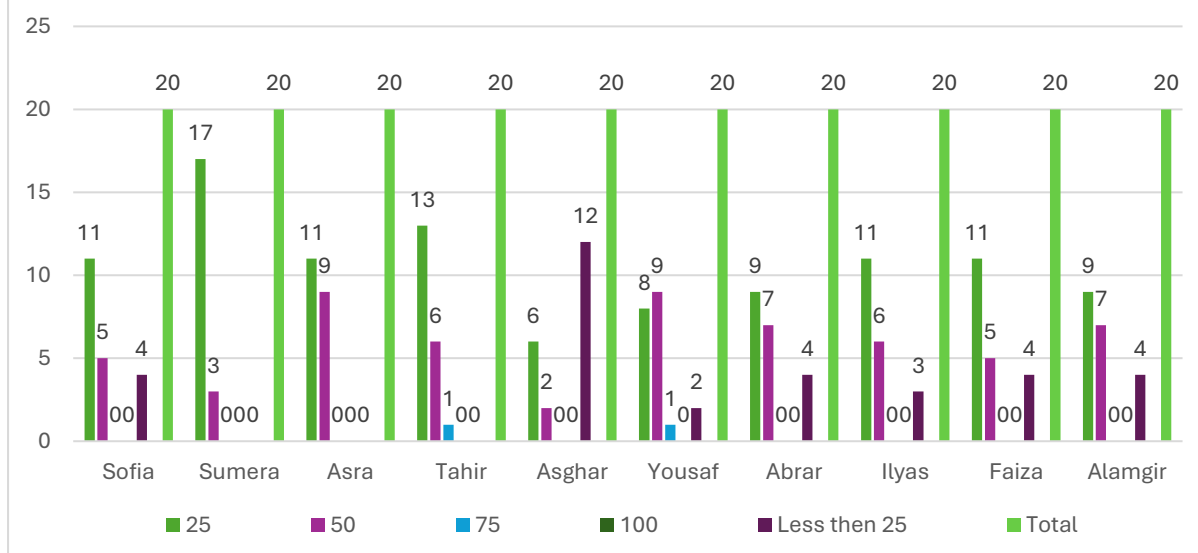
5. Discussion

The study highlights the tensions between teacher cognition and student expectations in EFL pronunciation instruction. While instructors perceived students as largely confident, student responses revealed notable insecurity, particularly among those from state-run schools with limited prior English exposure. This aligns with Kang's (2010) findings, where socioeconomic disparities impacted learners' self-efficacy. EFL teachers' expectations based on students' enthusiasm about the improvement of pronunciation were met. However, many grade-oriented students showed little interest in it. Hence these findings were partially proven in line with finding by Sumera and Yousaf. This phenomenon can be described as having a pragmatic effect in the context of general systemic issues, where oral proficiency is often disregarded in high-stakes exams, making pronunciation a relatively unimportant component.

Cultural influences significantly shaped students' feedback preferences. Their reluctance toward public correction, particularly among Pashtun female students, highlighted the enduring role of *haya* (modesty) and *gherat* (honour) in classroom interactions. While teachers recognized this hesitation and attempted to address it through strategies like gender-segregated group corrections, these measures only partially eased students' discomfort. This disconnect underscores a broader challenge: despite instructors' adaptive efforts, students nuanced emotional and cultural needs may require more personalized approaches.

The results of the accent preferences survey also reflected the impact of the globalization trend. Several students showed a strong preference for American English because they are exposed to this accent in various media and consider the choice of this accent a part of their social status. Moreover, some teachers insisted on the use of British English accent. This is an example of in-school aspirations, similar to those highlighted by Alamgir and Yousaf. However, the fact that some answers were Maybe suggests that students also realize that English belongs to the group of pluricentric languages. This conclusion could also be applied while analysing the question concerning the emphasis on pronunciation in the curriculum. Indeed, many students are convinced that special attention is paid to pronunciation, although teachers disagree. It can

be said that probably, students are confusing systematic instruction with teacher's spontaneous corrections, which also often occur while discussing various topics and concepts.

6. Conclusion

This study underscores the complex interplay of cultural, socioeconomic, and pedagogical factors in EFL pronunciation instruction. Key takeaways include: (1) Teachers must balance confidence-building strategies with sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds, particularly for learners from under-resourced schools; (2) Feedback practices should prioritize student comfort, offering private alternatives in culturally rigid settings; (3) Curricula should integrate diverse English models to reflect global realities while addressing media-driven preferences; and (4) Transparent dialogue about instructional priorities can bridge perceptual gaps between teachers and learners.

Future research could explore longitudinal impacts of tailored feedback methods or interventions enhancing metacognitive awareness of accent diversity. By cantering student voices and contextual realities, EFL pedagogy can evolve to foster both linguistic competence and learner agency in multilingual landscapes.

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