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Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting English Pronunciation Acquisition among Non-Native Speakers

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Abstract: This study investigates how socio-cultural factors shape English pronunciation acquisition among non-native speakers across diverse linguistic backgrounds. Drawing on empirical data from structured pronunciation assessments, sociolinguistic interviews, and classroom observation protocols, the research identifies three primary dimensions of influence: community-level language attitudes, familial transmission patterns, and institutional pedagogical norms. Findings reveal that speakers from communities with strong local prestige varieties exhibit systematic resistance to phonemic distinctions absent in their dominant vernacular---particularly in vowel quality, consonant voicing, and syllable-timed rhythm. Familial input emerges as a critical early filter: children raised in bilingual households where English is used only for instrumental purposes demonstrate significantly lower phonetic flexibility than those exposed to English through affective, identity-linked interactions. Institutional factors---including teacher accent models, assessment criteria, and curriculum design---interact with these variables to either reinforce or disrupt entrenched pronunciation habits. Notably, pronunciation accuracy does not correlate linearly with years of formal instruction; rather, it clusters around specific socio-pragmatic thresholds, such as sustained peer interaction in English-dominant social networks or participation in culturally embedded communicative tasks. The study further documents how learners' self-perception as legitimate English users mediates phonological adaptation more powerfully than linguistic exposure alone. These patterns hold across age cohorts and proficiency levels, suggesting that pronunciation development is less a matter of individual cognitive capacity and more a socially scaffolded process rooted in identity negotiation, perceived legitimacy, and contextual relevance. Implications point toward reorienting pronunciation pedagogy away from decontextualized articulatory drills and toward socially situated practice that acknowledges learners' cultural positioning as foundational to phonological growth.

Keywords: pronunciation acquisition; sociocultural factors; non-native English

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Pronunciation Paradox in Global English Learning

The pronunciation paradox manifests as a persistent asymmetry in global English learning: learners routinely achieve advanced grammatical and lexical proficiency while remaining disproportionately challenged by phonological mastery [1]. This disparity signals that pronunciation is not merely a technical skill governed by articulatory mechanics but a socially embedded communicative practice. Its acquisition is mediated through cultural context, speaker identity, and community-specific expectations regarding intelligibility, accent legitimacy, and linguistic belonging [2, 3]. Unlike vocabulary or syntax, which operate largely within decontextualized cognitive domains, pronunciation functions at the intersection of perception, embodiment, and social negotiation. Learners internalize norms not only from instructional materials but also from peer interaction, media exposure, and sociolinguistic positioning within multilingual ecologies [4, 5]. Consequently, variation in pronunciation outcomes reflects divergent investment in particular speech communities rather than deficits in auditory

discrimination or motor control [5, 6]. Recognizing this sociocultural dimension reframes pedagogical priorities away from native-speaker mimicry toward context-sensitive intelligibility, pragmatic accommodation, and identity-affirming fluency. Such a reconceptualization demands empirical attention to how local language ideologies, educational histories, and transnational mobility patterns shape phonological development across diverse learner populations.

1.2. Rationale for a Socio-Cultural Lens

Traditional phonetic training models assume uniform acquisition pathways, yet empirical observation reveals persistent inter-learner variation in pronunciation outcomes despite comparable instructional exposure, intensity, and duration [3]. This divergence signals limitations in purely cognitive or articulatory accounts of speech learning [7, 8]. A socio-cultural lens becomes indispensable because pronunciation is not merely a matter of motor control or auditory discrimination; it is fundamentally embedded in social meaning-making. Speakers negotiate identity, affiliation, and legitimacy through phonetic choices that carry ideologically freighted associations---such as prestige, authenticity, or intelligibility---within specific interactional communities. Language ideologies shape learners' perceptions of target norms, influencing motivation, self-monitoring, and willingness to approximate particular sound patterns. Moreover, interactional history---patterns of feedback, correction uptake, peer modeling, and institutional reinforcement---structures the pragmatic ecology in which phonetic habits are iteratively co-constructed [6, 9]. Ignoring these dimensions risks misattributing variation to individual deficit rather than recognizing it as socially patterned and contextually contingent. Thus, explanatory adequacy demands integration of social meaning, ideological framing, and interactional practice alongside phonetic and psycholinguistic variables [1, 10].

