

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**  
**(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

**THE STATUS OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING: ITS APPROACH,  
PLACE AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND EFFICACY**

**FOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN AMHARA REGION IN FOCUS**

**TAFERE MELAKU**

*July 2008*

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**By**

**TAFERE MELAKU**

**A Thesis Presented to the Department of Foreign Languages and  
Literature (Graduate programme)**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master  
of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

*July 2008*

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Awole Endris, for his invaluable commitment, constructive comments and guidance. I especially wish to express my heartfelt appreciation for his natural friendship and encouragement to his all advisees.

I am also grateful to express my gratitude to Dr. Seime Kebede and Dr. Hailom Banteyerga for their constructive comments and encouragement from the initial stage of this study while I was presenting the proposal in partial fulfillment of the two consecutive courses, Research Methodology and Graduate Seminar.

I am very happy to thank my former student, Tewodros Belew, who recorded the lessons with his own video recorder without being paid.

I would like to thank all the four school directors, but my special gratitude goes to Ato Mulat Admas, the director of Kosober Elementary school, who helped me all he could in facilitating my contact with the teachers and in arranging a room for the teachers' group discussion. And I am indebted to all teachers who permitted me to probe their past experiences, current thoughts and practices through the questionnaire, focus group discussion and classroom observation I conducted with them. Their willingness and unreserved cooperation would not be forgettable.

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to all my friends and relatives who, in one way or another, contributed to the completion of this paper. But my special thanks goes to my two neighbours, Mekuriaw Mekonnen and Tariku Afwork with their families for their unreserved and generous treatments to my son during my stay here in Addis.

Finally, I am very grateful to thank my son, Haimanot Tafere and my family, Firehiwot Melaku, Silenat Workie and Habitamu Mengistu for their patience during my stay here in Addis and their endless wishes for me to be more successful in my education.

# Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements .....	i
List of Tables .....	v
List of Appendices .....	vi
Abstract .....	vii
CHAPTER ONE	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3. Objectives of the Study .....	5
1.4. Significance of the Study .....	6
1.5. Scope of the Study .....	7
CHAPTER TWO	
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	8
2.1. What is Pronunciation? .....	8
2.2. Historical Perspectives of Pronunciation.....	8
2.2.1. Pronunciation Past .....	9
2.2.2. Pronunciation Present .....	11
2.3. Predominant Debates on Pronunciation Teaching .....	12
2.3.1. Does Pronunciation Matter?.....	13
2.3.2. Goal of Pronunciation Teaching: Intelligibility .....	14
2.3.3. What to Teach: Pronunciation Features .....	17
2.3.3.1. Segmental Features.....	17
2.3.3.2. Supra segmental Features.....	18
2.3.4. The Age Factor in Learning Pronunciation.....	19
2.4. Approaches to Pronunciation Teaching .....	20
2.4.1. Structural Approach.....	20
2.4.2. Communicative Approach.....	22
2.5. Classroom Procedures of Pronunciation Teaching .....	24

2.6. The Role of the Teacher in Pronunciation Teaching .....	25
2.7. Factors Influencing Pronunciation Teaching .....	26
2.7.1. The Inadequacy of Teachers' Trainings.....	26
2.7.2. The Inadequacy of Course Materials.....	27
2.7.3. Learner Factors .....	29
2.8. Language Teacher Efficacy.....	30
CHAPTER THREE	
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	31
3.1. Research Design .....	31
3.2. Subjects of the Study .....	31
3.3. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection.....	32
3.3.1. Questionnaire.....	32
3.3.2. Focus Group Discussion.....	33
3.3.3. Classroom Observation.....	34
3.3.4. Textbook Analysis.....	34
3.4. Development of the Instruments .....	35
3.5. Methods of Data Analysis .....	35
CHAPTER FOUR	
4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA.....	37
4.1. Presentation and Discussion of Teachers' Responses .....	37
4.1.1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Roles of Pronunciation in EFL Instruction.....	37
4.1.2. Teachers' Self-perceptions about their Capabilities in Teaching Pronunciation.....	42
4.1.3. The Procedures and Techniques Teachers Employ in Pronunciation Instruction` .....	48
4.1.4. Correlation between Teachers' Belief and Efficacy.....	53
4.2. Interpretation and Discussion of Textbook Evaluation on the Emphasis Given to Pronunciation Instruction.....	54

4.2.1. Evaluating the Share of Pronunciation Lessons.....	54
4.2.2. The Approach of Teaching Pronunciation Lessons in Textbooks.....	56
CHAPTER FIVE	
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	59
5.1. Summary .....	59
5.2. Conclusions.....	60
5.3. Recommendations .....	62
Bibliography .....	64
Appendices.....	69

## List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Teachers' Beliefs on the Roles of Pronunciation .....	38
Table 2: Teachers' Self-efficacy in the Teaching of Pronunciation.....	43
Table 3: Teachers' Responses on the Procedures and Techniques They Employ in Pronunciation Instruction.....	49
Table 4: Correlation between Teachers' Belief and Efficacy.....	53
Table 5: The Shares of Language Components in Students' Textbooks.....	55
Table 6: Pronunciation Components Included in the Textbooks.....	57
Table 7: Classroom Procedures of Pronunciation Teaching Included in the Textbooks.....	58

## List of Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Teachers .....	69
Appendix II: Focus Group Discussion Items .....	74
Appendix III: Teachers' Responses on Their Beliefs on the Roles of Pronunciation.....	75
Appendix IV: Teachers' Responses on the Efficacy Items .....	76
Appendix V: Teachers' Group Discussion Transcript.....	77
Appendix VI: Lesson Transcript One .....	82
Appendix VII: Lesson Transcript Two .....	85
Appendix VIII: Lesson Transcript Three.....	87
Appendix IX: Lesson Transcript Four .....	89
Appendix X: Lesson Transcript Five .....	91
Appendix XI: Textbook Evaluation Checklist on the share of Each language Component.....	93
Appendix XII: Textbook Evaluation Checklist on Approaches of pronunciation Lessons: Selection and Presentation.....	94

## **Abstract**

*The main objective of this study was to determine the current status of pronunciation teaching in elementary schools. This was attempted by exploring the beliefs and self-efficacy teachers hold about the roles of pronunciation and their capabilities in teaching pronunciation, the approach of pronunciation teaching and its place in the students' textbooks.*

*The subjects of the study were both grades 7 and 8 English teachers in the four available elementary and junior secondary schools in Injibara Town, Amhara Region. All 13 (5 male and 8 female) teachers were taken for the main study.*

*For the purpose of gathering sufficient and reliable data, four instruments-questionnaire, focus group discussion, classroom observation and textbook evaluation-were used. The questionnaire was deployed mainly to elicit information about the teachers' perceptions (beliefs and self-efficacy) and the approaches and procedures they employ in the teaching of pronunciation. The textbooks were also assessed to evaluate the coverage and approach of pronunciation in students' textbooks and in the overall EFL instruction. The focus group discussion and classroom observation were used mainly to triangulate and enrich the data gathered through questionnaire and textbook evaluation. The data were then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.*

*In this study, the teachers were found to have strong belief about the roles of pronunciation while they were found to have low level of self efficacy. Their classroom practices, however, greatly diverged from the belief they possessed about the roles of pronunciation, but it enormously converged on their self-efficacy. They usually felt that they are incompetent to teach it. Yet there was no a significant relationship between their belief and self efficacy results. The approaches and procedures they employ are far from the current rationales and trends of EFL pronunciation instruction. The textbook evaluation result also revealed the fact that pronunciation has got little or 'almost no' provision in students' textbooks and in the overall EFL instruction.*

*In general, the prevailing situations and practices clearly show that the current status of pronunciation teaching is not on the right track. It is rather downgraded as it was in the periods of late 1960s and early 1970s.*

*Therefore, it is pertinent to upgrade the teachers' theoretical and practical competence in the teaching of pronunciation. Teacher training institutions should also evaluate their EFL programmes to see whether they are working beyond giving lip service to the usefulness of communicative approach to trainees. Besides, language curriculum designers and text book writers need to reconsider the coverage and approach of teaching pronunciation in the students' textbooks and in the overall EFL instruction.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

People from all countries are now working and living in a globalized environment where communication from and to almost anywhere in the world may occur. It is also true that English is the major lingua franca globally, and that there are probably more speakers of English as a second or foreign language than there are people who speak it as their first language/mother tongue. More and more people need to use English for social, educational, and professional reasons in all kinds of contexts, locally and internationally. To this effect, people who use English to communicate are required to have a high level of intelligibility.

With respect to the above communicative needs, language teaching has shifted from aiming at linguistic competence to communicative competence (Hedge, 2000; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Brown, 1994; etc). In light of this notion, many attempts have been made to give considerable attention to all features, even to non-verbal aspects of the language which makeup real life communication (Morley, 1991; Kenworthy, 1987 and Harmer, 2001). Foreign language learners, therefore, need to have the skills and knowledge of all facets of the language to communicate intelligibly in every circumstance of conversation.

Even if all aspects of the language make their own contributions to the establishment of intelligibility in a given context, pronunciation takes its priority as it is an indispensable component of communication (Otlowski, 1998, and Morley, 1991). Emphasizing the essence of pronunciation teaching to achieving the overall proficiency of the language, Tench (1981:1) states, "Pronunciation is not an optional extra component for the language learner,

any more than grammar, vocabulary, or any other aspect of the language is.” Hence, as Baker (1982) argues, it is not enough for the students to learn words, phrases, grammatical features, but they should also be able to produce these in a way which makes their utterance comprehensible to speakers of the language.

Despite the adoption of communicative language teaching and the role of pronunciation teaching in communicative oriented foreign language classes, it is, however, for a variety of practical, pedagogical and ideological reasons, pronunciation teaching has suffered from neglect (Celce-Murcia et al. 1996; Morley, 1991; Brown, 1992, etc). To this contention, Harmer (2001) and Richards and Renandya (2002) also added that pronunciation teaching does not get the necessary place in foreign language classes as compared to the other facets of the language. This situation clearly shows that the debate on the essence of pronunciation and the choice of methods and approaches to teach it have not yet come to an end.

On the other hand, Morley (1994) gives four reasons why specifically foreign language or second language teachers have neglected pronunciation teaching. She states that teachers fail to teach pronunciation because of their views that:

- Pronunciation is not important;
- Students will pick it up on their own;
- It is not teachable;
- It is difficult to know how to teach it.

She, however, stresses more that non-native English teachers tend to ignore pronunciation teaching because they do not perceive themselves adequate and confident to teach it as they usually feel that they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills of pronunciation and how best to teach it. As Dalton (1997) states, teachers, for example, get nervous about dealing with sounds and intonation for they lack the basic knowledge to offer their students basic supports. In other words, teachers fail to teach pronunciation because of their

frustration at the difficulty of providing effective help for learners and their sense of not knowing enough about the topic in a certain situation under which they are working (Fraser, 1999). Of course, this recurrent incident is strongly related to the teachers' psychological trait, the so-called teacher efficacy.

The known psychologist, Bandura (1997) pointed out that teachers' feeling or perception of their capabilities (what he calls 'self-efficacy') profoundly affects their thoughts, their actions in the teaching process, the effort they put forth, and perseverance in improving students' achievement. And from this point of view, language teachers need to have their own high efficacy in order to possess the enthusiasm and interest to teach any aspect of the language. On the other hand, English teachers tend to ignore pronunciation teaching so far as they are not efficacious to it. In relation to this, research findings (Guskey and Passaro, 1994; Colardarci and Breton, 1991) also reveal the fact that teachers usually refrain from teaching any aspect of language when they have low self-perception about their capabilities. Hence, it is worth studying teachers' efficacy in the teaching of pronunciation since it is prominently influenced by foreign language teachers as it is primarily classroom oral work.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Here in our context, Ethiopia, English is mainly used as a medium of instruction besides being given as foreign language from elementary to higher education. It is believed that the students' success throughout their school lives is mainly determined by their success in learning the English language. Particularly, in recent times, due to the adoption of communicative approach, the English language syllabuses have been revised with the intention of improving the learners' learning the language in general and their communicative abilities in particular. As many of English syllabuses dictate, every opportunity has to be taken to involve the students in meaningful and realistic communicative activities.

In contrast, however, language curriculum designers and textbook writers seem to forget one aspect of communication, i.e. pronunciation teaching. Getachew (1996) comments that even though many English textbooks and manuals have been revised and deployed in the foreign language classes here in Ethiopia, they give little or no attention at all to pronunciation teaching. More recently, Geremew (2003), while investigating the place of pronunciation in grade 7 students' textbook here in Addis, has concluded that grade 7 students' textbook does not give the necessary place for pronunciation lessons. This shows that the recurrent under emphasis of pronunciation still exists.

Moreover, placing his own concern with the attitude of high school students and their English teachers, Anegagregn (2007) also tried to see the foreign language classes how much they go with the changing notions of pronunciation teaching. By so doing, he found out that teachers' negative attitude to pronunciation has its own impact for their negligence of pronunciation teaching.

In contrast to this, to help learners overcome the challenges they face as listeners and speakers, pronunciation is an indispensable facet of their foreign language learning. For instance, our high school students at present are facing challenges in listening to the non-Ethiopian plasma instructional TV teachers. This is mainly because of their poor knowledge and skills of pronunciation rather than something else. The challenges they are facing, in turn, are attributed to their education failure across all subjects since the classroom culture at present primarily dictates talking and listening. In view of this, pronunciation teaching deserves to get prioritized from the start to assist learners not to be cut off from actual classroom conversation as knowledge and skills of pronunciation determine one's listening and speaking skills. Accordingly, Otlowski (1998:3) citing Morley (1994) says, "Without adequate pronunciation skill, the learners' ability to communicate is severely limited."

On the other hand, students are yet impaired to communicate intelligibly in the outside world unless they are made to be familiar with perceiving and producing features of English pronunciation. They could hardly interact in English in the world of education, work and social interactions if they are unable to deploy features of pronunciation. Various local and international organizations in the world of work and education at present are giving prominence on comprehensible command over speaking and listening with intelligible pronunciation. Hence, little or inadequate concern of pronunciation is an act of 'abrogation of professional responsibility' (Morley,1991:489). Every language programme should, therefore, provide pronunciation instruction that enables learners become intelligible, communicative, confident users of spoken English for whatever purposes they need the language.

It is from all the above backgrounds that the researcher has decided to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching, mainly on the bases of the four interrelated dimensions of its approach, place and teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy, as they are important aspects of pronunciation instruction. It is also worthwhile on the part of the researcher to look into this problem in primary schools for pronunciation teaching should begin at the early age of learners.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching in elementary schools where 'pronunciation teaching gets its own meaningful and realistic stage as pronunciation instruction is emphasized from the initial stages of language learning so as to meet its primary goal, speech' (Kenworthy, 1987). Hence, the study tries to assess the actual classroom practices of pronunciation teaching and teachers' perceptions. It also tries to evaluate the treatment of pronunciation in relation to the overall contents of the textbook. In line with this, the intended study attempts to address the following general and specific research questions.

