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BELIEF AND PRACTICE IN THE TEACHING OF PRONUNCIATION IN
THE IRAQI EFL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, great interest has been significantly given in pronunciation teaching. More studies have examined the cognitions (knowledge and beliefs) of the second language (L2) teachers in the EFL context. However, despite these emphases that have been put on the role of pronunciation in teaching, this area still struggles to obtain the attention it deserves in the EFL classrooms.

The purpose of the present study, therefore, is to seek the beliefs of a group of 50 EFL English teachers at the secondary school level in Iraq about crucial aspects of pronunciation teaching and the functional relationship that exists between their beliefs and the real pedagogical practices in EFL context. The study employed a questionnaire containing two tables. These tables include statements reflecting teachers' beliefs and perspectives concerning pronunciation teaching to gain a full comprehension of teachers' views. Overall, the findings reveal that EFL teachers in the Iraqi EFL context consider pronunciation teaching essential to the English language teachers. However, the teachers' classroom practices tended to be traditional: their priorities in teaching were to deal with textbook activities like word-level features. Besides, most of the participants claimed to be inconvenient through teaching pronunciation.

INTRODUCTION

The last decades have seen a blast of research on language teacher cognition. It has become an independent research area after years of neglecting that followed the descend of audio lingual. Studies particularly concentrate on teachers' thinking, belief, and performance in their daily practices (Borg 2015). Although the field of the second language (L2) pronunciation has been an area of interest from academia, there is still a low level of investigation in the area of detecting the problematic points on the pronunciation features. Numerous works have revealed that pronunciation instruction can play a vital and influential role in improving learners' English speech as a second language (ESL) (e.g. Couper, 2003, 2006; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1997). Furthermore, Levis (2005) argues that perfect pronunciation should be a significant component of the communicative competence of learners.

In a similar vein, the availability of pronunciation teaching resources has shown a great increase in the last few years including pronunciation textbooks, teachers' manuals, computer software, internet resources, and mobile apps. However, a few education courses on how to teach L2 pronunciation are offered to teachers. In fact, several researchers have pointed out that a large number of L2 teachers have reported a lack in pronunciation training (Breitkreutz, Derwing & Rossiter, 2001; Derwing, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Murphy, 1997) and that teachers might be unwilling to teach pronunciation skill because of that shortage in both pronunciation pedagogy training and easy access to appropriate new materials (Macdonald, 2002).

Therefore, the present study attempts to explore Iraqi (EFL) English as a foreign language teachers' beliefs and practices related to pronunciation pedagogy. This research will not only raise the cognitions of language teachers to the existing knowledge in verbal communication, it will work out to reduce the gap between their beliefs and practices and shed light on the underlying pedagogical institutional factors.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Many studies have presented effective methods to teach pronunciation. However, it is still not recognized in many EFL (English as a foreign language) settings. Plus, on the theoretical side, less attention has been paid to investigate the actual teaching of pronunciation. According to Barrera Pardo (2004: p. 6) & Kanellou (2011: p.11) "pronunciation teaching has often been relegated to a subsidiary role of broader language performance skills such as speaking and listening". Likewise, it is found that little attention has been given to teachers' belief in the same field. Whereas some researchers like (Kagan, (1992) argues that the range of the professional growth of teachers could be measuring through belief. Thus, examining the actual practices in the pronunciation field based upon teachers' beliefs would give us a close comprehension of the issues surrounding pronunciation instructions.

To reach an in-depth understanding of teachers' applications in the classroom environment and its connected relation with what they believe in pronunciation

field. The present paper attempts to find out the strategies and methods of pronunciation teaching that are used by teachers in the Iraqi (EFL) context and any noticeable differences or gaps between teachers' beliefs and what they do inside EFL settings.