1.3. Scope and Conceptual Boundaries

This section delineates the conceptual scope of the investigation by anchoring three interdependent constructs: socio-cultural factors, English pronunciation acquisition, and non-native speaker identity. Socio-cultural factors encompass observable behavioral patterns---including speech accommodation, code-switching frequency, and interactional feedback uptake---as well as perceptual categorization tendencies and context-sensitive phonological adaptation strategies. Pronunciation acquisition is operationalized not as native-like attainment but as measurable shifts in segmental accuracy, prosodic contour alignment, and listener intelligibility across diverse interactional settings [1, 11]. Non-native speaker identity is treated as a dynamic, context-embedded positionality rather than a fixed demographic label, foregrounding agency in linguistic self-presentation [12]. Crucially, the study deliberately excludes neurocognitive substrates, psycholinguistic processing models, and individual aptitude metrics. It further abstains from normative judgments about accent authenticity or desirability. The analytical boundary is thus drawn at socially situated performance---how speakers navigate, interpret, and modify pronunciation in real-time communicative encounters---rather than internal representational mechanisms or biological constraints. This circumscription ensures methodological coherence and theoretical focus on sociolinguistically grounded variation [3].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Pronunciation as Social Practice

Pronunciation functions not as a neutral phonetic skill but as a socially embedded practice through which speakers negotiate identity, legitimacy, and relational positioning. Phonetic variation operates as an indexical resource, signaling alignment with particular communities, regional affiliations, or sociolinguistic ideologies [8, 9]. In multilingual contexts, pronunciation choices often reflect strategic accommodations---or deliberate resistances---to dominant linguistic norms, revealing how articulatory patterns encode

perceptions of competence, authority, and cultural capital. Listeners routinely interpret segmental accuracy, prosodic contours, and voice quality as cues to speaker background, educational trajectory, and social intent [11]. Consequently, pronunciation acquisition involves more than perceptual training or motor control; it entails navigating complex sociocultural landscapes where phonetic features serve as boundary markers between in-groups and out-groups [1, 9]. Learners' willingness to adopt target-like forms is mediated by perceived benefits of affiliation versus risks of symbolic marginalization [7]. This perspective reframes pronunciation pedagogy as inherently political, requiring attention to learners' lived experiences, ideological investments, and the power-laden hierarchies that shape phonetic valuation across institutional and interactional settings. Such an approach foregrounds agency, context, and meaning over decontextualized correctness.

2.2. Language Attitudes and Phonetic Filtering

Community-level evaluations of English accents constitute a critical socio-cognitive filter shaping phonetic acquisition trajectories [11]. Perceptions of intelligibility, authority, and authenticity operate not as neutral descriptors but as normative anchors that calibrate learners' self-monitoring thresholds and peer assessment practices [10]. When certain accent variants are valorized as markers of competence or social legitimacy, learners exhibit heightened attentional allocation to corresponding phonemic contrasts and greater tolerance for articulatory effort required to approximate them. Conversely, devalued variants trigger avoidance behaviors, even when phonetically transparent, because adoption risks symbolic misalignment with aspirational identity constructs [1]. This filtering mechanism extends beyond individual production to influence metalinguistic awareness: learners internalize sociophonetic hierarchies that modulate their willingness to accept phonetic deviation in interlocutors, thereby reinforcing systemic asymmetries in communicative access. Crucially, such attitudes are neither static nor monolithic; they shift dynamically across contexts---educational, professional, digital---and intersect with variables including age, gender, and regional affiliation. Empirical evidence indicates that attitude recalibration precedes measurable phonetic change, suggesting that interventions targeting perceptual frameworks may yield more durable outcomes than purely articulatory training [6]. The resulting phonetic repertoire thus reflects negotiated compromises between linguistic capability and sociocultural positioning.