1. What are the perceptions teachers hold about the roles of pronunciation and their capabilities in teaching pronunciation?
  - Do teachers believe that pronunciation has its own role in one's overall language proficiency?
  - Do teachers feel confident in teaching pronunciation?
  - What do teachers think about their knowledge and skills of pronunciation?
  - Is there a relationship between teachers' perception of their capabilities and their classroom practices in the teaching of pronunciation?
2. How is pronunciation currently taught?
  - How do teachers teach pronunciation features, in isolated manner, or in an integrated approach, or in both?
  - What are the procedures and approaches used for teaching pronunciation?
  - To what extent do teachers give the necessary feedback for their learners' difficult areas of pronunciation learning?
3. Does pronunciation have a place in the syllabus and students' textbooks?
  - What is the share of pronunciation as compared to other aspects?
  - What is the approach of pronunciation in the textbooks?

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Apart from exploring the current status of pronunciation teaching, this study is pertinent in that it:

- May raise the teachers' awareness of the role of pronunciation teaching in promoting students' language proficiency;
- Reveals the teachers' self-perception about their capabilities in teaching pronunciation and then gives feedback for them where they stand with regard to the teaching of pronunciation;
- Will also help teachers to reconsider their self-perception about their capabilities and make their own efforts to improve their pronunciation;

- Will suggest ways of improving the actual classroom practices of pronunciation teaching;
- Points out areas of difficulties in the teaching and learning of pronunciation;
- Will give feedback for language curriculum designers and textbook writers to see to what extent students' textbooks give a place for pronunciation;
- Is to be significant to other researchers who are interested to undertake further research on the subject as there are no similar studies dealing with the four interrelated dimensions of pronunciation teaching (approach, place and teachers' beliefs and efficacy).

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

There are a number of factors that can influence the actual classroom practices of pronunciation teaching in a foreign language setting. The attitude of teachers and learners, the age of learners, the teaching materials and methods to be implemented, teachers' confidence to teach pronunciation, the native language, etc, all have much to do with the teaching- learning of pronunciation (Kenworthy, 1987; Broughton 1980). As Kenworthy (1987) noted, the above listed factors are highly inter-woven in any foreign language setting. And, it is difficult to undertake each of them separately or to treat all of them in a single study. Because of this, the intended study is restricted to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching, examining only the four dimensions of its approach, place and teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy with particular reference to grades seven and eight in four available primary schools in Injibara town, Amhara Region.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. What is Pronunciation?**

By 'pronunciation' in the widest sense, we mean the main features that make up speech. In this regard, Ur (1996) views pronunciation as it is the components of sounds of the language and supra segmental levels (stress, rhythm, intonation... etc). Kenworthy (1987) and Tench (1981) also contend that pronunciation teaching refers to not only the teaching of segmental features but also supra segmental features of English.

In other thoughts of context, as Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), pronunciation is viewed as a way of uttering or speaking a language in a way that is accepted or understood. Of course, as Dalton and Seidlhofer, pronunciation has to be seen in both senses as production of sound and communication. In the first sense, we can see pronunciation as the production and reception of the sounds of speech. In the second sense, sound is significant because it is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use. In other words, pronunciation refers to acts of speaking used to achieve meaning.

On top of this, it is pertinent to see pronunciation in both senses of production and communication. Particularly, with the emergence of more holistic, communicative methods and approaches to ESL instruction, at present pronunciation is addressed within the context of real communication (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, 1996; Morley, 1991).

#### **2.2. Historical Perspectives of Pronunciation**

Pronunciation instruction tends to be linked to the instructional method being used (Celce- Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, 1996). The views and the degree of emphasis on pronunciation are closely related to the thoughts of the instructional methods being used. And thus, an overview of the most important

approaches and methods to L<sub>2</sub> gives a better picture of the status of pronunciation instruction.

### **2.2.1. Pronunciation Past**

The Direct method and Natural Approaches regard the process of learning L<sub>2</sub> as being the same as that of acquiring L<sub>1</sub> (Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Celce-Murcia, Goodwin and Brinton, 1996; Morley, 1991). By listening to an appropriate model, L<sub>2</sub> Learners “*pick up*” the pronunciation. In these methods of language teaching, pronunciation was taken as important but the methodology was primitive. The methodology consists of imitating a model through repetition. Hence, the teacher is ideally a native or near-native speaker of the target language presenting pronunciation inductively and correcting through modeling (Celce-Murcia, Goodwin and Brinton, 1996).

On the other hand, pronunciation teaching in the period (1940s, 1950s into 1960s) was dominated by Audio-lingual and Situational methods which emerged in America and Britain respectively (Morley, 1991). Accordingly, Celce-Murcia (1991) and Otlowski (1998) contend that this period marked a considerable change on pronunciation teaching because pronunciation was totally ignored in the periods of grammar-translation method. For practitioners of the Audio-lingual approach, pronunciation was very important and “it was seen as a pre-requisite for developing speaking” (Celce-Murcia and Goodwin, 1991:136).

The main contribution of this period to classroom methodology was the concept of phonemic contrasts, which are believed to contribute to improve learners’ perception and production. The methodology exploits the use of minimal pair drills and imitation of the appropriate models. Besides, learners receive some form of phonetic information to help them with the acquisition of pronunciation component, and pronunciation teaching is emphasized from the start (Ibid). According to Dickerson (1975), the notion and goal of communication was not

emphasized but accuracy based production via imitation, memorization, drills and dialogues.

In contrast to the above, however, pronunciation was negatively reacted from many scholars in the period of late 1960s, 1970s into the 1980s (Morley, 1991:485-6). Since the conventional wisdom of the late 1960s and early 1970s held that native- like pronunciation could not be totally taught any way, the cognitive code approach, for instance, de-emphasized pronunciation in favor of grammar and vocabulary. This was justified by the belief that language is governed by rules, thus habit formation cannot contribute to L2 acquisition. The conclusion is that teaching pronunciation is a waste of time since it cannot be learnt.

It was during this period that questions were asked about the role of pronunciation in the ESL/EFL curriculum, whether the focus of the programs and the instructional methods were effective or not. Pronunciation programs until then were “viewed as meaningless non-communicative drill-and-exercises gambits” (Morley, 1991:485-6). In many language programs, the teaching of pronunciation was eliminated because many studies concluded that little relationship exists between teaching pronunciation in the classroom and attained proficiency in pronunciations (Suter, 1976: 233-53).

The conventional wisdom of the 1980s into 1990s, on the other hand, held that oral communication is the primary use of language and therefore should be central to the mode of instruction. This was dominantly a period of communicative approach, which persists today with critics from some quarters, sprung into prominence particularly in 1980s (Celce- Murcia, Goodwin and Brinton, 1996). This period can be taken as a reflection of an important development and foundation for the current predominant view of pronunciation teaching.

### **2.2.2. Pronunciation Present**

As discussed above, with the emergence of communicative language teaching, the primary goal of language teaching becomes to achieve communicative interaction and functional use. Due to this, current researches in the EFL/ESL pedagogy are embracing pronunciation as an essential and indispensable component of communication (Otlowski, 1998). In support of this, Morley (1991:488) states the following :

*With today's renewed professional commitment ... it is clear that there is a persistent groundswell of movement to write pronunciation back into the instructional equation but with a new look and basic premise: Intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence.*

On the other hand, Morley (1991) points out that learners' education, occupational, social language needs, etc. strongly demand intelligible pronunciation that provides them with communicative empowerment for their survival as well as success. For instance, success in education is taken as the extent of one's communicative proficiency of the language. Therefore, students' needs are the decisive factors for the current reversal undergoing trend of pronunciation teaching.

Besides learners' needs, the recent emerging principles and beliefs of second language pedagogy contribute to the renewed interest of pronunciation in the foreign language classes. To this contention, Morley (1991:493-95) further reviewed some of the principles that could possibly guide the current directions of foreign language pedagogy in any language program. These include:

- i. Pronunciation is an integral part of communication and must get its proper place in the language curriculum;
- ii. Giving precedence to the critical importance of supra segmental features that are used to communicate meaning in the context of discourse;
- iii. The essence of the integration of segmental and supra segmental features in the actual classroom practice;

- iv. The role of the teacher could possibly be as a facilitator, coach and organizer of instructional activities;
- v. A focus on meaningful practice and especially speech- activity experiences suited to the communication styles and needs of the learners' real- life situations;
- vi. A focus on the link between listening and pronouncing/ speaking and a need to expand the nature and the range of pronunciation- oriented activities;
- vii. A focus on important sound- spelling relationships;
- viii. The revised expectations of the whole person learner involvement.

In general, foreign language programs should start by establishing long range oral communication goals and objectives that identify pronunciation needs as well as speech functions and the contexts in which they may occur (Morley, 1998). To this end, the intended study deserves to assess the status of pronunciation teaching of our elementary foreign language program whether or not it goes with the above mentioned current thoughts of pronunciation teaching.

### **2.3. Predominant Debates on Pronunciation Teaching**

In the history of foreign or second language pedagogy, issues related to pronunciation teaching have been wide- ranging debates among scholars (Celce- Murcia and Goodwin, 1991). And various language teaching methods and approaches of different times reacted quite differently to the essence and goal of pronunciation teaching. Questions 'what pronunciation features should be taught?', 'How to teach it?', and 'To whom pronunciation should be taught?' have also remained unresolved yet. And, in this section, an attempt will be made to review the prevailing debates.

### **2.3.1. Does Pronunciation Matter?**

As mentioned in the previous section, it has been a growing dissatisfaction in the second language pedagogy for scant attention has been placed on the importance of teaching pronunciation. Pronunciation materials and course books designed even in light of communicative approach reveal that pronunciation instruction is still superficially addressed in most cases (Morley 1991, Harmer 2001, Richards and Renandya, 2002). This situation, of course, appears because 'there have been many differences of opinions over the years about the value of teaching pronunciation and how best to teach it' (Celce-Murcia and Goodwin, 1991:136). In Grammar-translation, for example, pronunciation instruction was absent from the second/ foreign language classroom for a long time as it was taken as irrelevant (Morley, 1991; Richards and Renandya, 2002). Pronunciation got its relative place in the Direct and Audio-lingual methods, but it was treated discretely (Ibid).

With the adoption of communicative language teaching, pronunciation, however, relatively gets its place due to the increasing needs of students for fluent speaking abilities (Hedge, 2000; Brown, 1992). Nonetheless, as Jenkins (2000) states, pronunciation teaching is still downgraded pedagogically as a result of difficulties in aligning it with and incorporating it into more communicative approaches to language teaching.

However, there has been, more or less, a continual progress to bring pronunciation back on stage (Morley, 1991; Taylor, 1991). This is because learners' aspirations to understand utterance and to respond in the foreign language depend on their pronunciation skills as well. Therefore, giving scant attention or total ignorance to pronunciation for both language curriculum designers and teachers is 'an abrogation of professional responsibility' (Morley, 1991:489). Emphasizing the fact that pronunciation teaching is a must, Fraser (1999:1) argue that:

*You can live without advanced vocabulary--- you can use simple words to say you want to say. You can live without advanced grammar... you can use simple grammar structures instead. But there is no as such thing as simple pronunciation. If you do not have good pronunciation, you can have bad pronunciation*

In view of this, Otlowski (1998:3) quoting Morley (1991) says:

*Intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence. Teachers should include pronunciation in their courses and expect students to do well in them. Without adequate pronunciation skill, the learner's ability to communicate is severely limited.*

Therefore, English pronunciation is something that teachers cannot afford to ignore in the teaching of English for it is a prominent aspect in the students' general foreign language learning.

### **2.3.2. Goal of Pronunciation Teaching: Intelligibility**

Traditional Pronunciation goals, by and large, exhort foreign language learners to strive for 'perfect' pronunciation, and/or 'near-native' pronunciation (Kenworthy, 1987, Morley, 1991). In this traditional view of pronunciation goals, accuracy based production via imitation, memorization, drills and dialogues are highly emphasized but not fluency. Due to this, the communicative aspect of the language was forgotten. Foreign language teachers were assumed to be native or native- like speakers of the language. As a result, pronunciation was negatively reacted by many methods and approaches particularly in the period of late 1960s and early 1970s as the goal of native or native- like pronunciation was unable to be succeeded (Parcell and Suter, 1980:271-81).

However, in recent decades, and perhaps due to the effect of globalization as a worldwide phenomenon, the general goals of pronunciation teaching have primed the effective use of the spoken language to establish successful communication. Hence, it could be more sensible to think that intelligible pronunciation appears to be a more realistic and achievable goal instead of

pushing learners to strive for ‘perfect’ pronunciation (Morley, 1991; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Brown, 1992; Richards and Renandya, 2002, etc).

But what does ‘intelligibility’ mean? As Kenworthy (1987:13) states, “intelligibility is being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation.” On the other hand, Tench (1981:18) viewed the term ‘intelligibility’ in a wide scope as follows:

*Intelligibility would be impaired, for instance, if the wrong word was chosen or if some features of grammar are unrecognizable. It would obviously also be impaired if a word was mispronounced or if a sentence was uttered with odd rhythm and intonation patterns.*

Of all the aspects of the language, like lexis, grammar, etc. pronunciation, however, is the greatest source of intelligibility failure. To this effect, a study undertaken on the causes of intelligibility failure in Nigerian English depicted that pronunciation errors constitute 91.2% (i.e. rhythmic and stress errors = 38.2%, segmental =33%, phonotactic errors = 20%); and it has been found that the share of lexis and syntactic errors is only 8.8%, (Kral, 1994:108).

The question here should not be “what is correct in relation to a native-speaker norm”, but “what is appropriate and necessary to be able to communicate in specific situations” (Dalton and Seidlhofer 1994:12). As Morley (1991:498) mentioned “... perfect or native like pronunciation is not necessary condition for comprehensive communicative output.”

However, this does not mean that we should necessarily discourage the learners from setting themselves ‘high’ goals, i.e. achieving native-like pronunciation. This is because there are some learners who wish to achieve native like proficiency. This is not, however, true for the majority of learners in most cases in the foreign language context (Kenworthy, 1987). In setting goals for our learners, we need only to consider the effect of learners’ inadequate pronunciation skills on their communicative abilities. This is because learners

may fail to communicate orally unless their pronunciation fulfills ‘a threshold level of pronunciation’ (Morley, 1991). To put it differently, learners’ inadequate pronunciation knowledge and skills can create meaning distortion in their real life communication.

But, what is the problem if our language curriculum aims at achieving beyond intelligible pronunciation, i.e., a native-like pronunciation, proficiency? The possible answer could be that native-like pronunciation is likely to be ideal and unachievable in most cases, and even devastating in some circumstances (Kenworthy, 1987; Tench, 1981; Morley, 1991; Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994, etc).

Of course, some factors can be related to the challenges of setting native-like pronunciation as a goal of pronunciation teaching in EFL classes. The first would be the limited need of learners to aim beyond intelligibility. In this regard, Tench (1981:17) points out as, “... most language learners have modest ambitions and are not perfectionists.” Learners will easily refrain from making efforts to improve their pronunciation because of their being hopeless of meeting the unrealistic and unachievable, i.e. native-like, pronunciation. The other factor could be the issue of identity. Some EFL or ESL learners may not want to sound like native speakers. Rather, they “usually retain their own accent when they speak a foreign language simply to show their identity” (Harmer, 2001:184). Besides this, Kenworthy (1987:3) says, “In setting goals for our learners, we must consider the effect of mispronunciation on the listener and the degree of tolerances listeners will have for this.”