Aims of the study

This work focuses on the dilemmas faced by teachers concerning pronunciation in the Iraqi EFL context. It specifically aims to:

- 1- Identifying the potential causes that lie behind the problems of pronunciation in the Iraqi EFL learners.
- 2- Pinpointing any significant differences or gaps between teachers' belief (Knowledge and concepts) from the phonological perspective and the real practices that are used by them in the classroom about pronunciation teaching in the Iraqi EFL (English as a foreign language) context.
- 3- Finding out the ways and methods that assist to raise Iraqi teachers' awareness of pronunciation materials, new strategies and approaches of teaching pronunciation incorporate with the theoretical aspects.

For better clarity, the research questions addressed in this paper will guide the reader to best understanding and shed light on this issue;

- 1- What beliefs and cognitions do Iraqi EFL teachers hold about pronunciation teaching approaches?
- 2- How are these beliefs (knowledge and cognitions) concerning the pronunciation teaching reflected in their actual classroom practices?
- 3- Is there any perceived difference or gap and to what extent between teachers' beliefs in regard to the theoretical features of pronunciation teaching and what practitioners do inside the classroom? in terms of pronunciation actual practices?

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Some researchers have provided insight into teachers' beliefs and knowledge regarding pronunciation teaching and how these beliefs have been reflected in their classroom practice. However, despite the great efforts seen in this field, it still needs more attention to be paid. Porter (1999), confirmed that little attention has been given to the area of teaching second language pronunciation whether in materials design or pedagogical theory. The study of teacher's beliefs and practice on pronunciation teaching in the Iraqi context is also rare. Therefore, this paper attempts to show that pronunciation teaching is as important as teaching other language skills by defining the vital role that teachers play in shaping teachers' actual practices of pronunciation.

Thus, the study will contribute to this field by investigating Iraqi English teachers' beliefs and practices of different aspects of pronunciation and exploring their EFL- based approaches to teaching pronunciation in the classroom. The research will reveal that EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers in the Iraqi EFL context consider pronunciation teaching is essential to overall English proficiency. Furthermore, this study will provide useful

information to program developers, curriculum material designers, and even teacher training courses.

Finally, it is hoped that the findings of the present study will be useful by enhancing teachers' awareness of pronunciation teaching in EFL Iraqi context in line with their goal of learning the English Language. Further, the size of the importance must be known when assessing pronunciation. In a similar vein, investigating the actual practices of English pronunciation teachers will likely assist teachers in making decisions to concentrate on specific aspects of pronunciation teaching methods.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Basically, the limitation of the study is that it recruits a sample of 50 Iraqi EFL teachers. Large samples are often difficult to collect. Most of the participants were experienced, qualified teachers working at public schools and private language schools in the middle of Iraq. This sample of teachers does not represent all English teachers in the country, particularly those who work in public schools with poor working conditions, fewer training opportunities, and some of them even have limited proficiency or experience in English language teaching. The study is also limited to teachers' beliefs (cognitions and knowledge) and their observed practices i.e. teachers' performance inside classes in the EFL context, in particular at the preparatory stage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation teaching

Although pronunciation teaching has been an area of great interest in terms of linguistics studies. There is a little level of investigation in this field. According to Hughes (2006: p.22), "there is no doubt that pronunciation plays second best to other aspects of language teaching in the classroom".

This is consequently the point the current work aims to illustrate. Therefore, it is important to discuss the former viewpoints that have been placed to reach the appropriate solution that help to close the gaps in teaching pronunciation. The search on the related study will consider in what ways and how far the relevant literature has addressed the three research questions of this study.

A key source is available on pronunciation teaching that is relevant to the present study is a survey conducted by Fraser (2000), the work produced a significant finding; He stated that the area of pronunciation constituted to take a great concern not only from learners but also for teachers. However, unfortunately, despite this compatibility between teachers and learners on the value of pronunciation instruction, this significance was not reflected in the teachers' practices and/or content of the different courses/ programs.

In many EFL contexts, English language teachers are often faced with different contextual restrictions, such as, an exam- strategies culture, a restricted school text book, and limited Colleagues cooperation and institutional support (Zheng and Borg 2014). That might broad the split between their beliefs and practices in pronunciation teaching.

