# KOSOVAR EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS TEACHING PRONUNCIATION: STUDENTS' PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THEM

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examines the Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of pronunciation teaching, challenges faced by students according to the teachers, and the strategies these teachers use to overcome these challenges. To answer the study's proposed research questions, a questionnaire was used, and for the validity of the data, 121 participants were recruited randomly from all over Kosovo. Research questions are: 1. What are the Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English pronunciation? 2.According to Kosovar EFL teachers, which segmental and suprasegmental features are identified as challenging for Kosovar students while learning English pronunciation? and 3. Which strategies do Kosovar EFL teachers think are effective in helping their students overcome these challenges?

The results showed that Kosovar EFL teachers have positive perceptions regarding pronunciation teaching. Moreover, they have identified that Kosovar students have some challenges with segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation. To overcome these challenges, Kosovar EFL teachers claim to use various strategies.

**Keywords**: pronunciation teaching, teachers' perceptions, problems, strategies etc.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The significance and purpose of the study

There is a lot to be learned when acquiring a new language, including vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and discourse. Pronunciation is a central feature of the second language acquisition of oral skills (MacDonald, 2002), in which students require grammar and vocabulary skills, but such constructs or phrases must be pronounced correctly; therefore, the aim of students should also be to achieve successful and intelligible pronunciation (Sahatsathatsana, 2017). Regardless of its importance to learners' effective communication, many teachers who pay more attention to grammar and lexicon teaching often ignore pronunciation (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). This is due to the teachers feeling more secure about teaching grammar and lexicon than pronunciation, and they fear that they do not have adequate skills to effectively help their learners (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

However, there are problems that students face while learning pronunciation in an ESL and EFL context. As Pourhosein Gilakjani (2012) claimed, some of the reasons are the lack of interest from students and insufficient exposure to the target language. Also, the lack of ability on the part of the teachers to recognize the importance of pronunciation results in a lack of ability to help students develop proper pronunciation. Besides, the influence of the mother tongue has been identified as another challenge that students face when learning pronunciation (Nuhiu, 2013; Alimemaj, 2014; Bodorík, 2017). As a result of such interference, the students have problems with the pronunciation of sounds that do not exist in their native language and when there is a different stress placement (Nuhiu, 2013; Bodorík, 2017). It is important to address such problems since, as Pourhosein Gilakjani (2012) stated, if the speakers have an incorrect and unintelligible pronunciation, the listeners will not understand their words. Therefore, speakers will not succeed in communication.

Moreover, different strategies have been implemented by teachers to address these problems. Some teachers consider songs an effective strategy for developing the students' pronunciation skills and overcoming their pronunciation problems since they would be exposed to the native sounds of the language (Pimwan, 2012; Stanculea & Bran, 2015). Moreover, songs are considered original materials, and they are usually used to enhance students' pronunciation regarding stress, rhythm, and intonation (Read, 2007; Tuan & An, 2010). Other teachers prefer reading out loud activities since they believe that students will be able to develop better pronunciation skills through listening to each other and having the chance to repeat the text themselves (Harmer, 2012; Tost, 2013; Jerotijević-Tišma, 2016).

Nevertheless, very few studies have explored teachers' perceptions regarding the students' problems and their perceptions of strategies to overcome those problems (Jerotijević-Tišma, 2016; Koike, 2016; Bodorík, 2017). Hence, this study investigates the Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching pronunciation, their students' difficulties, and their strategies to overcome these challenges.

### 1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The study attempts to answer the following questions and fulfill the given hypothesis:

Q1: What are the Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English pronunciation?
*H1: Kosovar EFL teachers have a positive attitude towards teaching English pronunciation. (Koike, 2016; Uchida & Sugimoto, 2016; Bodorík, 2017)*

Q2: According to Kosovar EFL teachers, which segmental and suprasegmental features are identified as challenging for Kosovar students while learning English pronunciation?
*H2: According to Kosovar EFL teachers, students, while learning pronunciation, will face challenges with the mispronunciation of back vowels [ʊ] and [o], diphthongs /aɪ/, /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/ and /əʊ/, phoneme [w]and stress placement in words, while learning English pronunciation. (Nuhiu, 2013; Alimemaj, 2014; Bodorík, 2017).*