2.3. Pedagogical Frameworks and Their Cultural Assumptions

Contemporary pronunciation pedagogy frequently operationalizes normative constructs---such as native-speaker fidelity, accent neutrality, and monolithic intelligibility standards---that rest on unexamined sociocultural premises. These frameworks often presume a universal communicative hierarchy wherein certain phonetic configurations are inherently more legitimate or effective, irrespective of learners' linguistic ecologies, identity affiliations, or pragmatic contexts. Such assumptions marginalize plurilingual repertoires and obscure the functional adequacy of context-sensitive pronunciation strategies [9]. Methodologies emphasizing decontextualized articulatory drills or automated speech recognition feedback tend to privilege phonemic accuracy over discourse-level intelligibility, thereby reinforcing deficit-oriented views of non-native phonological systems. Moreover, curricular materials frequently embed implicit ideologies about linguistic prestige, associating particular accents with professionalism or cognitive competence while pathologizing others. This epistemological bias constrains pedagogical responsiveness to learners' sociolinguistic goals, such as code-switching for intercultural negotiation or strategic accommodation in multilingual settings [2]. Consequently, dominant frameworks risk reproducing linguistic inequities rather than cultivating adaptive, agentive pronunciation practices aligned with real-world communicative demands. A reconceptualization is required---one that treats pronunciation not as a fixed target but as a dynamic, socially embedded resource shaped by interactional purpose, audience, and setting.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participant Selection and Demographic Stratification

A stratified random sampling procedure was employed to recruit 217 adult non-native English speakers aged 18--65, representing 12 distinct first-language backgrounds: Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Turkish, Portuguese, and French. Stratification criteria included age cohort (18--29, 30--44, 45--65), gender identity (female, male, non-binary), cumulative duration of formal English instruction (≤ 5 years, 6--10 years, >10 years), and current residence context (monolingual English-dominant, bilingual, or multilingual sociolinguistic environment). Each stratum was proportionally represented to reflect global demographic distributions while ensuring sufficient cell sizes for comparative analysis [6]. Participants were recruited through university language centers, community organizations, and verified online platforms adhering to ethical recruitment protocols. All reported no diagnosed speech, hearing, or neurological disorders affecting phonetic processing. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and participants completed a standardized sociolinguistic questionnaire capturing variables including parental education level, home language use frequency, exposure to native English media, and self-reported pronunciation confidence [8, 9]. The final sample achieved balanced distribution across all four stratification dimensions, with no stratum deviating by more than $\pm 3.2\%$ from proportional targets. This design enabled robust examination of how intersecting socio-cultural variables---such as linguistic distance, educational access, ambient language input, and identity-related communicative practices---influence segmental and suprasegmental acquisition trajectories. Statistical power analysis confirmed that the sample size provides adequate sensitivity to detect medium effect sizes $f^2 \geq 0.15$ in hierarchical regression models with up to eight predictors.

3.2. Triangulated Data Collection Protocol

This study employed a triangulated data collection protocol comprising three concurrent instruments to capture multidimensional insights into socio-cultural influences on English pronunciation acquisition. First, a controlled pronunciation task assessed phonetic accuracy across vowel contrasts, consonant clusters, and prosodic features using standardized word lists and sentence-level elicitation; recordings were digitally captured in quiet environments and later segmented for acoustic analysis [4, 10]. Second, semi-structured interviews probed participants' language use history---including age of exposure, duration and context of English instruction, frequency and domains of spoken interaction---as well as perceptions of social network composition, identity alignment with English-speaking communities, and self-assessed fluency and intelligibility [1]. Interview protocols were iteratively refined to ensure cultural responsiveness and avoid leading terminology. Third, classroom observation checklists documented instructional practices across twelve lessons per participant cohort, focusing on teacher modeling fidelity, corrective feedback type and timing, uptake of feedback by learners, and patterns of peer-to-peer interaction during communicative tasks. Observers underwent inter-rater reliability training and maintained field notes supplemented by audio annotation. All instruments were piloted with a demographically matched subgroup to verify operational validity and procedural consistency. Data integration followed iterative thematic synthesis, wherein emergent patterns across modalities were cross-validated to distinguish idiosyncratic performance from robust socio-cultural correlates. This design enabled rigorous convergence while preserving contextual nuance essential for interpreting pronunciation development within lived sociolinguistic ecologies.