Studies on teachers' beliefs related to pronunciation teaching

Based on prior works on teachers' beliefs, it was discovered that the definition of teachers' beliefs in many different attempts and ways, the concept was mostly associated with teachers' knowledge (Zheng, 2009). Many studies have been made on teachers' beliefs (cognitions and knowledge) about L2 pronunciation instruction in both English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) and classroom environment. However, some researchers argue that it is still limited such as (Baker & Murphy, 2011). In particular, studies regarding beliefs about pronunciation instruction which relatively received little attention so far. Baker (2014) argues that "research into current pronunciation-oriented teaching practices of L2 instructors is long overdue" (p. 139).

There are several related pieces of literature such as Baker, (2011); Lin, (2010) that throw light on this area. The study was mainly concentrated on scouting teachers' belief about pronunciation teaching.

That deficiency would give investigators in this field a motivation to search and make more efforts to explore teachers' thoughts and performance regarding L2 pronunciation in various EFL contexts. Because this type of knowledge and facts are relevant as they can be useful for teachers' education, it might also help to raise new researchable questions in the future.

To draw broad conclusions about teachers' beliefs and practices in the field of pronunciation across different settings. Large samples with nontraditional methods are often required. For-example a related survey in Europe consist o 640 EFL teachers reveals that although EFL teachers think that training is fundamental and necessary for teaching pronunciation, having a native speaker teacher is considered sufficient for good pronunciation teaching (Henderson et al. 2015). Thus, this indicates that there is some discrepancy between EFL teachers' beliefs and practices concerning pronunciation teaching.

Another study was conducted by Peacock (1999) that sheds light upon further evidence which reveals the differences between teachers' and learners' perspectives. The study was based on a large sample consisting of (202) EFL students (Chinese, first-year 'Science', 'Maths' and 'Engineering' students taking the compulsory EFL course 'English Communication Skills') and at the same time, a group of (45) EFL teachers at the City University of Hong Kong in China. The study aims to investigate the beliefs about language learning, the

first part of the study was concentrated on the factors that affect learners' proficiency in English, such as the differences between student and teacher beliefs about language learning. The second part of Peacock's work is field-based investigation reinforced by Data which is mainly collected utilizing a 34-item Likert-scale self-report questionnaire (the BALLI studies), which identified teachers' and learners' beliefs on a wide range of different educational issues. Notice the responses of learners and teachers to the next section: "It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent pronunciation": 52% of students declared that it is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent, whereas only 13% of teachers did so. This leads to the idea that students place much more importance on the accent than their teachers did.

Interestingly, The role of the 'accent' and the value of good pronunciation was found to be very high among EFL learners in other studies that utilized the BALLI as their main data-collection instrument; examples on these studies are bellow-

97% of Taiwanese subjects (Yang, 1992)

89% of Korean subjects (Park, 1995)

81% of Korean subjects (Truitt, 1995)

78% and 80% of Turkish subjects (Kunt, 1997).

Data have been taken from Horwitz (1999)

Indeed, it is worthy to notice that speaking well with a near-native accent is considered one of the most important goals of (EFL) learners who came from different cultural backgrounds and contexts of learning English.

Studies on teachers' practices related to pronunciation teaching

Training and practice in pronunciation are very significant for students to be given to boost their communicative ability regardless of their learning objectives (Morley, 1991).

Concerning what practitioners do inside classrooms, few researchers have made an investigation on specific activities that EFL teachers use to teach pronunciation. Some findings that those studies reached refer to the use of traditional activities and an emphasis on segmental features. A basic source is Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2010) who surveyed 103 teachers working in North Cyprus. He discovered that their favorite techniques in teaching pronunciation were practicing dialogues, reading with a loud voice involving those using dictionaries.

Work by (Waniek-Klimczak, 2013) reveals that most of the teachers in European countries that completed the EPTiES announced that reading phonetic symbols is one of the usual and common activities that used to follow over the lesson. Another Smaller-standard study (Buss, 2013) from Brazil and (Tergujeff, 2012a) from Finland which likely seems to be using similar strategies in teaching pronunciation. The teachers reported that their methods of teaching are still near to traditional strategies .They were concentrating

mainly on segmental aspects through teaching, sound-correction, word-repetition, and reading aloud.