Q3: Which strategies do Kosovar EFL teachers think are effective in helping their students overcome these challenges?
*H3: Kosovar EFL teachers think that the use of songs, reading aloud, listen and repeat and tongue twisters as strategies can help their students overcome English pronunciation challenges. (Pimwan, 2012; Harmer, 2012; Tergujeff, 2012; Lindawati, 2013; Tost, 2013; Stanculea & Bran, 2015; Jerotijević-Tišma, 2016)*

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When it comes to pronunciation teaching, usually the choice is between RP (Received Pronunciation), which is also referred to as British English, and GA (General American English) (Dauer, 2005). Nevertheless, Jenkins (2000) sets out a third alternative, the Lingua Franca Core (LFC), an option for the people who learn English but do not want to learn British English or American English. Her work acknowledges that more than 300 million non-native English speakers communicate more frequently with each other than with native English speakers (Dauer, 2005). Jenkins believes that such speakers do not need an almost native accent and should not be pressured to choose between two English models they do not wish to associate with. Moreover, this core is different from the previous one because it is based on "interactional speech data" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 131). The integration of phonological characteristics in the LFC is based on Jenkins' impact on intelligibility and consideration of learning and teachability concepts (Zoghbor, 2011). This core tries to reduce the phonological challenge for most students and teachers by allocating time in the classroom to teach crucial elements in intelligible pronunciation and leaving the rest of the elements to be learned by students out of the classroom on their terms (Jenkins, 2000).

Two contradictory principles, the principle of nativeness, and the principle of intelligibility, long influenced pronunciation research and pedagogy (Levis, 2005). According to the nativeness principle, native pronunciation in a foreign language is possible and desirable (Levis, 2005). Yet, as Levis (2005) stated, nativeness was an unfair challenge for both teachers and students. In reality, very few adult students achieve native pronunciation in a foreign language. However, the principle of intelligibility says that students have to be comprehensible (Levis, 2005). The intelligibility theory recognizes that communication is remarkably effective even if foreign accents are visible or heavy, meaning that there is no direct connection between the accent and comprehension of the individual (Munro & Derwing, 1995). According to this principle, the

instructions should concentrate on the most beneficial features to understand and highlight the relatively weak ones. According to Levis and Grant (2003), teachers agree that intelligible pronunciation is essential for meaningful communication. Regardless of having gained skills in other communication elements, meaningless communication may result from a lack of intelligible pronunciation (Nikbakht, 2011). While intelligibility is currently the prevailing goal of pronunciation education, the natives and the concepts of intelligibility continue to influence pronunciation in the language curriculum both in the way it relates to the communicative context and the relationship between pronunciation and identification (Levis, 2005).

Teaching pronunciation is an essential element for teachers (Uchida & Sugimoto, 2016; Bodorík, 2017). However, teaching pronunciation is a challenge for teachers for several reasons, hence, impacting their attitudes toward teaching pronunciation. The lack of self-confidence, knowledge, and skills is why many teachers do not practice pronunciation teaching (Macdonald, 2002). Uchida and Sugimoto (2016) claim that from the results of their study, it can be said that there are two types of teachers, those who are confident in pronunciation teaching and those that are not. Therefore, confidence seemed to be an important factor for positive or negative attitudes towards teaching pronunciation. Macdonald (2002) found that teachers believed that pronunciation teaching was unsuccessful and unenthusiastic for several reasons, including the need for a new curriculum, better teaching, and learning content, and a structure for evaluating students' skills and improved pronunciation. Due to the insufficient preparation and confusion about the efficacy of teaching, both native and non-native English teachers face difficulties while teaching pronunciation. Nevertheless, non-native language teachers may also view themselves as insufficient models for pronunciation, leading to increased uncertainty about teaching pronunciation (Golombek & Jordan, 2005). According to Kelly (2000), teachers are generally uneasy regarding the teaching of sound and intonation; hence he believes that is why pronunciation is a disregarded aspect of English classes.