Accordingly, as Broughton et al., (1980) and Harmer (2001) state, EFL teachers should usually work on setting realistic and achievable goals of pronunciation for their learners. It is also a pertinent issue for teachers to concentrate on certain pronunciation features, which are vital for intelligibility and can impair communication if wrongly used, over others (Ibid). On the top of this notion, Ethiopia Elementary English teachers must also work on setting realistic and

achievable goal, i.e. intelligible pronunciation, as a minimum requirement for both their own and their students. This goal really, in turn, helps them not easily to get their desperation and not to be hindered from getting their confidence and interest to engage in the teaching of pronunciation.

### **2.3.3. What to Teach: Pronunciation Features**

Two groups of features are involved in pronunciation: segmental and supra segmental (Roach, 2000; Kenworthy, 1987; Tench, 1981). Segmental features are the basic inventory of distinctive sounds whereas supra segmental features transcend the level of individual sound and include stress, intonation rhythm, etc. On the other hand, Roach (1991), Morley (1991) and Brown (1992) noted another distinctive feature of English pronunciation in which the sounds of words change when they come into contact with other in a row speech. This is said to be 'connected speech'.

#### **2.3.3.1. Segmental Features**

These refer to sounds of the language, and they include vowels, consonants, and diphthongs (Kenworthy, 1987; Tench, 1981; Roach, 1991). As all the above mentioned authors and Harmer (2001) stated, foreign language learners should know the different sounds of the language and their features if learners are to understand what is said to them and be understood in their turn. Hence, foreign language teachers have to work on helping their learners to identify the various sounds of the language and how those sounds are produced.

Learners, however, usually face in studying the foreign language sounds because of either their mother- tongue interference or the absence of some sounds of the foreign language in their mother- tongue (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994). Teachers, therefore, get a focus on the difficulty areas of learners in mastering the new set of sounds (Ibid). In addition to this, Celce- Murcia, Goodwin and Brinton (1996) confirm that teachers must be responsive to

learners' needs and explore a variety of methods to help learners comprehend pronunciation features.

### **2.3.3.2. Supra segmental Features**

The most recent trend in pronunciation teaching claims that we should focus on teaching supra segmental rather than worry about the pronunciation of sounds. This is because they are closely related to communication.

Since supra segmental elements provide a crucial context and support (they determine meaning) for segmental production, they should get more emphasis on pronunciation instruction (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996, and Morley, 1991). These include:

- Stress- a combination of length, loudness, and pitch applied to syllables in a word;
- Intonation- the rising and falling of voice pitch across phrases and sentences;
- Rhythm- the regular, patterned beat of stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses;
- Prominence- speaker's act of highlighting words to emphasize meaning or intent;
- Adjustments in connected speech- modifications of sounds within and between words in streams of speech.

The debate here is to make a decision of whether segmental or prosodic features (supra segmental) that should be taught in pronunciation classes. Some argue that pronunciation features that are important for intelligibility should be given precedence and taught over others while some others still argue that students must first master the discrete English sounds (Jenkins, 2000).

Many research findings have revealed that the importance of supra segmental features for intelligible pronunciation should be given due emphasis in the foreign language classes. Jenkins (2000), however, strongly argues that

segmental features are also the necessary requirements for intelligible pronunciation. The author further states, “Segmental transfer errors can prove highly detrimental to successful communication in English” (p.39). Hence, it would be reasonable to give a relative emphasis to both segmental and supra segmental features.

#### **2.3.4. The Age Factor in Learning Pronunciation**

The debate over the impact of age on language acquisition and specifically pronunciation is varied. Emphasizing the fact that research results on this issue are still conflicting, Kenworthy (1987:4) says,

*Linguists and language teachers have been both fascinated by the question: is there an age-related limit on the mastery of pronunciation in second language learning? This is a much researched topic, but the studies have unfortunately yielded conflicting results.*

Even though this factor is still controversial, most researchers and scholars argue that pronunciation teaching is more effective if it is done at the early age of the learners. In support of this, Ur (1996:186-87) states the following:

*Young children learn language better and foreign language learning in school should start early ... probably teenagers are overall the best learners. The only apparent exception to this is pronunciation, which is learned more easily by young children.*

In support of this, Stern (1992:113) quoting Allen and Valette informs us, “most teachers agree that early insistence on correct pronunciation can save many hours of remedial work later on. Bad habits are easily formed and very difficult to change.”

On the other hand, most researchers agree that adults find pronunciation more difficult than children do. Stevens (1977:82) gives some reasons why older learners could not learn second language pronunciation effectively. These include:

- reduced auditory discrimination;
- inferior self-monitoring;

- reduced power of mimicry;
- increased shyness.
- Greater reliance on writing

Therefore, even if we do not have evidence for a simple and straight forward answer to the relationship between age and ability to learn the pronunciation of a language, several writers in EFL teaching argue that younger children learn pronunciation better than older ones. In such instance, pronunciation teaching should be given a considerable attention from the start. Based on this fact, it seems to be reasonable for the researcher to explore the current status of our pronunciation teaching with particular reference to elementary schools.

## **2.4. Approaches to Pronunciation Teaching**

In the foregoing discussion, attempts have been made to show only the predominant arguments in the teaching of pronunciation. Every concern on pronunciation teaching is, however, a debating issue. The approaches, methods and procedures of pronunciation teaching, for example, are areas of debating among methodologists and theorists of foreign language teaching. And, this section, an overview of approaches and procedures of pronunciation teaching is to be presented.

### **2.4.1. Structural Approach**

In this traditional approach, pronunciation learning is considered as habit formation. In this regard, Lado (1964) argues that pronunciation of a language is acquired through imitation by forming habits or systems of habits. The author remarks that the set of habit formation operates without the awareness of the individual.

On the other hand, the structural approach (Dalton and Seidlhofer: 1994) parallels with bottom-up approach. In bottom- up approach, the ‘segmental features’ are given priority in the foreign language teaching. In other words, the bottom-up approach begins with the articulation of individual sounds and

works up towards intonation, stress and rhythm while the top-down approach begins with patterns of intonation and brings separate sounds into sharper focus as and when required (Ibid).

To this end, a drill is often used as a sole method of structural approach in the teaching of pronunciation. Here the assumption is that once learners practice the drill, they will learn the pronunciation features. In support of this view, Stevick (1982) argues that the traditional technique of drilling is the best approach to the teaching of pronunciation.

However, it is quite impractical to make use of pronunciation features learnt in drills in real situations without having been provided practice in meaningful activities. In this regard, Kral (1986:108) conveys the following:

*Pronunciation drills limited to dealing with minimal pair or repetition within a word or sentence level are easy to learn while practicing them, but only to find them hard for use when they appear in real contexts.*

Fraser (1999) also remarks that drill is a device for boring that it does not provide intensive practice nor does it enable learners use in real life situations. The reason is that a drill does not give enough opportunities for real language use and meaningful practice.

In the same vein, Brown (1992) confirms that learning pronunciation by de-emphasizing the meaning causes boredom. Learners' attention would be distracted if they practice the utterances without understanding the meaning (Tench, 1981:26). Teaching pronunciation without setting contexts deprives learners of the opportunities of involving in meaningful activities using pronunciation variables in particular and language in general. Hence, "there should be a set context in which learners get oral practice and real language use" (Broughton et al, 1978:50). Regarding this, Morley (1991:496) also argues that students can do well in the pronunciation of English if the pronunciation

class is taken out off meaningless isolation and becomes an integral part of oral communication class.

Many scholars in the area, however, argue that using integrated approach does not mean completely avoiding using an isolated approach to pronunciation teaching. There may be a need to use isolated approach to pronunciation teaching. In view of this, Tench (1981:3) says, “pronunciation has to be isolated for practice of specific items and problems, like the articulation of ‘th’ or various vowels and so on.”

#### **2.4.2. Communicative Approach**

There has been a prominent shift within the field of language learning and teaching with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching over the last twenty years. In parallel to this new shift of interest, a move from specific linguistic competencies to broader communicative competencies has emerged as goals for teachers and students (Morley, 1991; Richards and Rodgers 2001; Brown, 1992). As a result, the need for the integration of pronunciation with oral communication, a change of emphasis from segmental to supra segmental, meaningful task-based practices, and group interaction were emphasized within the field of pronunciation teaching (Celce- Murcia, 1991; and Morley, 1991).

The communicative approach acknowledges the importance of pronunciation features, but differently from the traditional approach. As Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) state, this approach shifts from ‘bottom-up’ approach to top-down approach. In the top-down approach, the central assumption is that once the prosodic features (supra segmental) are in place, the necessary segmental discriminations will follow accordingly. This approach aims at intelligible pronunciation while the bottom-up approach rather aims at total accuracy.

To this effect, the traditional methods of teaching are found incompatible with the notion that pronunciation teaching should be communication oriented (Kenworthy, 1987; Morley, 1991, Broughton et al. 1980, etc). Similarly, Pennington and Richards (1986) emphasize that practice on segmental as well as supra-segmental levels of the sound system needs to be integrated with broader level communicative activities in which speakers and listeners engage in a process of exchanging meaningful information.

Brown (1992:13) also argues that pronunciation teaching needs to be integrated into the language as a whole and not studied as a phenomenon divorced from the process of communication. In addition to this, Paker (2000:21) citing Morley (1991) states, "Pronunciation taught in isolation does not carry over to improved pronunciation in actual communication." Supporting the above view, Kenworthy (1987) also states the following:

*Students can resolve their pronunciation problems in pronunciation lessons, but they may fail in general class work. Only few pronunciation difficulties students can overcome with a single isolated pronunciation lesson.*

On the other hand, Brown (1992) citing Celce-Murcia (1987) reviewed the following guidelines how best teachers can employ integrated approach in the teaching of pronunciation. These include:

- i. identify your students problem areas;
- ii. find Lexical/ grammatical contexts with many natural occurrences of the problem sound(s);
- iii. develop communicative tasks that incorporate the word;
- iv. develop at least three or four exercises so that they can recycle the problem and keep practicing the target sound (s) with new contexts.

To this end, the communicative method of pronunciation teaching gives more help for our teachers in any context to integrate pronunciation with the general language class work. This approach also holds that oral communication is the

primary use of language and therefore should be central to the mode of instruction. However sound this approach, in most language classroom in our own context, the teaching of pronunciation, if there is any, is far from this practice.

## **2.5. Classroom Procedures of Pronunciation Teaching**

Here, an attempt has also been made to overview the approaches of pronunciation teaching into two broad categories as structural and communicative approach. It has also been seen that the two approaches have quite different classroom practices and procedures of pronunciation teaching. In this section, the three separate procedures that are named (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994) as ‘explanation’, ‘exercise’, and ‘exposure’ will be examined. Dalton and Seidlhofer viewed that these three separate procedures can address how pronunciation points are actually taught in foreign language classrooms.

The first dimension, ‘explanation’ refers to the explicit or overt way of pronunciation teaching instead of the implicit one. Teachers are expected to help learners by providing with explanations about the sounds and patterns of speech (Ibid).

‘Exercise’ procedure, however, focuses on practice on the form of specific features of pronunciation (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994:72). This procedure is closely associated with the traditional procedure of identifying specific sound feature and providing practice in perception and production (Ibid). The practice is mainly undertaken by imitation.

As Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994:71) stated, in ‘exposure’ procedure, there is ‘no explicit attention is paid to the specific features of pronunciation. However, some kind of tasks and activities that create real language use and that promote the occurrence of spoken language will be provided for the learners. Pronunciation teaching in this procedure is viewed as the use of language for some communicative purposes (Ibid).

## **2.6. The Role of the Teacher in Pronunciation Teaching**

As mentioned earlier, the views of the different trends of language teaching on the role of the teacher particularly in pronunciation teaching would be quite different. In traditional approach of pronunciation teaching, the role of the teacher, for example was to be a perfect model for the students while in communicative approach, the role of the teacher is to be ‘speech coach’ or ‘pronunciation coach’ (Morley 1991:507). Other writers also pointed out various roles of the EFL teacher in Pronunciation teaching.

According to Wahba (1998), students’ learning pronunciation can be facilitated when the learners are aware of what is involved. The author confirms that most of the time learners are unable to do this by themselves. Supporting this view, Kenworthy (1987:2) says,

*The teacher has to be more conscious of deciding what type of exercises and activities will be helpful for students since learning pronunciation is a difficult task to be performed by the students alone.*

In pronunciation class, the teacher also has to pay more attention to the area where students are likely to have problems. With this respect, Kenworthy (1987:2) states the following:

*Learners need to know what to pay attention to and what to work on in pronunciation.... Students may not realize when a particular word is stressed or said in a different way that can affect the message which is sent to the listener.*

Furthermore, in order to make the teaching- learning of pronunciation effective, students should also get some feedbacks about their performance. In relation to this, Kenworthy (1987) and Celce-murcia and Goodwin (1981) assert that English language teachers must provide learners with information about their performance in learning pronunciation.

On the other hand, Morley (1981:507) summarizes the roles of the teacher as 'speech coach' or 'pronunciation coach'. As to her, rather than just correcting students' mistakes, an EFL teacher is supposed to:

- supply information;
- give models from time to time;
- set high standards;
- provide a wide range of practice opportunities and overall supports;
- encourage the learners.

Hence, the role of EFL teacher is not mainly to be a model worthy of imitation but to be a motivator or a facilitator in pronunciation class.

## **2.7. Factors Influencing Pronunciation Teaching**

### **2.7.1. The Inadequacy of Teachers' Trainings**

In communities where English is taught as a second or foreign language, students have little or no opportunity for direct contact with the language outside the English class. In such instances, English teachers seem to be the only model for the pupils to imitate: competent teachers become good models, while insufficient ones stay being poor models (Fangazhi, 1998). However, to have competent and effective English teachers, training that involves adequate theoretical preparation and practice is essential. In view of this, Brown (1990:87) as cited in Abiy (2002:82) points out that the teacher in the course of training needs to acquire "knowledge of the what, how, and why of teaching a language." Abiy (2002:90) himself further argues that the language teacher education should aim at promoting the trainees' linguistic and pedagogic competence.

The professional language teachers ( Broughton, 1980; and Dalton and Seidlhofer,1994) are required to be competent and have good mastery of pronunciation so that they can strive for making their pronunciation teaching

virile. Acquiring the necessarily knowledge of pronunciation (like knowledge of phonetics) for a teacher, for instance, is a must.

However, in our context, the overall language proficiency of our English teachers is unsatisfactory. The problem is that teachers have not usually been equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills of the subject matter in the course of their pre-service trainings (Abiy, 2002). Of course, the problem gets worse and worse in the case of teachers' pronunciation trainings. As a result, teachers usually tend to ignore the teaching of pronunciation. In view of this, Brown (1992) states that the majority of teachers lack their interest and confidence to teach pronunciation as many of them have received little training in how to teach it. Similarly, Fraser (2000) confirms that many language teachers do not want to prioritize pronunciation because they lack confidence and/or skill in teaching it. In relation to this, Murdoch (1994:254) says, "for non-native English teachers, language proficiency will always represent the bed rock of their professional confidence."

As discussed above, teachers who have not had adequate trainings in pronunciation or good mastery of pronunciation fail to have enthusiasm and confidence to teach it. This is to mean that their inadequate pre-service and in-service pronunciation trainings can have a deleterious effect on their classroom practice. This, in turn, profoundly affects the learners' learning of the language in general and pronunciation in particular.