It would seem at the first sight that there are numbers of prior works that put light on pronunciation teaching and the gap found between teachers' beliefs and their practices. In essence, this study attempts to contribute to this field by closing this gap. It tends to build on the highlighted researches to reach the potential solutions to these issues. Basically, the way will be through surveying 50 Iraqi EFL teachers' views regarding their beliefs related to pronunciation teaching approaches, challenges they face while teaching pronunciation. Besides, the research will be focused on specific questions or statements regarding teaching strategies followed in the classroom environment and essential activities. The method that this will be achieved is displayed in the following outlined methodology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

From my own practical experience as a preparatory school teacher in Iraq and comparing that experience to the global one, a lot of weaknesses and shortages have been noticed. On the other side given the importance of pronunciation and the demand for teaching better pronunciation. All these factors aid to raise the motivation of some teachers to work hardly wishing to develop the basic communication abilities of EFL learners through minimizing the problems of pronunciation area and help to produce more authentic pronunciation at general preparatory level English classes in the Iraqi schools.

METHODS & PARTICIPANTS

Over the past thirty years, studies into L2 pronunciation teaching have appointed several different research methods, with a focus on earning a real understanding of teachers' cognitions and beliefs and how it reflects on their actual practices.

The focus of the paper will be that of a preliminary study. This research has involved several participants as a research method for collecting data. The participants will consist of 50 (EFL) English as a foreign language teacher who work at the secondary stage in Iraqi schools. The majority of the groups are females, their ages range from the 30s to 50s. The chosen participants will be from different Iraqi schools at the preparatory level. The (L1) first or native language of the whole participants is Arabic. It is considered as well as the dominant language for daily communication. English regards the second language for the participants. In the classroom, it is important to know that most of the teachers in their daily English lessons used to speak Arabic while teaching English whereas few of them teach in English.

In terms of education, the age at which all teachers started to learn English was eleven. All the teachers had a university degree, few of them had a master's degree, their highest degree was in linguistic and English language literature. Almost all of the teachers worked at Iraqi high schools. But few taught in private language schools. Some of them gave private lessons. All

respondents are bright and experienced teachers, their experience range from 8 to 20 years.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURES

In terms of data collection, data have been collected through questionnaires. The teachers had been invited to participate in this work. It is planned to design a questionnaire. English teachers were asked to complete an online questionnaire to gather their beliefs regarding pronunciation. They were asked to record their impressions of the given statements. The statements are quite simple to facilitate understanding. It contains information on the following main topics: opinions and beliefs about pronunciation, pronunciation teaching practices, and strategies applied.

ANALYSIS DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Beliefs and opinions

In general, teachers recognize the significance of teaching pronunciation in the classroom environment. In this study, teachers were asked to report their beliefs and cognitions about pronunciation teaching and the frequency of using some kind of pronunciation activities in class. The results were quite positive.

Table 1 Beliefs and cognitions about pronunciation teaching

<u>Statements</u>	<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>Agree</u>	
	<u>Frequen</u> <u>cy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Frequen</u> <u>cy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Frequen</u> <u>cy</u>	<u>%</u>
• Teaching pronunciation is difficult for me. I don't like teaching this skill.	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>64</u>
• A native speaker teacher is the best model for teaching pronunciation material.	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>70</u>
• Foreign accent is the cause of all difficulties.	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>78</u>
• Pronunciation rules and phonological explanation are often unnecessary, because most learners are able to pick up good pronunciation through language immersion.	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>84</u>
• Giving	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>90</u>