Different researchers have conducted studies regarding the problems that students face when learning pronunciation. Hago and Khan (2015) explored the difficulties that Saudi English learners encounter when pronouncing English consonants. They found out that the learners had difficulties in pronouncing eleven consonant sounds /p/, /ʒ/, /ŋ/, /r/, /tʃ/, /t/, /ɬ/, /v/, /k/, /l/, /d/. Learners would make substitutions of sounds such as substituting /p/ with /b/and /ŋ/ sometimes by /n-k/. Additionally, Nuhiu (2013) has researched several difficulties in pronunciation encountered by EFL Albanian students. She found that most students have had minor misarticulations when pronouncing the back vowels [ʊ] and [o]. Additionally, the sound [æ] has been pronounced as [e] in many words. Also, the pronunciation of diphthongs /aɪ/, /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/ and /əʊ/ has been noted as a difficulty. Nuhiu (2012) believes that such problems occur because of the inference of the L1. Slovak and Albanian learners of English seem to face problems when producing the phoneme [w] since such a sound does not exist in the phonetic inventory of these two languages (Nuhiu, 2013; Bodorík, 2017). Another challenge that Slovak and Albanian students' face when learning English pronunciation is the placement of stress in words (Alimemaj, 2014: Bodorík, 2017). This problem happens because of the differences between the L1 and the L2 (Alimemaj, 2014; Bodorík, 2017;). In Albanian, the stress generally falls on the last syllable, whereas in English, it varies according to the grammatical category (Alimemaj, 2014).

Undoubtedly, to overcome the problems that students face while learning pronunciation, teachers must apply strategies and techniques. Tost (2013) found out that reading out loud benefits students in having better pronunciation. In addition, Pimwan (2012) conducted a study with 22 students at Watratchaphatigaram School in Bangkok to explore the usage of songs as a strategy for teaching pronunciation. Similarly, Stanculea and Bran (2015) argue in their paper that by teaching through songs, students will be able to hear the words as they are pronounced in the target language, and consequently, they will pronounce the sounds as they hear them. On the other hand, Lindawati (2013) presents tongue

twisters as another strategy to improve pronunciation. Results showed that tongue twisters helped students produce sounds more accurately; hence, such a method improved their proficiency in pronunciation. Other strategies, such as minimal pairs, explanations, and watching films, have been employed by teachers to improve pronunciation (Jerotijević-Tišma, 2016).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

For the validity of this research, 121 participants both males and females were involved. In order to participate in this research, they needed to be monolingual native speakers of Albanian who hold a university degree in English Language and Literature/Linguistics or an equivalent teaching qualification, like DELTA/CELTA. They also needed to be 20 years old and above, live in Kosovo and be EFL Kosovar teachers. Participants were recruited through the Facebook teacher groups of Kosovo, the group of Kosovo English Teacher Network, and the researcher's personal Facebook account.

Since this study aims to explore the EFL Kosovar teachers' perceptions of the teaching of pronunciation, students' challenges, and the strategies to overcome them, it can be argued that a mixed-method approach is more appropriate to achieve the purpose of this study. A mixed-method approach allows us to understand the problem under investigation better since it includes analyses of qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2014).

In order to meet the needs of the current study, a questionnaire was used by the researcher (including both quantitative and qualitative questions) as a means of finding out the Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions regarding pronunciation tuition, the students' challenges in learning pronunciation according to teachers and the strategies employed to help students overcome their pronunciation challenges. It is essential to point out that the questionnaire was created online using a Google form. The choice of online questionnaires is opted to be the most appropriate for this study, as they are very helpful since web-based research is completely anonymous, which leads to participants being honest (Dornyei, 2007; Pratama, 2020). Furthermore, the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and open-ended questions. As Google form was used to complete the questionnaire, the descriptive statistics were taken from the Google form summaries, given in frequencies.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English pronunciation

The first research question examined the Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English pronunciation. Table 1 shows the results of the questionnaire regarding this perception. The results show that 116 out of 121 Kosovar EFL teachers believe it is important to teach English pronunciation. In general, their perceptions of teaching English pronunciation were very positive. Moreover, such a positive attitude is also related to the Kosovar EFL teachers' confidence in teaching pronunciation. The results show that 74 Kosovar EFL teachers are comfortable with their language skills, and 91 feel confident in their knowledge and abilities to teach English pronunciation.

Furthermore, 112 Kosovar EFL teachers believe that pronunciation is important for successful communication, as all of them have reported that it was important to them how their students speak. 101 teachers consider it important for their students to attain native-like pronunciation. However, not only the

native-like pronunciation is the goal of Kosovar EFL teachers, but 112 of them also claim that clear and intelligible English is their goal of pronunciation. Nevertheless, considering that they consider as a goal of pronunciation both native-like speech and intelligibility, it is implied that intelligible English is associated with native-like phonological attainment.