### **2.7.2. The Inadequacy of Course Materials**

The roles and effectiveness of textbooks in foreign language classroom largely depend on the way they are designed. For instance, the emphasis given to the lesson and time allocation is a determinant factor that profoundly influences the teaching of any aspect of the language either positively or negatively. Hence, the place given to pronunciation lessons has its own share for the

actual classroom practice of pronunciation teaching and learning. In support of this, Celce-Murcia 1991 states the following:

*The extent of pronunciation instruction will vary according to the availability and the focus of the course. Moreover, if a lot of time is allowed for the teaching of pronunciation, students become more beneficial because learners can get enough time to exercise and pick up even the most difficult articulation of the new pronunciation. It also allows learners to be exposed to variety of pronunciation models (Celce-Murcia, 1991:137)*

The proper place of pronunciation in the language curriculum, particularly as an integral part of communication should, therefore, be the primary objective of any course designers in a given context. Gimson (1980) also asserts that in any course of English, a realistic amount of time should be devoted to practice in the spoken language, mainly in pronunciation.

Unfortunately, in most English language courses, pronunciation is the aspect upon which least time is spent (Morley, 1991). However, Ann Baker (1982) argues that the negligence of pronunciation in many language programs gets worse and worse at lower grades. To put it in his own words, Baker says, "In course planning often little or no time is allocated to pronunciation at beginner level, but more time is allocated as courses progress" (P.1).

More specifically, textbooks that contain adequate pronunciation features and a range of pronunciation lessons and activities can, however, create good opportunities for students to make practice. They can also create a conducive environment for teachers to possess their interest and enthusiasm in the teaching of pronunciation. For making the teaching and learning of pronunciation more effective, adequate textbooks with a range of pronunciation lessons and activities should, therefore, be designed and provided for both teachers and students (Fraser, 2000). To this effect, course designers and teachers need to go hand-in-hand for giving a considerable emphasis to students' pronunciation needs.

What a pertinent issue for course designers and teachers is, pronunciation features and approaches should be adopted for the existing EFL curriculum. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) answer this question saying that a particular direction will not perhaps be advisable. This would rather be determined in accordance with purpose, level of the learners, learner needs, etc. in that particular situation where the program is taking place (Ibid). For instance, the difficult areas students could possibly face in communication, the issue of first language interference, and the purpose of the language learning (academic, specific purpose, general purpose,... etc) should primarily get a focus on deciding pronunciation features (Ibid:70-71). In relation to this topic, Brown (1992:11) citing Kenworthy (1987) stressed that of the problems learners face those that are more important for intelligibility should be high precedence.

### **2.7.3. Learner Factors**

Research has contributed some important data on learner factors that can influence the learning and teaching of pronunciation skills. Some of the learner factors that dominantly influence the actual classroom practice include: learner's age, learner attitude and motivation, native language, aptitude, etc (Celce-muricia, Goodwin and Brinton, 1996 and Graham, 1994).

The pronunciation of a learner might be affected by a combination of these factors. The key is to be aware of their existence so that they may be considered in creating realistic and effective pronunciation goals and development plans for the learners (Kenworthy, 1987). For example, a learner who is a native speaker of Amharic will perhaps need assistance with different pronunciation features than will a native Oromipha speaker. Hence, even if the debates over these factors and the research findings are not yet conclusive, teachers should not deny that these factors can have their own impacts on their pronunciation teaching. By so doing, they need to strive for accommodating these factors in the actual classroom though the act of accommodation by itself is challenging.

## **2.8. Language Teacher Efficacy**

As stated in chapter one, the perception teachers hold about their capabilities (their self-efficacy) is a predominant variable that can influence their classroom practices either positively or negatively.

Teacher efficacy or teachers' confidence in their ability to promote students' learning was identified almost 25 years ago as one of the few teacher characteristics related to achievement in a study by the RAND Corporation (Armol et al, 1976). Since that early study, teacher efficacy has been associated with such significant variables as student motivation, teachers' adoption of innovations, superintendents' ratings of teacher competence, teachers' classroom management strategies, time spent teaching certain subjects (Ibid). Due to this, the role of self- efficacy in teaching and learning continues to interest researchers and practitioners alike.

Teachers with high sense of efficacy, for example, are found to have a strong conviction that they can influence student learning even the learning of those students who may be more challenging (Guskey and Passaro, 1994). These teachers are open to new ideas and more willing to experiment with and try new strategies better to meet their students' needs (Guskey, 1988; Stein and Wang, 1988).

In contrast, however, teachers with low efficacy feel that they only have minimal influence on student achievement. These teachers give up more easily when confronted with difficult situations, are less resourceful, and oftentimes feel that students cannot learn because of the unfavorable circumstances (Ashton and Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1977). Overall, non- efficacious teachers tend to ignore to engage in tasks.

Therefore, the perception teachers have about their capabilities has a profound influence on their teaching any aspect of language particularly on their pronunciation instruction as it is a complex task and requires their perseverance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study is mainly designed to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching in grades 7 and 8 in four elementary schools in Injibara town, Amhara Region. For this purpose, an attempt is made to examine the approach of pronunciation teaching, its place and the teachers' beliefs and efficacy. To this end, a descriptive survey method is employed as 'it is pertinent to assess the existing situations, beliefs and perceptions and practices' (Gall et al. 1996). Accordingly, a multiple- method approach is deployed as it enables the researcher "to see the thing from different perspectives and to understand the topic in a more rounded and complete fashion than would be the case had the data been drawn from just one method" (Denscombe, 2003: 132). This is because examining the status of pronunciation teaching, which appears to be some sort of evaluation of the prevailing situations, requires the researcher to elicit information from different angles. Accordingly, both qualitative and quantitative (simple descriptive statistics) methods are used for data analysis.

#### **3.2. Subjects of the Study**

The subjects of this study are both grades 7 and 8 English teachers in the four available elementary and junior secondary schools, namely Kosober, Injibara, Bahunk and Andinet. All 13 (5 male and 8 female) teachers are taken for the main study. However, the researcher did not take the students for the study for fear that they might not give adequate responses. The second reason is that the intended study aims at investigating the teachers' perceptions, place of pronunciation and the teaching aspect of pronunciation.

### **3.3. Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection**

In order to come up with adequate and reliable information about the study, four types of data collection instruments-questionnaire, focus group discussion (FGD), classroom observation and content analysis- were used. The researcher employed these different instruments for the study as the study is more of qualitative. Selinger and Shohamy (1989:122) state that, “Qualitative research utilizes a variety of means to collect data. Often, several different methods are used in the same study in order to compile a more complete picture of the activity, or event being described.” Of course, the two instruments, i.e. questionnaire and textbook analysis, were taken as major instruments while the other two instruments, i.e. classroom observation and focus group discussion, were taken as supplementary ones.

#### **3.3.1. Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was set mainly to obtain information on teachers’ stated beliefs and perception about their capabilities in teaching pronunciation as it is convenient “to collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed” (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989:122). The items of the questionnaire were designed and developed basically using the ideas of Morley (1991) and Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994). The first ten items in the questionnaire were mainly designed to elicit information on the beliefs teachers possess about the roles of pronunciation in students’ EFL learning and in their own general language proficiency. The researcher intentionally included these items in the questionnaire so as to find out either the teachers’ self- perception about their capabilities or their beliefs about the roles of pronunciation have a direct influence on their actual classroom practice of pronunciation teaching. The second ten items (Items 11-20) were used to explore the teachers’ self- efficacy (the perceptions they hold about their capabilities in the teaching of pronunciation). These items were adapted from the questionnaires used by prominent people (Bandura, 1986 and Pajares, 1999) in the area. The rest of

the items (Items 21-29) directly dealt with the procedures and techniques that teachers would use in pronunciation instruction. Lastly, few open-ended items were included to supplement the closed- ended items.

The questionnaire was then administered by the researcher himself with the provision of explanation and clarifications on the aims, instructions and items.

### **3.3.2. Focus Group Discussion**

The focus group discussion (FGD) was also used as data collection instrument for the study. It was conducted after the questionnaire and classroom observations were undertaken. The purpose was to supplement and enrich the information that was drawn by the questionnaire and textbook analysis. The researcher preferred this instrument mainly because of three reasons.

- The combined effect of the group will produce a wider range of information, insight and ideas than will the commulation of the responses of a number of individuals when these replies are secured privately;
- A comment by one individual often triggers a chain of responses from other participants;
- The participants usually find comfort in group discussion and are more willing to express their ideas and feelings.

Seven (3 male and 4 female) teachers from the four schools were made to participate in the discussion. Before starting the discussion, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Moreover, they were made to be sure that they will remain anonymous in the presentation and discussion of the results of the study.

And then, with their full consent, the discussion was conducted by probing questions and a tape recorder. To make the communication more effective, the discussion was made using their vernacular language, i.e., Amharic. Since they had their own awareness of the issue in the questionnaire, there were long

interval and thoughtful discussions among them. Additional comments were given by group members after they heard the questions posed by the researcher and the responses of others. The responses were then collected in both tape- recording and writing. Finally, the discussion was transcribed and analyzed.

### **3.3.3. Classroom Observation**

Since one component of this study was to explore the approach of pronunciation teaching, the researcher employed classroom observation so as to see mainly what was/is happening in the actual classroom where pronunciation lessons are included explicitly. This is because ‘classroom observation is more productive in generating information on language teaching learning practices as they occur instantly’ (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This data gathering tool was taken as supplementary one for the purpose of triangulating the information gathered by other tools. The reason is that the researcher thought there was no more time to stay in the research area so as to record more lessons when pronunciation teaching occurs explicitly.

The observation was conducted with the help of both video and tape recorders after the questionnaire was administered to teachers. Only a lesson that was taught by five teachers in their respective schools was purposefully recorded. This is because the researcher got the five teachers’ full consent on that single lesson as they thought the selected lesson was relatively simple for them to teach it. Those few recorded lessons were then transcribed.

The result of the observation would be judged in light of the teachers’ group discussion and their questionnaire responses for the purpose of evaluating their self-efficacy and their beliefs.

### **3.3.4. Textbook Analysis**

This method of data gathering tool was taken as a major instrument to gather information about the place of pronunciation in students’ textbooks and in the

general EFL instruction. To this end, the place or emphasis given to pronunciation in both grades was analyzed thoroughly in relation to the overall contents of the textbooks. By doing this, it was possible to identify:

- the share of pronunciation lessons in relation to the overall contents of the textbooks;
- the approach of pronunciation lessons included in the textbooks.

For this purpose, the researcher also tried to make use of the teachers' manual and the syllabus of each grade. An attempt was made by the researcher to develop his own evaluation checklist on the basis of the review of literature as he was unable to easily access any previously used standard checklist.

### **3.4. Development of the Instruments**

The development of the instruments underwent the following processes. First of all, the researcher constructed and developed the items on the bases of the objectives of the study and the existing literature. The draft items were then given to the researcher's advisor. Taking his comments and suggestions into account, the researcher reshaped the tools.

And then, before applying the methods to the main study, the researcher piloted particularly the items of questionnaire so as to cross check how appropriate and adequate those items were to meet the purpose of the study. The researcher conducted the pilot study here in Addis Birhan Elementary and Junior School in Yeka Sub-city and 7 teachers were made to participate in the pilot study. By so doing, some items were reordered and modified, and few were discarded.

### **3.5. Methods of Data Analysis**

The data from the four instruments involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis or interpretation. The data gathered through the questionnaire were first tallied before the responses were tabulated under each item and analyzed with simple descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean score

and grand mean. In this regard, Kumar (1999) states that simple statistical measures such as percentages and means are helpful to reduce the volume of the data and make it easier to understand. An attempt was also made to calculate the Pearson correlation coefficient to see whether the teachers' beliefs correlate with their self-efficacy.

Besides the percentage values, the grand mean was used to interpret the data. As Gall et al. (1996) stated, if the mean score of the positive item is greater than the grand mean, it implies that the teachers are positively inclined to the item and have strong self-perception and vice versa. On the other hand, if the mean score of the negative item is greater than the grand mean, it means that the teachers show agreement to the item while if the mean score of the negative item is less than or equal to the grand mean, it means that they show disagreement to the item.

The researcher also tried to organize and facilitate the analysis of the data collected through textbook analysis by tabulating the occurrences of each language component, pronunciation feature and classroom procedure of pronunciation teaching in the checklist using frequency and percentage value.

The data gathered through the supplementary ones (FGD and classroom observation) were, however, transcribed and discussed as a support for the discussion of the results of the data collected through both questionnaire and textbook analysis.

Finally, based on the findings obtained, summary, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

As noted earlier, the intent of the study was to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching in elementary schools. This was made possible mainly by assessing the teachers' beliefs about the roles of pronunciation, their perceptions about their capabilities in pronunciation teaching, the approach of its teaching and the place of pronunciation teaching in the curriculum. Accordingly, the whole data collected are presented and discussed in light of the above mentioned interrelated areas of pronunciation instruction. There are two major sections (teachers' responses and textbook analysis) that make up this chapter.

#### **4.1. Presentation and Discussion of Teachers' Responses**

The data were gathered from teachers' questionnaire responses, their group discussion and the classroom observation undertaken. The data presented and discussed in this section are mainly based on the teachers' questionnaire responses while their responses from their group discussion and the classroom observation are primarily used to supplement and enrich the data analysis made from the teachers' questionnaire responses. Teachers' questionnaire responses are organized and discussed as follows under three sub-headings.

##### **4.1.1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Roles of Pronunciation in EFL Instruction**

This section is concerned with the teachers' beliefs about the importance of pronunciation for students' EFL learning in general and their communicative abilities in particular. To this end, the first ten items in the questionnaire were used to obtain information about teachers' beliefs on the roles of pronunciation. The table below shows the percentages and mean scores of the teachers' responses to each item under this point.

**Table 1: Teachers' Beliefs on the Roles of Pronunciation**

Items	Responses										Sum <sup>n</sup>	Mean scores
	SA		A		UD		DA		SDA			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	2	15.38	11	84.61	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	4.15
2	4	30.76	7	53.84	1	7.69	1	7.69			13	4.07
3	8	61.53	5	38.46	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	4.61
4	4	30.76	6	46.15	1	7.69	2	15.38	-	-	13	3.92
5	4	30.76	7	53.84	1	7.69	1	7.69	-	-	13	4.07
6	2	15.38	9	69.23	2	15.38	-	-	-	-	13	4.00
7	5	38.46	8	61.53	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	4.38
8	3	23.07	8	61.53	-	-	2	15.38	-	-	13	3.92
9	-	-	2	15.38	1	7.69	7	53.84	3	23.07	13	2.15
10	4	30.76	6	46.15	2	15.38	-	-	1	7.69	13	3.92

Grand mean= 3.82

**Key:** SA=Strongly agree=5, A=Agree=4, UD=Undecided=3, DA=Disagree=2  
SDA=Strongly disagree=1, Sum<sup>n</sup> = Total Number of Teachers, F= Frequency.

Under item 1 above, teachers were asked to respond to the view that, “pronunciation is an essential component of communication as grammar or vocabulary.” As can be seen from the table, all the teachers (100%) appear to strongly favor the value of pronunciation in oral communication. In this regard, Otlowski (1998) argues that people orally communicate effectively if they have better pronunciation than better grammar and vocabulary. This is to mean that the teachers strongly believe that students need to learn pronunciation so far as they want to be acquainted with the spoken language. A similar result is depicted in item 2. As the above table illustrates, nearly all the teacher respondents (83.60%) showed their agreement to the claim that,

“Pronunciation should be taught and practiced in actual EFL classes with relative emphasis given to it as other language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, etc.”