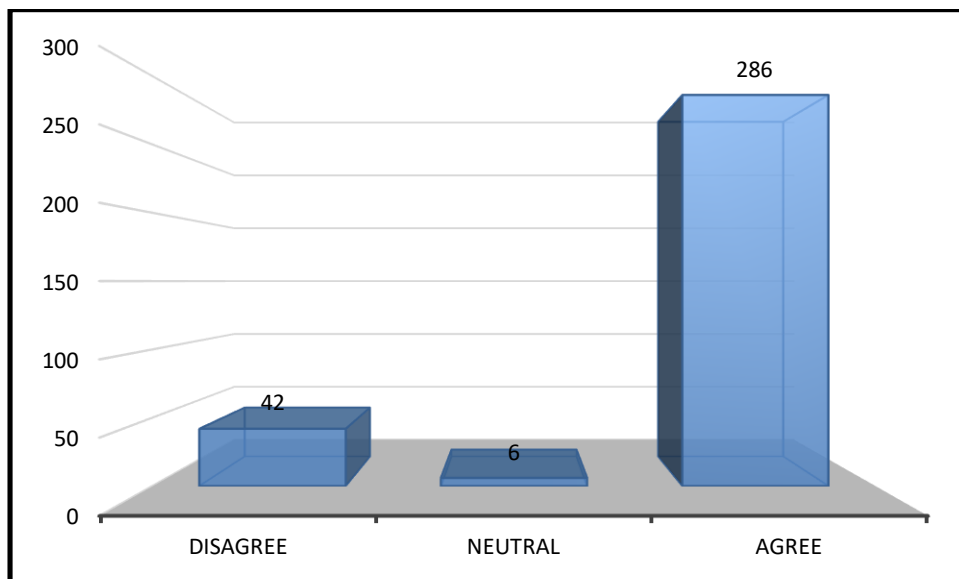
Pronunciation instruction help to improve pronunciation accuracy more than communication among students.		<u>0</u>				
• Highly qualified and long experience teachers reflect a positive feeling towards students towards pronunciation teaching.	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>94</u>
• Expose students to real English language through technological recourses is quite important to raise the motivation of learning among students.	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>92</u>
Total	<u>42</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>286</u>	<u>82</u>

As can be seen in table (1), this part of the survey provided several statements regarding pronunciation. The teachers need to provide opinion towards these given statements whether he/she agree or disagree with the givens. These response choices were split into three categories: disagree, neutral, and agree. In fact, teachers' responses toward pronunciation teaching mostly not all showed negative attitudes. Most of the teachers (64%) have found that teaching pronunciation is difficult for them. Whereas few participants (20%) of them seem to enjoy teaching pronunciation. The majority of teachers (70%) agree with the opinion that a native teacher is better than a foreign speaker teacher in teaching pronunciation. Because most of them (78%) believe that problems and difficulties come from the foreign accent.

(90%) of the responses also revealed that pronunciation instruction can improve students' accuracy in English more than communication among students. Also, (84%) of participants agree that picking up good pronunciation does not necessarily come from explaining phonological rules explicitly. So the majority agree that language immersion is the best way to improve English pronunciation.

Over (90%) of respondents agreed with the statement saying that highly qualified and long experienced teachers could give students a positive feeling towards pronunciation teaching. Furthermore, nearly the whole (92%) indicated that exposing students to real English language through technological resources help to raise students' motivation to learn pronunciation.

Figure (1)



Overall, as indicated in figure (1) participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the above statements: So, at the end of the survey, over 80% of the participants indicating that they strongly agreed with the statement. Only 6% did not want to express their opinions or beliefs or were neutral. Less than 20% of the teachers disagreed.

General teaching approaches and activities used

In regard to the essential approaches to pronunciation teaching, most teachers indicated that they teach specific activities and features through the lesson but the level of using such activities is differs from one teacher to another.

Table 2 How often do teachers used this kind of pronunciation activities in class