Additionally, Kosovar EFL teachers have shown a positive attitude towards teaching pronunciation's suprasegmental and segmental aspects. As the results showed, 68 teachers have claimed that their focus on teaching pronunciation is in both aspects equally. This positive attitude can be related to the confidence that teachers have shown in speaking and teaching the English language and pronunciation. Considering all of the above, it can be said that the first hypothesis has not been rejected.

| **Question** | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pronunciation is important for successful communication. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 39 | 73 |
| I consider teaching pronunciation important in English classes. | 0 | 0 | 5 | 41 | 75 |
| I teach both the segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation equally. | 1 | 8 | 44 | 41 | 27 |
| I feel comfortable when I speak English with obvious features of my Albanian (native) language. | 14 | 16 | 17 | 49 | 25 |
| I pay attention to my English pronunciation. | 0 | 0 | 5 | 38 | 78 |
| I am very confident in my knowledge of Phonetics and Phonology of English. | 1 | 0 | 18 | 61 | 41 |
| I am not very confident in my ability to teach English pronunciation | 62 | 29 | 11 | 12 | 7 |
| It is important to me how my students speak English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 102 |
| My goal of pronunciation teaching is to help students become as native-like as possible | 0 | 5 | 15 | 38 | 63 |
| My goal of pronunciation teaching is to help students become clear and intelligible. | 4 | 0 | 5 | 43 | 69 |

*Table 1 Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching English pronunciation*

### 4.2 Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by students in pronunciation teaching

The second research question aimed at exploring the segmental and suprasegmental features that are identified as challenging for Kosovar students while learning the pronunciation of English, according to the Kosovar EFL teachers. From the findings in quantitative data *(Table 2*), what 51 teachers seem to be neutral about is the vocabulary spelling; nevertheless, from the qualitative data (*Table 3*), it can be seen that students have problems with some vowels like /a/, /e/, /ɪ/, /ʊ/, consonants /w/, /r/, and /k/, and diphthongs /eə/, /oʊ/, /aʊ/, and /eɪ/. Therefore, it could be said that vocabulary spelling could pose a potential source of difficulty for Kosovar EFL learners. However, it can be noticed that 90 Kosovar EFL teachers believe that their students have strong pronunciation, which means that they pronounce the words correctly and intelligibly. 84 teachers also believe that their students have proper intonation and do not have intonation problems. Nevertheless, when it comes to stress, teachers had a more reserved opinion and mainly remained neutral, which indicates that there must be some challenges in stress placement in a word.

Even though 38 teachers believe that Kosovar EFL students do not have difficulties in pronouncing English consonants, from the qualitative data, it can be noted that other Kosovar EFL teachers think that there are difficulties in pronouncing some consonants by Kosovar EFL students. More specifically, 26 Kosovar EFL teachers believe that the labiovelar approximant /w/ is one of the problematic consonants, followed by the voiceless velar plosive /k/and the post-alveolar approximant /r/, which are other difficult consonants for the Kosovar EFL students.

Furthermore, according to Kosovar EFL teachers, vowels such as /a/, /e/, /ɪ/, /ʊ/, and /æ/ are considered the most difficult vowels to be produced by Kosovar EFL students. Additionally, the pronunciation of the diphthongs /eə/, /oʊ/, /aʊ/, and /eɪ/ have been reported as challenging to be pronounced as well. According to the EFL Kosovar teachers, the major reason behind these problems (*Table 4*) seems to be the influence of the mother tongue. Interference from the native language (L1) has been broadly proven to be a source of problems for EFL students.

Moreover, 50 Kosovar EFL teachers believe that their students receive enough pronunciation instruction. However, as seen from the qualitative, where 56 teachers remain neutral and quantitative results, they believe their students do not receive enough practice opportunities outside the classroom. Therefore, considering that there are not many English classes, there is a need to practice it outside the classroom, and not having such an opportunity has been seen as a challenge.