In the teachers’ group discussion, the participants also suggested that students ought to learn pronunciation and acquire intelligible pronunciation so that they can comprehend the speech they hear and take part in any form of spoken communication successfully. Most of the participants in the discussion pointed out that they are still unable to hear news on broadcasts like BBC because of their inadequate knowledge and skills of pronunciation.

Item 9 above was also designed to obtain the teachers’ beliefs on the teaching of pronunciation when seen in comparison with the teaching of other aspects. The item reads: “pronunciation teaching is a waste of time, particularly in elementary schools, as there are a lot more important aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, speaking, etc., to be taught.” As depicted in the above table, the majority of teachers (76.91%) disagreed to the item. Yet the mean score of the item (2.15) which is less than the grand mean (3.82) reveals that they do not believe that pronunciation teaching is a waste of time or is a leisure activity. This shows that they want their students to get more practice on pronunciation and be proficient in it.

On the other hand, teachers were asked to reflect their beliefs on the view that, “unintelligibility is a matter of mispronunciation rather than ungrammaticality or misuse of words”. In response to this item 3, all the teachers (61.53% of strongly agree and 38.46% of agree) showed their agreement. Similarly, participants, while mentioning their own past experience during their group discussion, stressed that pronunciation is the greatest source of intelligibility failure. For instance, one of the participants in the FGD (fictitiously named Dagnachew) mentioned his own past experience as follows.

*In 2005, politics was a very sensitive issue in our country, Ethiopia, particularly after May 15 National Parliamentary Elections. Every body was insisting on getting fresh and valid news. Likewise, I tried my own best to listen to BBC, besides VOA Amharic service. Unfortunately, I was unable to comprehend what I heard. At the end I felt angry. And I don't think that it was because of the unfamiliarity of words but rather because of the unfamiliarity of pronunciation.*

A close look at the mean score of item 3 (4.61) which is much greater than the grand mean (3.82) also depicts the teachers' strong beliefs on the view that unintelligibility is a matter of mispronunciation rather than something else. The teachers' responses to the item could possibly coincide with 'a study undertaken on the causes of intelligibility failure in Nigerian English' (Kral: 1994). See chapter two, page 15.

In addition to this, in item 8, the teachers were asked to respond to the view that, "Being intelligible for the learner requires using stress, intonation and connected speech." As to this item, most of them (84.60%) expressed their agreement. Only 15.38% of the teachers disagreed on it. A close examination of the mean score of item 8 (3.92%) clearly shows that they have positive inclination to the item. The result of this item reveals that the teachers believe in the view that their pronunciation teaching can enhance the intelligibility of their students' speaking and language competence. Concerning this, Kenworthy (1987:53) says, "... a student who can pronounce and recognize every English sound may still be unintelligible and unable to understand the spoken language if he has not mastered English stress and intonation patterns." The teachers further reacted to item 4. They were asked whether or not they believe that students can acquire intelligible pronunciation in spite of the possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning process. The mean score of this item (3.92) reveals that the respondents agreed on the item.

On the other hand, items 6 and 7 directly or indirectly dealt with the interaction of speaking, listening and pronunciation. Item 6 was used in an attempt to know if the teachers believe that speaking involves articulating

individual sounds and uttering them with correct pronunciation. As to this, nearly all the teachers (15.38% of strongly agree and 69.23% of agree) showed their agreement to the item while 15.38% of them did not show either agreement or disagreement. Under item 7, all the teachers perceived that effective listening of the English language demands familiarity with features of spoken English such as stress, intonation and connected speech.

In the FGD, participants strongly claimed that their inadequate knowledge and skills of pronunciation usually hinder them from listening to any form of spoken communication. One of the participants who has been attending his summer degree programme in Bahir Dar University shared his own experience by saying:

*We were made to take listening examination last summer. The listening examination was conducted by the audio- recorded material of a native speaker. During the examination session, I got nervous because I could hardly recognize and comprehend what I heard and I thought it was a special challenge for me. But most of the examinees got nervous when they rushed out the language lab. And every body was scrambling and shouting! After three or four days, we felt shamed when the instructor gave us a copy of that listening text because most of the words were very familiar to us.*

Lastly, item 10 required the teachers to show their reactions to the view that, “pronunciation is involved whatever aspects of the language is taught.” The result of this item shows that most of the teachers (78.91%) believe that whatever aspect of language is being taught, pronunciation is involved. However, 7.6% of them showed their disagreement. Yet, the mean score of the item illustrates that the teachers more or less favoured the item. In response to item 5, the teachers have also got more opportunities to strengthen their beliefs in item 10. In item 5, they were required to show their reactions on the view that, “knowing a word involves how it is pronounced.” As to this, the majority of teachers (84.60%) expressed their agreement. The FGD participants also suggested that students usually get unfamiliar words in all units which are incorporated in their textbooks so that they should know how those words are

pronounced. The participants also added that there are some lessons which refer to ‘pronouncing words.’

Hence, it seems possible to infer from the above discussion that teachers in the sample schools have positive belief in the role of pronunciation in one’s general language proficiency. Their responses can really reflect their strong desire for acquiring adequate knowledge and skills of pronunciation. They also recommended that students need to acquire intelligible pronunciation so as to take part in any form of communication. In this regard, Kenworthy (1987:9) says, “A teacher who clearly demonstrates concern for the pronunciation and speaking of learners will stand a good chance of instilling a similar concern in the learners themselves.” In general, the belief teachers hold about pronunciation will possibly go with the current thoughts of foreign language teaching.

#### **4.1.2. Teachers’ Self-perceptions about their Capabilities in Teaching Pronunciation**

With respect to the teachers’ efficacies (their perceptions about their capabilities), the ten items (items 11-20) included were related to what the teachers think they are successful in making students acquire intelligible pronunciation. Teachers were asked as to what extent they think they can make their students learn and practice pronunciation features so as to develop their overall English language skills and make them effective communicators whenever the need arises. The responses were tabulated as follows.

**Table 2: Teachers' Self-efficacy in the Teaching of Pronunciation**

Items	Responses										Sum <sup>n</sup>	Mean scores
	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very Low			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
11	-	-	-	-	2	15.38	7	53.84	4	30.76	13	1.84
12	-	-	-	-	1	7.69	7	53.84	5	38.46	13	1.69
13	-	-	2	15.38	4	30.76	4	30.76	3	23.07	13	2.38
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	84.61	2	15.38	13	1.84
15	-	-	-	-	2	15.38	7	53.84	4	30.76	13	1.84
16	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	76.92	3	23.07	13	1.76
17	-	-	1	7.69	5	38.46	3	23.07	4	30.76	13	2.23
18	-	-	1	7.69	3	23.07	3	23.07	6	46.15	13	1.92
19	-	-	-	-	2	15.38	6	46.15	5	38.46	13	1.76
20	-	-	-	-	2	15.38	7	53.84	4	30.76	13	1.84

Grand mean =1.91

Under item 11, the teachers were asked as to what extent they think they can make their students learn and practice how individual English sounds are pronounced in words and speech. As to this, 53.84% and 30.76% of them gave “low” and “very low” responses from a five- point scale (very high, high, moderate, low and very low). Only 15.38% of them gave “moderate” response. The mean score of this item (1.84) which is less than the grand mean (1.91) illustrates that the teachers do not feel that they can make their students learn and practice how individual sounds are pronounced. In item 12, they were also asked whether they think they can make their students familiar with sounds that do not appear in their mother tongue. As can be seen from the table, 53.84% and 38.46% of them respectively gave “low” and “very Low” responses.

On the other hand, the teachers showed their reactions to item 13. In response to this item, 30.76% and 23.07% of them gave “low” and “very low” responses respectively. However, 15.38% and 30.76% of them gave “high” and “moderate” responses. The mean score of this item (2.38) which is greater than the grand mean (1.91) reveals that the teachers are positively inclined to the item. This implies that they believe that they can help their students to pronounce words in terms of sounds instead of orthographic symbols.

The results of items 11, 12 and 13 (their grand mean is 1.93) show that the teachers in the sample schools do not seem to have confidence to teach English sounds and help their students recognize those sounds. In contrast to this, however, Harmer (2001) confirms that learners of a language need to know the different sounds of the language and their features if they are to understand what is said to them and be understood in their turn. Teachers of the language should, therefore, make sure that their students can identify the various sounds that occur in the target language.

On the other hand, both items 14 and 15 were designed to examine the teachers’ confidence in teaching supra segmental features, particularly stress and intonation. In item 14, they were asked as to what extent they think they can make their students use stress to highlight information. As can be seen from the table, all of them gave “low” and “very low” responses.

In the open-ended part of the questionnaire in item 30 and in the group discussion, the participants pointed out that the teaching of English stress is really beyond their capabilities. For instance, they confirmed that they usually face challenges in pronouncing words that get a change of their parts of speech and their meanings because of their different pronunciations. One participant (fictitiously named Belay) says:

*In a little bit, the grade 8 textbook offers students opportunities to practice and recognize that the given few words can get a change of their parts of speech and their meanings because of the placing of stress on different syllables. Even if I am aware that English stress can have its own meaning from the linguistic courses, module 1 and 2, I usually skip this section I want to be frank. I do not have the necessary knowledge and skill to teach this section. Even I am in doubt to teach it in the future.*

The rest of the participants have also mentioned that teaching how words are stressed is a challenge for them to explain for their students why a particular syllable takes a primary stress within a word. It is true that teachers lose their interest to teach pronunciation since they get pronunciation teaching more difficult in most cases. In this regard, Haycraft (1981) states that teachers often neglect pronunciation teaching since they usually lack confidence to teach it methodologically.

In item 15, the sample teachers were asked as to what extent they think they can make their students use intonation to convey their emotions and attitudes. As to this, 53.84% and 30.76% of them gave “low” and “very low” responses respectively, and only 15.38% of them gave “moderate” response. Yet, the mean score of this item (1.84) also depicts that the teachers are, more or less, negatively inclined to the item. This tends to show that they are not confident enough to teach intonation. In view of this, Dalton (1997) confirms that teachers usually get nervous when dealing with sounds and intonation as they lack the basic knowledge to offer their students basic support.

Hence, it seems possible to deduce from the results of these two items (items 14 and 15) that teachers from the sample schools are not also interested in teaching supra segmental features. However, the effective teaching of these features offers learners a better opportunity to use the language intelligibly in every bit of conversation as these features play a crucial role in effective communication.

In addition to this, in item 16, the teachers were asked to express their general disposition as to what extent they think their knowledge and skill in teaching pronunciation is sufficient to teach their students. As to this, all the teachers (100%) do not believe that their knowledge and skill in teaching pronunciation is sufficient to help their students.

In their group discussion, most of them also confirmed that they do not feel comfortable to teach pronunciation features. As to their reasons, they claimed that they have not had adequate pronunciation training. They also added that they have never made any practice on how to teach pronunciation even if they have taken some methodology courses during their pre-service trainings. As to them, the short-term trainings they have taken mainly focused on how to teach reading, listening or on how to make their EFL classes student-centered, but not on how to teach pronunciation. And in the open-ended part of the questionnaire (item 32), they noted that they highly demand to have more training on pronunciation to be confident and interested in teaching it.

Therefore, it appears to be difficult to expect teachers to teach pronunciation without undergoing through the training of pronunciation. To this contention, Hammerly (1991:10) says, "To be able to deal effectively with the causes of pronunciation distortion, teachers have to be trained on how to teach pronunciation."

On the other hand, item 17 required the teachers to give their reactions as to what extent they can identify students' difficult areas of pronunciation learning. As shown in the table, the mean score of this item (2.23) shows that their responses fall on above the average mean scores of the ten items. In other words, teachers feel that they can identify students' difficult areas of pronunciation and primarily give a focus on those areas. In support of this, Tench (1981) advises teachers to give their students opportunities to make more practice on certain pronunciation items that are potentially awkward and difficult to them.

Item 18 was designed to find out whether or not the teachers in the sample schools teach pronunciation features in an integrated manner. The item reads, “To what extent do you think you can present pronunciation features by integrating it with other language components.” The majority of teachers (23.07% of low and 46.15% of very low) responded that they do not integrate pronunciation with other components adequately while teaching it. The mean score of this item (1.92) which is close to the grand mean (1.91) clearly demonstrates that the teachers are negatively disposed to the given item. This reveals that they give scant attention to the integrated approach of pronunciation teaching.

During the classroom observation, all the five teachers were seen teaching the third person singular marker sounds, i.e. [-s] and [-iz], only by pronouncing the discretely presented words and by making their students repeat after them. But they were not seen giving more contexts and presenting sounds with broader communicative activities in which learners engage in a process of exchanging meaningful information among themselves. This could possibly be because of their inadequate skill of integrating pronunciation with other components of the language. To put it differently, if teachers are well acquainted with integrated techniques, they will often be ready to present the pronunciation features in a more contextualized and communicative approach. The great challenge for teachers will perhaps be on how to exploit other language components to teach pronunciation.

Furthermore, items 19 and 20 were intended to know the adequacy and appropriateness of the feedback and encouragement teachers give to their students in learning pronunciation. As to item 19, teachers were asked as to what extent they think they can give appropriate and timely feedback to their students that could help them improve their pronunciation. With regard to this item, most of them (46.15% and 38.46%) gave “low” and “very low” responses.

In addition to this, during classroom observation, the teachers were not seen correcting student's pronunciation. This could be due to their lack of confidence on the correct forms of pronunciation of the sample words, as it was reported during their group discussion.

In item 20, the teachers were again asked as to what extent they think they can encourage students in learning pronunciation. A similar result was depicted. The mean scores of items 19 and 20 which are 1.76 and 1.84 respectively and less than the grand mean (1.91) reveal that the teachers are not confident enough to give the appropriate and timely feedback and encouragement to their students.

As can be seen from Table 2, it seems possible to say that the teachers in the sample schools are found to have low efficacy. As to their reasons, they reported that they have not had adequate pronunciation trainings and there are no textbooks that sufficiently incorporate pronunciation components. As a result, the teachers confirmed that they usually fail to teach pronunciation.

#### **4.1.3. The Procedures and Techniques Teachers Employ in Pronunciation Instruction**

As stated in the foregoing discussion, the third component of the teachers' questionnaire mainly focused on gathering information on whether the procedures and techniques teachers employ can go with the current trends of pronunciation teaching. To this end, 9 items (items 21-29) were designed and included in the questionnaire.