Statements	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1- Drilling techniques: e.g. repetition drills and contrasting minimal pairs (food/good, ship/sheep, bit/beat)	0	0	0	0	15	30	35	70
2- Role-play activities:	0	0	0	0	22	44	28	56

e.g. practicing pronunciation while performing conversation in pairs or groups.								
3- Introducing Phonological rules: teaching English phonetic and phonological rules explicitly with example	30	60	11	22	9	18	0	0
4- Using recording tapes: having students listen to pronunciation activities or dialogues.	0	0	5	10	33	66	12	24
5- Interactive media: e.g. pronunciation software programmers, online pronunciation activities.	29	58	13	26	8	16	0	0
6- Shadow reading: Having students mark the text passage for pronunciation features, this activity involves listening and pronunciation practice. (e.g. underline the stressed words	7	14	31	62	12	24	0	0

or circle the intonations words).								
7- Enhancing the phonetic feeling: having students feel where/ how they are speaking (e.g. asking them to touch their throats while pronouncing voiced and voiceless consonants to note the difference between them).	4	8	12	$\frac{2}{4}$	24	$\frac{4}{8}$	10	20
8- Homophones activity: Explaining what a homophone is then showing learners some important examples. Choosing the words is based upon the level the learners are in, such as sea/see, pool/pull.	0	0	5	$\frac{1}{0}$	16	$\frac{3}{2}$	29	58
Total		<u>$\frac{7}{7}$</u>			<u>139</u>		<u>114</u>	

As shown in table (2), this part of the questionnaire presented a model of activities of pronunciation teaching techniques that are frequently used inside English class, some followed by an explanation or examples. The participants also need to give responses to this list of activities. The response choices were divided into four categories: never, rarely, sometimes, and often.

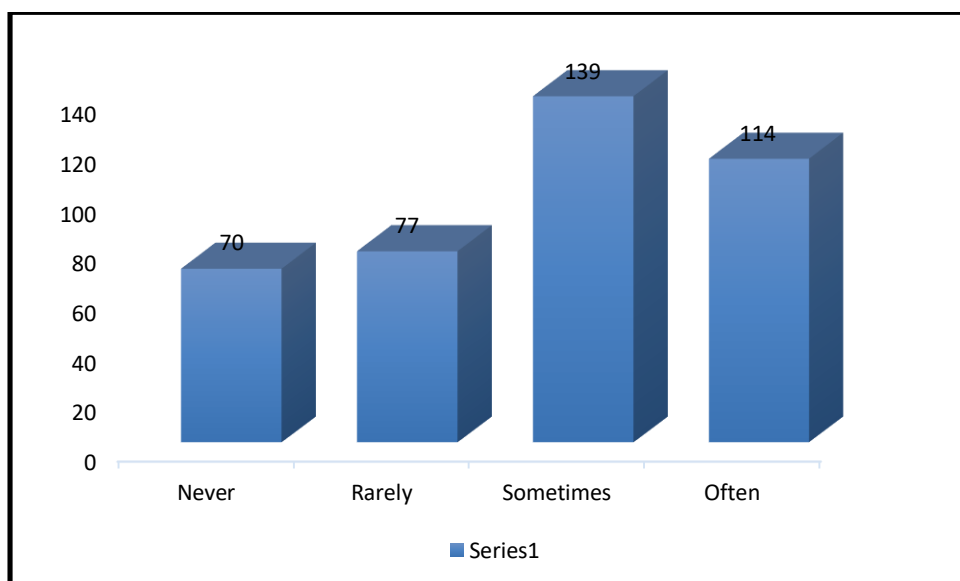
A large number of teachers reported that as they usually worked on drilling activities found in the English textbook. Almost (70%) of them were said that whereas (30 %) their responses were sometimes. Basically, it sounds that

word-level features activities are more emphasized by Iraqi instructors. Other activities like role-playing and homophones are often used by (56 % and 58 %) of the teachers respectively while lessons. Less than half (44% and 32%) of the same teachers referred to their use by sometimes. A similar activity that most commonly used by Iraqi instructors is using a tape recorder to facilitate listening to pronunciation activities. It seems that (66%) of teachers have referred that they sometimes use this type of activities and (24 %) of teachers often used them.

The only activity that was identified as never or rarely used by teachers was Interactive media. Over (50%) of the respondents said that they never use pronunciation software programmers or online pronunciation activities in pronunciation practice and (26%) of teachers rarely used. The use of textbook reading for pronunciation features like stressed words or intonations was the least frequent technique inside the English language classroom. More than half of the teachers (62%) said they rarely used such activity and only (24%) sometimes worked on them.