Concluding, it could be supported that the second hypothesis is partially rejected. Kosovar EFL teachers, from vowels, only the back vowel [ʊ] seemed problematic for the students, whereas the back vowel [o] has not been identified as a challenge. Moreover, Kosovar EFL teachers have identified the diphthongs /eə/, /oʊ/, /aʊ/, and /eɪ/ as challenging for the Kosovar students, which only confirms one of the hypothesized diphthongs. As for the phoneme [w], it has been confirmed that Kosovar EFL teachers believe it is a challenging phoneme for the Kosovar students. Similarly, by staying neutral and reserved about stress placement, Kosovo's EFL teachers have confirmed that it is challenging for their students to put stress properly in a word.

| Question | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kosovar EFL students have strong English pronunciation | 0 | 1 | 30 | 58 | 32 |
| Kosovar EFL students receive enough pronunciation instruction in their present English courses. | 3 | 12 | 56 | 31 | 19 |
| Kosovar EFL students get enough opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom. | 5 | 22 | 45 | 27 | 22 |
| Kosovar EFL students are confused by vocabulary spelling | 12 | 22 | 51 | 27 | 9 |
| Kosovar EFL students have proper intonation | 1 | 4 | 32 | 68 | 16 |
| Kosovar EFL students have problems with stress placement | 9 | 12 | 51 | 35 | 14 |
| Kosovar EFL students have problems with producing silent sounds | 0 | 45 | 45 | 22 | 9 |
| Kosovar EFL students shorten the vowel sounds. | 4 | 23 | 71 | 19 | 4 |

*Table 2 Challenges faced by students according to teachers*

| What consonant/vowels/dipthongs sounds are the most difficult for Kosovar EFL students to pronounce? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Consonant** | **Frequency** | **Vowels** | **Frequency** | **Dipthongs** | **Frequency** |
| /b/ / | 7 | /a/ | 26 | /aʊ/ | 19 |
| d/ | 4 | /ɒ/ | 11 | /aɪ/ | 15 |
| /g/ | 5 | /ɪ/ | 29 | /eɪ/ | 19 |
| /h/ | 7 | /e/ | 33 | /eə/ | 30 |
| /j/ | 6 | /æ/ | 12 | /ɪə/ | 15 |
| /k/ | 23 | /ʊ/ | 7 | /oʊ/ (AmE) | 21 |
| /l/ | 6 | /ʌ/ | 31 | /ɔɪ/ | 10 |
| /n/ | 4 | /ə/ | 8 | /əʊ/ | 13 |
| /p/ | 10 | /ɜ:/ | 3 | /ʊə/ | 14 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| /r/ | 13 | /i:/ | 3 | None | 32 |
| /s/ | 10 | /ɔ:/ | 2 | | |
| /t/ | 13 | /u:/ | 5 | | |
| /v/ | 3 | /ɑ:/ | 2 | | |
| /w/ | 26 | None | 32 | | |
| /z/ | 1 | | | | |
| /θ/ | 19 | | | | |
| /ð/ | 4 | | | | |
| /ʃ/ | 2 | | | | |
| /ʒ/ | 1 | | | | |
| /tʃ/ | 3 | | | | |
| /dʒ/ | 1 | | | | |
| /ŋ/ | 1 | | | | |
| None | 38 | | | | |

*Table 3 Consonants, vowels, and diphthongs that are difficult to pronounce for Kosovar EFL students*

| **Major reasons behind English Pronunciation difficulties of Kosovar EFL students** | **Frequency** |
|---|---|
| Not adequate English teachers | 5 |
| Not enough practice | 19 |
| Not interested in the lesson | 3 |
| Do not know the alphabet | 2 |
| Mother tongue influence/difference with English | 45 |
| Stress and intonation | 4 |
| Lack of attention to pronunciation | 2 |
| Lack of communication with native speakers | 5 |
| Lack of confidence | 1 |
| Lack of time for the teacher to teach pronunciation | 6 |
| Textbook | 6 |
| Silent letters | 1 |
| Dialects | 2 |
| No problems | 7 |

*Table 4 Major reasons behind English Pronunciation difficulties of Kosovar EFL students*