**Table 3: Teachers' Responses on the Procedures and Techniques They Employ in Pronunciation Instruction**

Items	Responses										Sum <sup>a</sup>	Mean scores
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
21	-	-	-	-	2	15.38	6	46.15	5	38.46	13	1.76
22	3	23.07	8	61.53	2	15.38	-	-	-	-	13	3.92
23	-	-	-	-	1	7.69	4	30.76	8	61.53	13	1.46
24	-	-	-	-	3	23.07	3	23.07	7	53.84	13	1.69
25	-	-	3	23.07	2	15.38	3	23.07	5	38.46	13	2.23
26	-	-	-	-	2	15.38	2	15.38	9	69.23	13	1.46
27	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	23.07	10	76.61	13	1.23
28	-	-	6	46.15	4	30.76	2	15.07	1	7.69	13	3.15
29	-	-	-	-	1	7.69	4	30.76	8	61.53	13	1.46

Grand mean=1.83

As shown in Table 3, items 21, 22 and 23 were designed to find out how often teachers employ the stated classroom procedures, namely **explanation**, **exercise** and **exposure** (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994). For instance, with regard to item 21, teachers were asked how often they teach by explaining sounds and patterns of speech. As to this, only 15.38% of them responded that they sometimes use 'explanation' as classroom procedure to make their learners familiar with the sounds and patterns of speech while 84.61% of them rarely or never use it. On the other hand, in item 22, the teachers were asked how often they use 'exercise' (listen and repeat) in the teaching of pronunciation. The result of this item (22) depicts that the majority of teachers (84.60%) frequently use it. However, in item 23, most of them (61.53%) gave "never" response. The mean score of this item (1.46) which is less than the grand mean (1.83) also reveals that 'exposure' does not have the necessary place within English language instruction, particularly in pronunciation.

Besides this, the result of item 24 illustrates that above half of the teachers (53.84%) never try to teach pronunciation by combining the three procedures which are stated under item 21, 22 and 23. Only 23.07% of them reported that they rarely use it. With regard to this, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) state that combining the three procedures in various ways is a pertinent issue rather than preferring one over the other.

During classroom observation, it has been evident that all the five teachers were frequently pronouncing the sample words to the whole class while teaching about third person singular marker sounds, i.e. [-s] and [-iz]. And students were made to repeat those words after their teachers. However, the teachers were not seen presenting the pronunciation lesson in a more contextualized and communicative discourse which motivates the use of language. In general, the teachers' classroom practices prominently revealed the fact that, as Morley (1991:455) noted, "Traditional pronunciation teaching approach still continues to flourish in many language teaching programs around the world."

However, as discussed in the literature, the communicative function of pronunciation in spoken discourse could be realized when pronunciation is taught integratively. In other words, 'there is always a need for integrating it with other skills and aspects as it occurs naturally' (Tench, 1981).

The integrative approach of pronunciation teaching can, for example, take place when we teach the third person singular marker sounds, [-s] and [-iz]. In this respect, the observed teachers should have presented the [-s] and [iz] sounds, in a more integrated manner. In relation to this, Broughton et, al. (1980) argue that teachers can exploit some grammatical items such as plural, singular, third person, possessive markers, past tense and past participle for the purpose of pronunciation teaching. This is because "the traditional labeled [-s] plural, for example, has a different pronunciation according to which sound

it follows, as does the ‘-ed’ past tense ending” (Ibid: 55). For example the teachers can present using simple communicative tasks or contexts like as follows.

What does Aster do every weekend?

Saturday	help wash fetch take	water clothes her mother bath
Sunday	watch visit make play do wear	coffee to her family TV grand mother church volley ball homework a white dress

By so doing teachers can invite the students to discuss on the things Aster does every weekend. This can create good opportunities for the students to practice the target sounds using the words with the natural occurrences of sounds in the real communicative activities. Hence, the use of authentic language can be motivated by using such kind of communicative activities. In fact, this would be true if the teachers were trained on how to design communicative tasks or if communicative tasks were designed and available in the textbooks.

As can be seen from the lesson transcripts (Appendix VI-X), the classroom observation, however, revealed that teachers made the students only to practice those sounds in isolated manner. The teachers did not try to find grammatical contexts with many natural occurrences of the target sounds, and they did not develop any exercises that enable the students to practice the

target sounds with new contexts. Hence, students hardly use them in their real life communication.

The last five items in the same table (items 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29) were used to elicit information about the techniques teachers employ in the teaching of pronunciation. Item 25 was, for example, intended to assess how often teachers employ minimal pairs and their responses mainly fall on “rarely” and “never”. Only 23.07% and 15.38% of their responses fall on “usually” and “sometimes” respectively. This implies that in most cases teachers do not use minimal pairs that play remarkable roles in the teaching of pronunciation (Celce- Murcia, 1991).

In the two items (items 26 and 27) teachers were asked how often they employ role-plays and language games in pronunciation instruction. As shown in the above table, the results of both items show that nearly all of the teachers never use role-plays and language games. However, Celce-Murcia (1991:145) recommends that, “Role plays and drama scenes are always fun and are an ideal vehicle for practicing pronunciation.”

Concerning item 28, most of the teachers (76.91%) reported that they usually or sometimes use pronunciation drills. Similarly, the mean score of this item 28 (3.15) which is much greater than the grand mean (1.83) shows the teachers’ positive inclination to the item.

Item 29 was also designed to know how often teachers use recorded- materials. As to this, 61.53% of them responded that they never use any recorded- materials for the teaching of pronunciation. Only 7.69% of them sometimes use those kinds of materials.

In the focus group discussion (FGD), teacher participants also reported that there are no opportunities for them in their schools to easily access any recorded- materials which are primarily prepared for pronunciation teaching.

From the above discussion, we can deduce that the teachers in the four sample schools do not teach pronunciation adequately as the classroom procedures and techniques they favored in the questionnaire do not create more exposures and opportunities for practice.

Besides, the inadequacy of pronunciation lessons in students' textbooks, the approaches and procedures which are suggested in the syllabus can not go with the current rationales of pronunciation instruction. This might be the possible reason for the fact that the approaches, procedures and techniques teachers used during the classroom observation were not helpful for the students. This is because students were not provided with adequate time and meaningful tasks to make the necessary practice on the pronunciation points that promote real language use.

#### **4.1.4. Correlation between Teachers' Belief and Efficacy**

**Table 4: Correlation between Teachers' Belief and Efficacy**

Pearson correlation	Significance at (P<0.05)
0.468	0.172

The correlation in the above table seems to reflect the beliefs and efficacy of teachers that were discussed in the analysis of the teachers' responses in the questionnaire. As can be seen from the Pearson correlation coefficient result, there is no correlation between the teachers' belief and their self- efficacy ( $r = 0.468, p = 0.172 > 0.05$ ).

This tends to show that the teachers could have high or low beliefs with high or low efficacy. In other words, teachers tend to have high beliefs about the role of pronunciation with low efficacy to teach it and the vice versa.

However, in the group discussion, the teachers strongly believe that they can have high efficacy with high beliefs if they are made to undergo through various in-service pronunciation trainings in the form of seminars, workshops, etc.

The observation result also revealed that the teachers' low level of efficacy can have a negative impact on their actual classroom practices of pronunciation teaching than can have their beliefs about the roles of pronunciation. Hence, so far as the teachers have had low efficacy in pronunciation teaching, they usually refrain from teaching it as 'pronunciation is a very complex and sophisticated task to undertake in the foreign language setting' (Gilbert and Rodgers, 1990). In support of this view, Hailom (1993) mentioned that the problem of non-native English teachers is not only a feeling of inadequacy to teach pronunciation, but also a feeling of discomfort. He commented this by saying, "... for example, in the teaching of spoken English in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, many staff members shied away from joining that section" (p.118). His observation and past experience revealed that pronunciation receives little attention in higher institutions. This in turn makes student-teachers lack the adequacy and confidence in their future career, particularly in the teaching of pronunciation. Of course, this situation has already been reflected by the subject teachers of this particular study.

## **4.2. Interpretation and Discussion of Textbook Evaluation on the Emphasis Given to Pronunciation Instruction**

### **4.2.1. Evaluating the Share of Pronunciation Lessons**

An attempt was made to elicit information about the place of pronunciation in the students' textbooks in both grades 7 and 8 for it helps to determine as to where the status of pronunciation teaching lies seen against the current rationales of pronunciation instruction.

Accordingly, the pronunciation lessons in each grade were identified and calculated with percentage value in accordance with the total number of

lessons in the textbook. It was then possible to know the share of pronunciation lessons and evaluate the emphasis given to pronunciation in both grades as compared to other aspects of the language.

To this end, both the syllabus and students' textbooks were used, and then the shares of all language components (skills and sub- skills) are presented as follows.

**Table 5: The Shares of Language Components in Students' Textbooks**

No	Language components (skills and sub-skills)	Grades				Results in both grades	
		Grade 7		Grade 8		No of Lessons	%
		No of Lessons	%	No of Lessons	%		
1	Reading comprehension	19	17.59	16	17.58	35	17.58
2	Writing	24	22.22	19	20.87	43	21.60
3	Listening and speaking	22	20.37	21	23.07	43	21.60
4	Vocabulary	17	15.74	13	14.28	30	15.07
5	Pronunciation	7	6.48	4	4.39	11	5.52
6	Language patterns	25	23.148	17	18.68	42	21.10
7	Punctuation	4	3.70	1	1.09	5	2.51
	Total	108	100	91	100	199	100

The result shown in the above table depicts that out of the total lessons found in each grade (108 lessons in grade 7 and 91 lessons in grade 8), pronunciation has got insignificant share when compared to the other aspects. Only 7 (6.48%) pronunciation lessons were explicitly incorporated in grade 7 while 4 (4.39%) in grade 8. However, most of the lessons are subsumed under listening and speaking, writing, language patterns, reading comprehension and vocabulary.

In the group discussion, teacher participants also confirmed that the textbooks gave more attention for the four major skills, but not for pronunciation. As shown in the data from the above table, pronunciation teaching that can arm the students with communicative skills appears to be left out. There are not realistic pronunciation goals and objectives stated in the syllabus that aim at 'functional intelligibility (ability to make oneself relatively easily understood), functional communicability (ability to meet the communication needs one faces), and enhanced self- confidence in use' (Morley, 1998). However, any more neglect of pronunciation in second language instruction is a great disservice to learners and the overall programme, as it is difficult to expect students to communicate intelligibly in any form of conversation in the absence of pronunciation teaching.

#### **4.2.2. The Approach of Teaching Pronunciation Lessons in Textbooks**

As a textbook plays a decisive role on the choice of the approach and procedures teachers follow in the EFL pronunciation instruction, an attempt was also made in this study to examine the approach and procedures on which pronunciation lessons in the textbooks are based. To this effect, the approach of pronunciation teaching was analyzed on the bases of its two major dimensions (selection and presentation) as it was already discussed in the literature (see chapter 2, page 24).

Accordingly, the result of the analysis is presented as follows using frequency and percentage value under each variable.

**Table 6: Pronunciation Components and their inclusions in the Textbooks**

No	Pronunciation components	Grades				Total result in both grades	
		Grade 7		Grade 8		F	%
		F	%	F	%		
1	Distinctive sounds (consonants, vowels and diphthongs)	1	14.28	-	-	1	9.09
2	Peculiar or unusual English sounds /θ /and /ð / (difficulty areas)	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Pronouncing words (by syllabication and stress)	5	71.42	4	100	9	81.81
4	Stress in sentences	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Intonation	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Connected speech	1	14.28	-	-	1	9.09
	Total	7	100	4	100	11	100

From the data, pronunciation lessons presented explicitly in both grades mainly focus on ‘pronouncing words’ which covers 81.8% out of the whole pronunciation lessons while there are no lessons that focus on the rest of pronunciation components. However, learners, for instance, need to practice how individual sounds are pronounced in words and speech, and form a new set of sounds in the target language to cope with the interference of their mother-tongue from their early age of learning pronunciation. In addition, they need to learn and make practice on supra segmental features that mainly help students develop communicative abilities.

Table 5 also shows that peculiar or unusual English sounds are totally ignored in the students’ textbooks. This trend is quite contrary to what Ur (1996) has stated. That is, learners face great difficulties in oral communication unless

they overcome the strangeness of few sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue.

**Table 7: Classroom Procedures of Pronunciation Teaching Included in the Textbooks**

No	Classroom procedures	Grades				Total result in both grades	
		Grade 7		Grade 8		F	%
		F	%	F	%		
1	Explanation	3	42.85	-	-	3	27.27
2	Exercise on reception or production	4	57.14	4	100	8	72.72
3	Exposure	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	7	100	4	100	11	100

Regarding the procedures, the pronunciation lessons are mainly based on explanation (27.27%) and imitation (72.72%). However, exposure that motivates the use of language in the form of some communicative activities and purposes does not have a place in the textbooks. The approach of pronunciation lessons does not go with the current thoughts of foreign language pedagogy. This shows the fact that pronunciation is downgraded pedagogically.

During classroom observation, teachers were seen making their students repeat frequently and imitate what they pronounced. In contrast, the use of authentic language was not motivated by some communicative activities and purposes.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Summary**

As mentioned in chapter one, the main concern of the study was to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching in grades 7 and 8. Accordingly, the perceptions of teachers (their beliefs about the roles of pronunciation and self-efficacy about their capabilities in the teaching of pronunciation), the approach of pronunciation teaching and its place in the students' textbooks were assessed as they are interrelated areas of EFL pronunciation instruction.

An attempt was also made in the review of literature to show the fact that all the dimensions or constructs of this study could significantly affect the teachers' classroom behaviors and the overall pronunciation instructional practice. In addition to this, the past and current thoughts and trends of pronunciation teaching have been discussed.

For the purpose of gathering reliable data, four instruments- questionnaire, focus group discussion, classroom observation and textbook analysis- were deployed. The researcher employed the multiple- method approach intentionally as he thought it was necessary to see the issue from different perspectives before a decision was made of whether or not the status of pronunciation teaching lies on the right track. And the two instruments, i.e. questionnaire and textbook analysis, were used as major instruments while the other two instruments, i.e. focus group discussion and classroom observation, were merely used as supplementary ones to triangulate and enrich the data gathered through the major tools.

The data gathered through the four instruments were analyzed and discussed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The Pearson correlation coefficient was

also calculated to find out whether there is a significant relationship between teachers' belief and self- efficacy.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

Based on the analysis made in the preceding chapter, the following conclusions were made.

With the adoption of communicative language teaching, the primary goal of EFL instruction lies on achieving communicative interaction. Due to this, current thoughts and trends of EFL/ ESL pedagogy are embracing pronunciation as an indispensable component of communication. An attempt was made in this study to find out whether elementary English teachers diverge from or converge on the current thoughts and trends of EFL/ESL pedagogy on the roles of pronunciation. And the teachers from the sample schools were found to have strong belief about the roles of pronunciation in enhancing their students' language learning proficiency in general and their communicative abilities in particular. As to their reasons, they noted that they themselves are facing great challenges in hearing news on broadcasts like BBC because of their poor knowledge and skills of pronunciation. They also strongly believe that their students' inadequate knowledge and skills of pronunciation can create meaning distortion in real life communication.

On the other hand, the results obtained from efficacy items in the questionnaire revealed that the teachers have low level of efficacy. They also reported that they could hardly teach any pronunciation component and help their students to develop intelligible pronunciation. In other words, they are not efficacious to the teaching of pronunciation.

The classroom observation result also depicted that pronunciation teaching is not addressed within the context of real communication. It is being treated discretely and superficially. As to their reasons, they confirmed that they have not had sufficient pronunciation trainings, particularly on how to teach it. Due

to this, they do not feel confident to exploit other components for the teaching of pronunciation and give the necessary feedbacks for their learners' difficult areas of pronunciation learning. In general, the prevailing situations and practices in the sample primary schools clearly show that pronunciation is downgraded pedagogically as a result of difficulties in aligning it with and incorporating it into a more communicative approach of language teaching. The approaches and procedures teachers employ sit uncomfortably with the overall aim of language teaching to achieve efficient communicative abilities, with the learners' needs and the challenges they face in real life communication taken into account.