Other practices like enhancing the phonetic feeling were rarely or sometimes employed by teachers. (48%) of instructors mentioned that they sometimes have students feel where or how they are speaking to touch the difference between voiced and voiceless consonants. Some respondents indicated that they were not familiar with this type of technique and (24%) rarely used that. (60%) of teachers do not encourage teaching phonetic and phonological rules explicitly with examples. whilst some nearly (22%) of them mentioned that they rarely use explicit explaining.

Figure (2)



In total, participants were asked to refer to the most common activities that have been used by them inside the classroom. So figure (2) above reflects the level of their use. Interestingly, a great number of the responses (139 / 114)

referred to sometimes and often. Whereas the rest of the participants said rarely or never

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study set out to answer three main questions: so findings will be reported for each of these three research questions.

Findings from the questionnaire that reflects Iraqi teachers' belief firstly indicated that the Iraqi teachers consider pronunciation teaching is important. That beliefs were as well in agreement with research findings in the literature, such as Hughes (2006) that referred to the role of pronunciation and its significance in language acquisition. Although they have generally negative attitudes towards pronunciation teaching. As Iraqi instructors seem to be not comfortable with the pronunciation teaching more than other teachers surveyed in the literature.

Secondly, the majority of teachers said that a foreign accent is the cause of most difficulties. Another result that has been found is that the participants in this study believe that a native speaker is the best person to teach pronunciation. Some findings that come from prior studies such as (Henderson et al. 2015) exposed that having a native speaker teacher is thought to be necessary for good pronunciation.

Further, there is a tendency to encourage the notion of saying that native speech is the best model for pronunciation instruction.

Besides, Iraqi teachers tended to agree with the view that pronunciation instruction could play an influential role in improving language accuracy than communication among students. This result seems to be similar to the literature that was conducted earlier with other EFL contexts and teachers.

In terms of actual classroom practices and its link with the teachers' beliefs that they hold, through working on this research question, we can see that Iraqi EFL teachers surveyed appear to focus on word-level features in their pronunciation teaching. Also, a tendency to teach phonological rules implicitly. Stress – word and intonation were mentioned more than any other phonological feature as the most difficult to teach.

In fact, it is important for teachers not to keep dealing with an aspect of pronunciation that is considered as difficult for learners to cope with. Brawerman-Albini and Kluge (2010) offered more evidence about the difficulties of English intonation and how it could be challenging for some students. Consequently, this might lead us to ask for more professional training especially in the teaching of intonation and other aspects that were less frequently taught, such as utterance - stress, and rhythm, etc

Likewise, Drilling techniques was also the most frequently used in pronunciation teaching technique, a great number of participants mentioned that they are considered as one of the most effective types of textbook activities

inside class. Iraqi teachers usually rely heavily on textbook activities involving repetition, role-play dialogues, etc.... Giving preference to these traditional methods in teaching pronunciation comes back to the studying that teachers usually got or courses they received in the past. But it is important to note that employing traditional methods in pronunciation teaching is not just in the Iraqi EFL context, there are some literary works that we mentioned earlier have proved utilizing the traditional methods strategies in pronunciation teaching in (EFL) context.

Therefore, it is recommended for the participants to acquire more professional development and gain new training course opportunities in this field. That might help to familiarize them with the modern tools and the new pedagogical approaches. This is a point, another point is that as we mentioned earlier over (90%) of participants agreed with the belief that highly qualified and long experienced teachers could give students a positive feeling towards pronunciation learning.

Clearly, by examining the literature of this study, it can be seen that there are some samples of findings like the survey investigated in Europe consist of 640 EFL teachers. Its finding reveals the importance of training opportunities for pronunciation teachers.

Finally, generalizing from this data, our findings also have revealed some gaps between teachers' opinions and cognitions concerning pronunciation teaching and how they actually taught it in the classroom environment. This gap returns to the difference found between textbook designed, fully packed curriculum, and the implementation of this EFL curriculum. How could we address this gap effectively? particularly when teachers surrounded by such constrained teaching circumstances. At the same time, they need to follow the school textbook in teaching. Because textbook considered the key source that these teachers rely on to teach their students.