### 4.3 Kosovar EFL teachers' perceptions of the strategies that help students to overcome the challenges

The third research question aimed to explore the strategies Kosovar EFL teachers think effectively to help their students overcome those challenges. This study indicates that Kosovar EFL teachers' strategies include teaching IPA symbols, stress, rhythm, and intonation (*Table 5*). Nevertheless, teachers do not use these strategies regularly but only sometimes during English classes. Furthermore, to help students overcome the challenges and improve their pronunciation skills, the qualitative results (*Table 6*) show that teachers use a wide range of strategies, showing a preference mainly for the traditional ones, such as reading aloud, repetition, and dialogues. Reading aloud as a strategy is also supported by Tost (2013), who found out that such a strategy benefited students in having a better pronunciation. It can be said that this strategy, as it is used almost by all the participants, helps the teacher identify the students' problems. However, teachers should keep in mind that, as Sobkowiak and Piasecka (2014) claimed, this strategy may create anxiety and a feeling of boredom since the reader's attention is on the articulation rather than on the comprehension of the text. Also, strategies such as songs, recognizing sounds, tongue twisters, and voice recordings have been considered beneficial by many Kosovar EFL teachers. Therefore, they have shown a positive perception of using such strategies for teaching pronunciation in their classes. Moreover, music is considered an essential part of our life and can help create an appropriate environment for the teacher and students (Ulate, 2012), which will result in students being more motivated to participate and enhance their pronunciation skills (Ebedy, 2015). Moreover, other strategies such as movies, minimal pairs, information gap, rhyming, transcription, imitation, and guessing placement of stress seem to be used by some teachers but not at a high frequency. Regardless of not appearing to be used as much as the other strategies, it can be said that as long as teachers have mentioned them in their preferences, they hold a positive attitude towards such strategies. Besides these strategies, Kosovar EFL teachers believe that more exercises in and out of the classroom and more English classes would improve students' pronunciation skills. From these results, we can see that the third hypothesis has not been rejected.

| **Question** | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I teach IPA symbols | 7 | 13 | 50 | 29 | 22 |
| I teach stress | 0 | 11 | 50 | 41 | 19 |
| I teach intonation | 1 | 4 | 29 | 49 | 38 |
| Kosovar EFL students are confused by vocabulary spelling | 12 | 22 | 51 | 27 | 9 |
| Kosovar EFL students have proper intonation | 1 | 4 | 32 | 68 | 16 |
| Kosovar EFL students have problems with stress placement | 9 | 12 | 51 | 35 | 14 |
| Kosovar EFL students have problems with producing silent sounds | 0 | 45 | 45 | 22 | 9 |
| Kosovar EFL students shorten the vowel sounds. | 4 | 23 | 71 | 19 | 4 |

*Table 5 Strategies that help overcome the challenges.*

| **Strategy** | **Frequency** |
|---|---|
| Songs | 79 |
| Reading aloud | 113 |
| Repetition after teacher | 103 |
| Repetition after recording | 65 |
| Voice recording | 42 |
| Tongue twisters | 42 |
| Movies | 29 |
| Situational dialogues | 66 |
| Minimal pair exercises | 37 |
| Information gap activities | 36 |
| Rhyming | 35 |
| Transcription | 34 |
| Guessing stress placement in words | 36 |
| Imitation | 37 |
| Recognizing sounds | 49 |
| Body movement: e.g.… | 40 |
| Tactile reinforcement: | 27 |

*Table 6 Strategies used to overcome challenges*

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study aimed to bring an insight into how EFL Kosovar teachers stand towards pronunciation teaching, the obstacles their students face, and how they overcome them. To best understand this, three main research questions were asked, with the first one being focused on the EFL Kosovar teachers' perspectives on teaching pronunciation. The study has shown that teachers hold a positive attitude towards pronunciation tuition, which could be linked to teachers' confidence in speaking and teaching English pronunciation. Secondly, what obstacles students face while learning English pronunciation based on EFL Kosovar teachers' perceptions were highlighted. The answer to this issue depends on specific vowels taken into account, as students have shown to face more difficulties with the back vowel [ʊ] but did not face an issue when learning other vowels. Additionally, stress was another issue that students face when learning English, with them facing difficulties in placing the stress accordingly when pronouncing words in the English Language. However, with all the challenges that students could face, it is important to explore and understand what strategies teachers are employing to make the learning process easier and more comfortable for the students. This is the focal point of the third research question, with the answer providing evidence that teachers use songs, reading aloud, listening and repeating, and tongue twisters as ways of helping their students overcome English pronunciation challenges.

The findings of this study could serve as a reference to future research on English language teaching in the EFL context, focusing on the teaching of pronunciation. Because a survey is not enough to capture the teachers' full range of perceptions and practices, future studies on Kosovar teachers' beliefs and practices of pronunciation instruction must include classroom observations and interventions. Besides, it is also important to investigate the Kosovar EFL students' perceptions of pronunciation learning; therefore, a study that reports and compares the perceptions of both the Kosovar EFL teachers and Kosovar EFL students will be beneficial.

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