Hence, it has been evident that teachers' classroom practices have profoundly converged on the self-perception they hold about their capabilities in the teaching of pronunciation. However, their classroom practice has immensely diverged from the belief they hold about the roles of pronunciation. This incident may have emanated from their exposures to the theoretical discussion of the communicative function of pronunciation and from their own inadequate knowledge and skills of pronunciation. Or may be, because of the challenges they are facing in the real world communication.

As the general goals of EFL teaching in our own context have primed the effective use of the spoken language to establish successful communication, it appears to be pertinent to provide learners with rudimentary support in language classrooms on pronunciation. This could, however, be possible when there is a relative coverage of pronunciation lessons in students' textbooks and when pronunciation gets its proper place in the overall language program. However, pronunciation receives little or almost no provision in primary schools, particularly in grades 7 and 8. It has got a very insignificant share (5.52%) as compared to the other aspects. The procedures and approaches incorporated in the textbooks are far from the current rationales of EFL pronunciation instruction. In general, pronunciation teaching that can arm the

students with communicative skills appears to be left out. There are no realistic pronunciation goals and objectives stated in the syllabus of each grade. Curriculum designers really seemed to have forgotten the communicative function of pronunciation even if they have tried to propagate that the classroom culture of every English language class primarily dictates talking and listening.

Therefore, even if the teachers from the sample schools seem to be slaves of the theoretical discussion on the roles of pronunciation in one's overall language proficiency, the teaching of pronunciation in all schools is poorly accomplished if there is any. Hence, from all the above findings, the researcher can conclude that the status of pronunciation teaching in elementary schools is very poor and does not stand on the right track as seen against the prevailing rationales and trends of foreign language teaching in general and pronunciation instruction in particular. It is rather downgraded as it was in the periods of late 1960s and early 1970s.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Learners' aspirations to understand English utterances and to respond in the foreign language depend on their Pronunciation skills as well. However, the classroom practice at present is far from the current thoughts and trends of pronunciation instruction. Hence, it is pertinent to upgrade the teachers' pronunciation competence, and help them on how to exploit other components of the language for pronunciation teaching and on how to provide more communicative tasks with the natural occurrence of pronunciation points. To this end, the teachers should have opportunities for engaging in their own in-service trainings such as workshops and seminars to promote their knowledge and skills of pronunciation and be acquainted with the necessary skills on how to teach it. Besides this, they are highly required to make their own endeavors to improve their pronunciation.

In a similar manner, teacher training institutions should evaluate their EFL teacher training programmes and see whether or not they are working beyond giving the verbal endorsement of communicative approach of teaching. They should try to offer quite intensive courses in the field of spoken English focusing on pronunciation to their trainees.

The inadequacy of pronunciation lessons and the neglect of pronunciation teaching in any language program have deleterious effects particularly on the learners' communicative competence. In contrast to this, pronunciation has got little or almost no place in both grades 7 and 8 students' textbooks. In view of this, language curriculum designers and textbook writers ought to reconsider the coverage and approach of pronunciation lessons in students' textbooks and give considerable emphasis for both segmental and supra segmental features. In general, any attempt should be made to incorporate pronunciation lessons with different stages of learning in elementary schools. It is also quite worth mentioning that concerned bodies need to supply supplementary teaching materials, i.e. recordings, hand books, etc. for use in approaching pronunciation teaching and integrating it with other aspects.

There are no more previous studies on pronunciation teaching in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature in Addis Ababa University while many are available on other aspects. Hence, the researcher recommends that other researchers should conduct further studies particularly on the impact of the current status of pronunciation teaching on the learners' overall language proficiency, the perceptions of language curriculum designers on the roles of pronunciation and the status of teaching pronunciation and spoken English in teacher training institutions, etc.

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# **Appendix I**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**Institute of Language Studies**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**  
**(Graduate Programme)**

## **Questionnaire for Teachers**

First of all I would like to thank you in advance for the time you are willing to devote to fill out this questionnaire. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather the necessary data on the current status of pronunciation teaching in elementary schools. It mainly gathers information on the perception you hold about your capabilities in teaching pronunciation and how you carry out your pronunciation teaching in the actual classroom. All the information that you provide will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study. Your sincere replies are earnestly required since they will have a positive impact on the outcome of this study. And before you start reading the items, please, complete the following background information.

I. School Name\_\_\_\_\_

ii. Sex\_\_\_\_\_

iii. Age\_\_\_\_\_

iv. Experience\_\_\_\_\_

v. Qualification \_\_\_\_\_

vi. Grades you teach \_\_\_\_\_

**Instruction I:** Here is a five- point scale to measure your belief on the importance of pronunciation. Please put a tick (✓) against your choice. The scales are:

Strongly agree= 5      Disagree=2  
 Agree=4                      Strongly disagree=1  
 Undecided= 3

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Pronunciation is an essential component of communication as that of grammar or vocabulary					
2.	Pronunciation should be taught and practiced in the actual EFL classes with relative emphasis given to it as other language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary or etc.					
3.	Unintelligibility (not being understood as a speaker and/or unable to understand one's speech as a listener) is a matter of mispronunciation rather than ungrammaticality or misuse of words.					
4.	Students can acquire intelligible pronunciation in spite of the possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning process.					
5.	Knowing a word involves knowing how it is pronounced.					
6.	Speaking involves articulating individual sounds and uttering them with correct pronunciation.					
7.	Effective listening of the English language demands familiarity with features of the spoken English including stress, intonation and connected speech.					
8.	Being intelligible for the learner requires using stress, intonation and connected speech.					
9.	Pronunciation teaching seems a waste of time particularly in elementary schools, as there are a lot more important aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, speaking, etc. to be taught.					
10	Whatever aspect is taught, pronunciation is involved.					

**Instruction II:** Respond to each of the following items by putting a tick (✓) against your choice.

<b>NO</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Very high</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very low</b>
11	To what extent do you think you can make your students learn and practice individual English sounds and how they are pronounced in words and speech?					
12	To what extent do you think you can make your students familiar with sounds that do not appear in their mother tongue?					
13	To what extent do you think you can make your students pronounce words in terms of English sounds instead of letters?					
14	To what extent do you think you can make your students use stress to highlight information?					
15	To what extent do you think you can make your students use intonations to convey their emotions and attitudes?					
16	To what extent do you think your knowledge and skill in teaching pronunciation is sufficient to teach your students?					

17	To what extent do you think you can identify students' difficulty areas of pronunciation learning?					
18	To what extent do you think you can present pronunciation features by integrating it with other language components					
19	To what extent do you think you can give appropriate and timely feedback to your students that could help them improve their pronunciation?					
20	To what extent do you think you can encourage students in learning pronunciation?					

**Instruction III:** Which of the following procedures and techniques do you think you most frequently employ to teach pronunciation features in EFL instruction? Please, indicate the degree of frequency of the techniques and procedures used by putting a tick (√) against your choice

<b>NO</b>	<b>Techniques and/or procedures used</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
21	By providing more explanations about the sounds and patterns of speech.					
22	By pronouncing pronunciation features and then by making learners imitate my speech					
23	By presenting pronunciation features in context and by giving learners chances to practice.					
24	By combining the three procedures					

	(explanation, practice and exposure) at the same time					
25	By using minimal pairs (words which differ from each other in only one sound) as in <b>tin/sin, sick/tick, pen/pan</b> , etc.					
26	By using role- plays					
27	By using language games					
28	By using pronunciation drills					
29	By using recorded- materials					

**Instruction VI:** Write what you feel about the following questions.

30. What are the practical problems you face while you teach pronunciation?

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31. What are the sources of the problems you face while you teach pronunciation?

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32. What things do you think make English teachers confident and interested in pronunciation teaching?

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# **Appendix II**

**Addis Ababa University**

**Institute of Language Studies**

**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**

**(Graduate Programme)**

## **Focus Group Discussion for Teachers**

1. Some people say pronunciation teaching is a waste of time since the present goal of language teaching is to achieve communicative abilities. How do you react to this?
2. How do you evaluate the emphasis and provision of pronunciation points in your EFL Instruction? Do you think that pronunciation has got a considerable attention in students' textbooks?
3. To what extent do you think your knowledge and skill in teaching pronunciation is sufficient to teach your students? Do you feel confident to teach it and help your students to improve their pronunciation?
4. So, how can we see the current status of pronunciation teaching particularly in elementary schools?

## Appendix III

### Teachers' Responses on the Belief Items on the Roles of Pronunciation

Teachers' code	sex	Qualification	Experience	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
01	F	12+2	13	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	4
02	M	12+2+ 3 sum.	14	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	2	4
03	M	12+2	27	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	2	4
04	F	10+3	2	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	1	5
05	M	12+2	16	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	3
06	F	12+2	9	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	5
07	F	12+2	17	4	3	4	2	2	4	4	2	4	3
08	F	12+2	14	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	2	4
09	M	12+2	9	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	4
10	F	12+2	12	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	5
11	M	12+2	16	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	1
12	F	12+2	13	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
13	F	12+2	18	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	1	5

Value: 5= Strongly Agree,    4= Agree,    3=Undecided,    2= Disagree,    1= Strongly Disagree

## Appendix IV

### Teachers' Responses on the Efficacy Items

Teachers' code	Sex	Qualification	Experience	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
01	F	12+2	13	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	3
02	M	12+2+ 3 sum.	14	3	2	4	2	2	2	3	3	2	2
03	M	12+2	27	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
04	F	10+3	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	4	2	2	2
05	M	12+2	16	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2
06	F	12+2	9	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2
07	F	12+2	17	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	1	1
08	F	12+2	14	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
09	M	12+2	9	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	4	3	3
10	F	12+2	12	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2
11	M	12+2	16	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1
12	F	12+2	13	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	1	2
13	F	12+2	18	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	2

Value: 5= very high, 4= high , 3= Moderate, 2= Low, 1= Very low

## **Appendix V**

### **Teachers' Group Discussion Transcript**

**Key:** R: Researcher

P<sub>M</sub>: Male Participant (teacher)

P<sub>F</sub>: Female participant (Female teacher)

“...” (Words of the participants)

R: First of all, I would like to thank you for your willingness and unreserved cooperation. And as I tried to inform you, the aim of this study is to explore the current status of pronunciation teaching in elementary schools. For this purpose, I have to gather adequate and reliable information about the issue. This is the reason why I invited you again for the third time to this group discussion. To elicit the information sufficiently, I ought to record our discussion. As you know, in every research practice, participants remain anonymous. And the same is true for you. So, your name could never be addressed in this study. All right! So, can we start our discussion? Ok, let's see the first issue. Some people say pronunciation teaching is a waste of time since the present goal of language teaching is to achieve communicative abilities. In other words, as far as learners can communicate, those people argue that there is no a need to teach pronunciation. How do you react to this? Yes.

P<sub>F1</sub> By the way, English is our “Second Language”. So, I strongly disagree to the claim that pronunciation is a waste of time. Even it makes me surprised. Because if we want to develop our language proficiency, we must have good pronunciation. I strongly believe that pronunciation is very important for our students because they can develop their communication abilities. Eh. . . we can see it from our problem of listening and speaking. For instance, we are still impaired to listen “foreigners' news”. So, I don't know why you say it is a waste of time.

- R: All right. I am reflecting the views of other people. Have you got me? I may have my own view but here I am a facilitator for your discussion.
- PM<sub>1</sub>: I don not think that pronunciation it a waste of time. Eh . . . for instance a word may have different meanings because of the way it is pronounced. So, students must learn how to pronounce words.
- PF<sub>2</sub>: Ah . . . The point should be how we can have good pronunciation. For example, if we take BBC, leave alone the students, I cannot hear what they are saying. I think we cannot recognize the words they use unless we have adequate knowledge and skills of pronunciation.
- R: You are saying that pronunciation is not a waste of time. But, when people say pronunciation is a waste of time, they mean that it is not as such important so far as we can make our students develop the necessary communicative skills. Eh..!
- PM<sub>2</sub>: We know that English is “an international language”. So, we are expected to communicate with foreigners when there is a need. But we are unable to understand what they say. In the first place, I cannot listen to them. For example, let’s imagine that a foreigner came to our school. Ato Mulat (the participant’s school director) might come to me with the guest. (Every body got laugh.) Only God knows if I can listen to him. Therefore, eh. . . if we say pronunciation is a waste of time, we are just saying that students should be cut off from any conversation held with foreigners as we are . Let me tell you what I experienced last summer in Bahir Dar University. We were made to take listening examination last summer. The listening examination was conducted by the audio- recorded material of a native speaker. During the examination session, I got nervous because I could hardly recognize and comprehend what I heard and I thought it was a special challenge for me. But most of the examinees got nervous when they rushed out the language lab. And every body was scrambling and shouting! After three or four days, we felt shamed when the instructor gave us a copy of that listening text because most of the words were very familiar to us.

PM<sub>3</sub>: Can I forward my own experience?

R: Ya ....

PM<sub>3</sub>: Eh. He made me remember what I had forgotten. I think it is clear, eh. . . everybody knows. In 2005, politics was a very sensitive issue in our country, Ethiopia, particularly after May 15 National Parliamentary Elections. Every body was insisting on getting fresh and valid news. Likewise, I tried my own best to listen to BBC, besides VOA Amharic service. Unfortunately, I was unable to comprehend what I heard. At the end I felt angry. And I don't think that it was because of the unfamiliarity of words but rather because of the unfamiliarity of pronunciation.

R: Thank you very much, eh. Can we proceed to the second point? Ok. You have said that pronunciation is an important aspect of the language to be taught, but how do you see the emphasis given to pronunciation in students' textbooks or in the curriculum. Yes. That is a new face.

PF<sub>3</sub>: As I see the textbook, it gives little attention to pronunciation. I am not also concerned with pronunciation. Even the students prefer learning grammar to other aspects of the language. "By the way" the textbook gives more attention to the four major skills.

PM<sub>1</sub>: Of course, pronunciation is not adequately and explicitly presented in the textbook. But, it doesn't mean that pronunciation is totally ignored because there are many exercises in the vocabulary section that require students to make practice on "pronouncing new words"

PF<sub>2</sub>: As to me, I do not think that pronunciation is totally ignored. It is rather a difficulty of intergrading it. As he said, there are exercises, particularly in grade 8 that require students to pronounce the given words, but I usually "Jump" it. Even the students would be very happy when I bring some grammar questions to them as they are going to take "Regional examination"

R. Ok! Any additional comments. Can I go to the next point? Yes ... yes Excuse me.

RM3: It is very difficult to say that pronunciation is neglected. I think Metshet mentioned it. Students usually get unfamiliar words in all units which are incorporated in their textbooks. But I do not teach them how they are pronounced. Let's assume that I teach them, they simply acquire my own poor pronunciation. I think the main point is here. So, we, teachers, first need to have our good pronunciation before we teach the students. "Otherwise we confuse."

R: Thank you very much. And he has already started the third point that we are going to discuss. Eh. . . To what extent do you think your knowledge and skill in teaching pronunciation is sufficient to teach your students? Do you feel confident to teach it and help your students to improve their pronunciation?