Thus, a practical step needs to be taken by textbook designer. **Firstly**, it is important to highlight the most effective and essential activities that quite match the Iraqi EFL context. **Secondly**, in terms of the practical side, the classroom environment needs to be worked on as this would encourage teachers to put more effort into this sub-skill. Besides, a good classroom environment would help to increase the motivation of learning among students.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, researches in the field of pronunciation seem to have a great influence on the beliefs held by the teachers surveyed regarding their teaching practices. The current study contributes to the literature on the beliefs of EFL teachers about teaching pronunciation. It reveals that Iraqi EFL teachers held a strong belief in the importance of pronunciation teaching in language classrooms. Although their strategies in pronunciation teaching were found to be fairly traditional and did not match with the requirements of the modern

teaching methods which is prevalent in many (EFL) contexts. Another thing is that a number of Iraqi teachers seemed to feel uneasy in teaching pronunciation. The apparent gap that exists between Iraqi EFL teachers' beliefs and practices probably caused by invalid teacher education and the dominant instructional and sociocultural contexts. As a result, Iraqi EFL language teachers need to obtain adequate training at both pre- and in-service stages.

However, these suggestions are only speculative, because a large number of researches that seek to get effective ways of teaching pronunciation are keeping developing. In fact, Apart from practical teaching strategies, the right step does not only come from improving teachers education and professional development of the Iraqi English teacher in this area but should also focus more on helping EFL teachers discover and bridge the gap between their beliefs and practices, and increase their sense of confidence in teaching pronunciation.

Eventually, it is beneficial to know that future studies on teachers' beliefs related to pronunciation teaching should include classroom observations and interviews. Because this would give a close comprehensive view of instructors' knowledge and beliefs and their actual teaching practices in the classroom. Observations of teachers' practices that participants report in the questionnaires and personal interviews would confirm their responses. Added to that, it would raise our understanding of how these practices are performed in the actual classroom environment. Overall, these results indicate that more attention needs to be dedicated to the pronunciation field in the Iraqi EFL context. Having further research into pronunciation teaching might assist to extend the findings of the current study.

APPENDIX

Teachers' questionnaire

The following questionnaire consists of two tables. The teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire to provide teachers perceptions of this issue.

Please try to fill in the following tables by ticking the appropriate answer.

Table 1 Beliefs and cognitions about pronunciation teaching

Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
• Teaching pronunciation is difficult for me. I don't like teaching this skill.			
• A native speaker teacher is the best model for teaching pronunciation material.			
• Foreign accent is the cause of all difficulties.			
• Pronunciation rules and			

phonological explanation are often unnecessary because most learners are able to pick up good pronunciation through language immersion.			
• Giving Pronunciation instruction help to improve pronunciation accuracy more than communication among students.			
• Highly qualified and long experience teachers reflect a positive feeling to students towards pronunciation teaching.			
• Expose students to real English language through technological recourses is quite important to raise the motivation of learning among students.			

Table 2 How often do teachers used this kind of pronunciation activities in class.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>
• 1-Drilling techniques: e.g. repetition drills and contrasting minimal pairs (food/good, ship/sheep, bit/beat)				
2-Role-play activities: e.g. practicing pronunciation while performing conversation in pairs or groups.				
3-Introducing Phonological rules: teaching English phonetic and phonological rules explicitly with example				
4-Using recording tapes: having students listen to pronunciation activities or dialogues.				
5-Interactive media: e.g. pronunciation software programmers, online pronunciation activities.				
6-Shadow reading: Having students mark the text passage for pronunciation features, this activity involves listening and pronunciation practice. (e.g. underline the stressed words or circle the intonations words).				

7-Enhancing the phonetic feeling: having students feel where/ how they are speaking (e.g. asking them to touch their throats while pronouncing voiced and voiceless consonants to note the difference between them).				
8-Homophones activity: Explaining what a homophone is then showing learners some important examples. Choosing the words is based upon the level the learners are in, such as sea/ see , pool/pull.				

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