PM3: I think we have already discussed it. The problem that we are discussing may have emanated from this issue. First of all we have not had adequate training on pronunciation particularly on how to teach it when we were in colleges. I have, more or less, learnt on how to teach "reading, listening and, etc", but not on how to teach pronunciation. Because of this, leave alone being confident, I usually skip teaching pronunciation. For instance, in a little bit, the grade 8 textbook offers students opportunities to practice and recognize that the given few words can get a change of their parts of speech and their meanings because of the placing of stress on different syllables. Even if I am aware that English stress can have its own meaning from the linguistic courses, module 1 and 2, I usually skip this section. I want to be frank. I do not have the necessary knowledge and skill to teach this section. Even I am in doubt to teach it in the future.

R: Eh.

RF4: This is the reason why I kept quiet. Even the short term trainings we have taken do not focus on pronunciation. Rather they focus on how to make the EFL classes student-centered, or something else, but not on how to teach pronunciation. I think this is not our problem.

R: Ok. Thank you for your participation. Is there something which is different? No? Let's see the last question? So, how can we see the current status of pronunciation teaching, particularly in elementary schools? Yes.

RM<sub>1</sub>: As I mentioned earlier, there are no "recordings, reference materials". Moreover, there are no more pronunciation lessons in students' textbooks. The Manual, which is in use, doesn't give clear procedures and additional activities. Even it doesn't provide answers for those few pronunciation lessons. On the other hand, we are not trained. We are not invited for short term trainings in the form of workshops and seminars. So, I think this is not our problem. When I come to your question, the status of pronunciation teaching is very poor.

PF<sub>2</sub>: Even I would like to share "Gash Ferede's idea". It is very difficult to say that we are teaching pronunciation. And he has, more or less, mentioned the problems.

R; Ok, any more idea! No? Ok. These are all the issues on which I want to have a discussion with you. And, I would like to thank you again. Even I don't have more words. . . . .

## Appendix VI

### Lesson Transcript One

**School Name: Kosober**

**Teacher 1 (Female)**

- T: Now, we learn /-s/ and /iz/ sounds (she wrote the lesson: The '-s' forms of verbs has different sounds'. So, when we pronounce different verbs, some are /-s/ and the others are... eh?
- Ss: /-iz / sounds
- T: How can you pronounce the first word? The first? ...Eh! Somebody please can raise his hands, finally you have the correct...the correct pronunciation of the word. That means 'watch' /w ^ ts/ is given. Eh.....yes.
- S: 'watch' /w ^ ts/ ....when we pronounce watch /w ^ ts / ... that is / iz / sound.
- T: So can you pronounce? What is your pronunciation? ....please pronounce the whole!
- Ss: xx.....
- T: Is that watches / w ^ tss /? or watch / w ^ tsiz /
- Ss: watches / w ^ tsiz /
- T: ya! watches / w ^ tsiz /. Yes please pronounce the whole!
- Ss: watches / w ^ tsiz /
- T: watches / w ^ tsiz /
- Ss: watches / w ^ tsiz /
- T: Thank you! The next? ...eh....
- S: drink / dri:nk / ....for /-s /. That is drinks / d ri:nks /
- T: Yes. drinks / d ri:nks /. So, pronounce drinks /d ri:nks /
- Ss: drinks / d ri:nks /.
- T: drinks / d ri:nks /
- Ss: drinks / d ri:nks /
- T: Ok! the next? That means... the third word! The third word?

S: /iz / sound that is fetches / fetsiz /  
T: fetches / fetsiz / eh... fetches / fetsiz / .../ iz /sound. Yes ! eh ?  
Ss: fetches / fetsiz /  
T: And the next ?  
S: eat /it /.../ -s / sound.  
T: So, pronounce  
Ss: eats / its /  
T: eats / its /  
Ss: eats / its /  
T: Ok! The next?  
S: / -s / sound. asks/ asks /  
T: asks/ asks /  
Ss: asks / asks /  
T: The last word? ...The first column....this one!  
S: washes /w^ ]iz /... /iz / sound  
T: yes! /iz /sound. So, the whole class...  
S: washes / w^ ]iz / ... /iz/ sound .... / -s / sound. No...no.../ iz /sound.  
T: eh...  
Ss: washes /w^ ]iz / ...  
T: washes /w ^]iz /? or / w ]s/  
Ss: washes / w ^]iz /  
T: So, washes / w ^]iz /  
Ss: washes / w ^]iz /  
T: Ok! The next ....eh... yes, Sintayehu?  
S: helps /helps/ ... That is ... / -s / sound.  
T: so; pronounce  
Ss: helps /helps/  
T: helps /helps/  
T: ok! The next?  
S: sits.... / æs /sound  
T: yes, sits /sits /

Ss: sits / sɪts/

T: pronounce sits / sɪts/

Ss: sits / sɪts/

T: what about the next word?

S: finish.../ fɪnɪʃ / sound.

T: so pronounce the whole.

Ss: finish.../ fɪnɪʃ /

T : finish .. / fɪnɪʃ /

Ss : finish .. / fɪnɪʃ /

T : ok ! Next.... Eh...yes !

S : catch /kʰts / ....catches /kʰtsɪz/ .../ɪz/ sound.

T : yes, catches /kʰtsɪz/

Ss : catches /kʰtsɪz/

T : eh- !

Ss : catches /kʰtsɪz/

T : ok...eh....so...some verbs have / -s/ forms and some verbs have /ɪz/ forms.

Yes !

Ss : ..Yes... yes!

T : eh...now.....ok !... question !....question

## Appendix VII

### Lesson Transcript Two

**School Name: Andinet**

**Teacher 2 (male)**

T : All right students. We are going to learn today... the / -s / forms of verbs (He wrote the topic on the blackboard). You know,.. /-s / forms of verbs have different sounds. Now eh... see these words on the blackboard (He pointed to the words on the blackboard). The question.. is which word ....eh.... which word is for /-s / sound ?..and which word is for /-iz / sounds ? All right! Now you are seeing words take ..the /-s /.../ æs / form of third singular...eh ..and words take -es / ɪæ s / sound. All right! Now when I pronounce the words, repeat after me. The first word is watch /w<sup>^</sup> ts / . So, say watches /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/

Ss : watches /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/

T : watches /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/

Ss : watches /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/

T : repeat three times

Ss : watches /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/ /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/

T : eh !

Ss : watches /w<sup>^</sup> tsiz/

T : All right now say fetches / fetsiz/

Ss : fetches / fetsiz/

T : once again

Ss : fetches / fetsiz/

T : All right ! that is good. What about 'wash' /w<sup>^</sup> ʃ /

Ss : washes /w<sup>^</sup> ʃiz/

T : washes /w<sup>^</sup> ʃiz/

Ss : washes /w<sup>^</sup> ʃiz/

T : Ok but...s /- æs / sound for 'help'. So, now say helps /helps/

Ss : xx.. xxx

T : helps / *helps*/

Ss : helps / *helps*/

T : what about ask / *sk*/

Ss : asks / *sks*/ xxx.... no .....asks / *sks*/

T : what ? asks / *sks*/ or asks / *skiz*/?

Ss : asks / *sks*/

T : All right ! asks / *sks*/ because -s / *sks*/ form...eh..

Ss : yes ..yes

T : Now pronounce each word .. all right each word ..( he pointed to a word).

Ss : xxx.. eats / *eits* /

T: yes. eats/ *eits* /

Ss: . eats/ *eits* /

T : eh ! ( he pointed another word. )

Ss : drinks / *drInks*/

T : Yes ! drinks / *drInks*/ . ..... eh ..(He pointed to another word).

Ss : speaks / *ˈspɪks*/

T : Ya ! ( He pointed another word )

Ss : dances / *dansiz*/

T : dances / *dansiz*/. All right now understand!

Ss : Yes.

T : All right.

## Appendix VIII

### Lesson Transcript Three

**School Name: Kosober**  
**Teacher 3 (female)**

The teacher wrote the topic on the blackboard.

T: Today's lesson is / -s / forms of verbs. That means when we change verbs.....verbs in to third person singular.. eh.... if the subject is third person singular, verbs have /-s/ /æʃ/ and -es /ɪæʃ/ . yes. So, the -s / æʃ /and -es /ɪæʃ / forms have different sounds. Some sounds are /-s / sound and /ɪz / sound. Some verbs have /-s/ sound .eh ..and some verbs?.

Ss: /- ɪz /sounds

T: yes /- ɪz /sounds. Words ending -ch, -sh, .....have /ɪz/ sounds. Yes ./ɪz / sound .ya ! but words with /-s/ forms have /-s/ sound. Yes ! eh?

Ss: / -s / sound

T: Now let me write some of the words ...for example.....eh .....watch /wʌts / (She wrote the word the blackboard ). What sound? Eh?

Ss: /-ɪz / sound..... / -s / ( some of the students pronounced /ɪz/ sound. And others pronounced /-s/ sound)

T: yes /ɪz/ sound. Because, it is -es /ɪæʃ / form. Yes .

Ss: yes

T: so say watches /wʌtsɪz /

Ss: watches /wʌtsɪz /

T: /ɪz/ sound. Yes, if you take ask / asks /?

Ss: asks / asks /

T: Yes. asks / asks /

Ss: . asks / asks /

T: . asks / asks /

Ss: . asks / asks /

T: what about eat / ɪt /?

Ss: eats / ɪt /

T: eats / ɪt /

Ss: eats / it /

T: eh. look this one ( She pointed to a word on the blackboard. )

Ss: /iz/ sound

T: Yes. /iz/ sound. Because ?

Ss: xxxx

T: eh. catch / k^ts / . catches / k^tsiz /

Ss: catches / k^tsiz /

T: catches / k^tsiz /

Ss: catches / k^tsiz /

T: catches/ k^tsiz / finishes / k^tsiz /

Ss: catches/ k^tsiz /

T: Ah.. another finish / f iniʃ / .Look ( She pointed to the word on the blackboard ) .. finishes / f iniʃiz/

Ss: finishes / f iniʃiz/

T: finishes / f iniʃiz/

Ss: finishes / f iniʃiz/

T: /iz/ sound. Yes. eh . another ..speak / iː spɪk/

Ss: Speaks / iː spɪks/

T: Speaks / iː spɪks/

Ss: Speaks / iː spɪks/

T: Speaks / iː spɪks/

Ss: Speaks / iː spɪks/

T: drink / drɪnk / .. eh.. drinks / drɪŋks /

Ss: drinks / drɪŋks /

T: drinks / drɪŋks /

Ss: drinks / drɪŋks /

T: Another word, fetch / fɪtʃ / .. fetches / fɪtʃɪz / ... eh..... Yenew?

Ss: Because you said the word ending.. eh... ch, sh... add / -iz / sound.

T: Yes. Yenew said word ending -es, -ch,.... have /-iz / sound. Yes. If you have question.

**Appendix IX**  
**Lesson Transcript Four**

**School Name: Andinet**

**Teacher 4 (male)**

T: Today, we are going to learn pronunciation. We must have good pronunciation. Therefore, You sometimes learn pronunciation. Yes?

Ss: Yes

T: The pronunciation is /-s/ and /iz/ sounds (He wrote the sounds on the blackboard). Now we can practice the sounds. Now say /-s/

Ss: /-s/

T: /-s/

Ss: /-s/

T: Now say / -iz /

Ss: /-iz/

T: Now we can see some examples from your textbook. (He wrote some words). If you look these words, they contain /-s/ and /iz/ sounds. Yes. Now you must repeat after me ( He has written few words which have –es forms in one column and few other words which have –s forms in another column )  
Ok ? Say the first word. washes /w<sup>^</sup>tsiz/

Ss: washes /w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

T: washes /w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

Ss: washes /w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

T: washes /w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

Ss: washes /w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

T: That is well. And continue like this. fetches / fetsiz /

Ss: fetches / fetsiz /

T: fetches / fetsiz /

Ss: fetches / fetsiz /

T: fetches / fetsiz /

Ss: fetches / fetsiz /

T: what about watch /w^ts/? say watches /w^tsiz/

Ss: watches /w^tsiz/

T: watches /w^tsiz/

Ss: watches /w^tsiz/

T: watches /w^tsiz/

Ss: watches /w^tsiz/

T: What about the words: help /help/ ,ask/ asks / , speak /spik/ .Yes. If you take the first word, help /help/ , ...eh ? Any one ? Yes.

Ss: helps /helps/

T: Yes, helps /helps/ . Say helps /helps/ .

Ss: helps /helps/

T: What about the second word?

Ss: asks / asks /

T: Yes asks / asks / . [-s] sound. Eh ? (He pointed to the last word.)

Ss: speak /**ɪ**spi: ks/

T: speak /spik/ ..... /spiks/

Ss: speak /**ɪ**spi: ks/

T: speaks /spiks/

Ss: speaks /spiks/

T: Eh.. and you must learn pronunciation when you get this chance. Yes .

# Appendix X

## Lesson Transcript Five

School name; Bahunk  
Teacher 5 (female)

The teacher wrote the lesson on the blackboard.

T: our lesson is ‘-s’ forms of verbs. The ‘-s’ forms of verbs have different sounds. Some of the verbs have /-s/ sound. whereas some other verbs have /-iz/ sounds. So we may pronounce verbs differently. Verbs which end withy -sh, -ch,-ss, etc,. have ‘-es’ singular marker forms. .... and they are pronounced as /-iz/ sounds. Whereas verbs which end only with ‘-s’ form are pronounced as /-s/ sound. Sp, what kind of sound is there in the first word? (She wrote few words on the blackboard in two columns). The word has ‘-es’ form. So, we pronounce the word as washes/ w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /. And say washes / w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

wash	finish
drink	lift
fetch	dance
ask	speak
help	use
sit	catch

Ss: washes/ w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

T: washes/ w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

Ss: washes/ w<sup>^</sup>tsiz /

T: and say drinks/ drinks /

Ss: drinks/ drinks /

T: drinks/ drinks /

Ss: drinks/ drinks /

T: drinks/ drinks /

Ss: drinks/ drinks /

T: what sound is there in the word, fetch/ *fetsiz* /? Yes.

Ss: /-iz/ sounds

T: yes. fetches/ *fetsiz* / .say it fetches / *fetsiz* /

Ss: fetches / *fetsiz* /

T: fetches / *fetsiz* /

Ss: fetches / *fetsiz* /

T: fetches / *fetsiz* /

Ss: fetches / *fetsiz* /

T: what about . asks / *asks* /?

Ss: asks / *asks* /

T: Yes. asks / *asks* /

Ss: . asks / *asks* /

T: . asks / *asks* /

Ss: . asks / *asks* /

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## Appendix XI

### Textbook Evaluation Checklist on the share of Each language

**Component**

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

No	unit	Number of lessons in each Language							No of Lessons in each unit
		Component							
		Reading comprehension	writing	Listening and speaking	vocabulary	Pronunciation	Language patterns	Punctuation	
Total									

## Appendix XII

### Textbook Evaluation Checklist on Approaches of pronunciation Lessons: Selection and Presentation

No	unit	Selection(size and attention)					Presentation (procedures)			
		Distinctive sounds (vowels, consonants, diphthongs )	Peculiar or unusual English sounds(difficult areas)	Pronouncing words(by syllabication and stress)	Stress in sentences	intonation	Connected speech	explanation	Exercise on reception or production	exposure
Total										

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Tafere Melaku

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: June 17, 2008