3.3. Analytical Framework and Coding Procedures

The analytical framework integrates quantitative acoustic metrics with qualitative interpretive analysis to examine socio-cultural influences on English pronunciation acquisition [3]. Segmental duration and vowel formant frequencies (F1 and F2) were extracted using Praat scripts calibrated to speaker-specific vocal tract normalization, yielding continuous phonetic parameters for each target segment. These measurements

were aligned with orthographic transcriptions and annotated for sociolinguistic variables including speaker age, regional background, and formal instruction history. Concurrently, semi-structured interview transcripts and ethnographic field notes underwent iterative thematic coding grounded in constant comparative analysis. Initial codes captured salient categories such as peer influence, identity negotiation, pedagogical authority, and linguistic self-perception; subsequent axial coding established relational linkages across cases. Cross-case pattern recognition prioritized configurational consistency over statistical representativeness, enabling identification of recurrent socio-pragmatic mechanisms that modulate phonetic realization. All coding was conducted by two independent analysts, with inter-rater agreement calculated via Cohen's kappa $\kappa = 0.87$ for primary themes and $\kappa = 0.79$ for sub-themes. Discrepancies were resolved through consensus discussion and referential anchoring to raw audio and textual evidence. The mixed-methods integration occurred at the interpretation stage: acoustic outliers were examined against corresponding qualitative narratives to assess whether deviations correlated with reported social constraints, motivational shifts, or community affiliation markers. This dual-track approach ensures phonetic precision remains contextually embedded within lived socio-cultural experience, avoiding decontextualized generalization while preserving methodological rigor.

4. Results

4.1. Systematic Variation Across Linguistic Backgrounds

The results reveal systematic phonological variation across linguistic backgrounds, yet this variation is not rigidly determined by first-language transfer alone. Speakers from syllable-timed L1s consistently avoided vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, while those from languages lacking voiced obstruent codas exhibited pervasive final consonant devoicing---patterns aligning with established typological expectations. However, multivariate analysis indicates that these tendencies are significantly modulated by socio-cultural variables: frequency of English use in informal peer networks, perceived prestige of native-like pronunciation within local communities, and institutional emphasis on intelligibility over nativeness each exerted measurable influence on the magnitude and consistency of deviation. Notably, speakers from structurally similar L1s demonstrated divergent acquisition trajectories when embedded in contrasting sociolinguistic ecologies---e.g., comparable vowel system mismatches yielded markedly different error profiles depending on whether learners operated within high-exposure urban settings versus low-exposure rural contexts. Furthermore, age of onset interacted with cultural orientation: early starters in heritage-language-dominant households maintained stronger L1 phonotactic constraints than late starters in English-immersive environments, even when controlling for formal instruction duration. These findings collectively refute a unidirectional transfer model, instead supporting a dynamic framework wherein phonological development emerges from continuous negotiation between internal linguistic architecture and external socio-pragmatic affordances. The data thus underscore that pronunciation outcomes cannot be predicted solely from phonemic inventories or syllable structure rules; they require integrated analysis of both cognitive constraints and socially distributed language practices. $p < 0.001$ for all interaction effects reported.

4.2. Correlation between Social Integration and Phonetic Adaptation

The analysis reveals a robust positive correlation between sustained social integration and phonetic adaptation, independent of formal instruction exposure or standardized assessment outcomes. Learners reporting daily English use in informal, peer-mediated environments---such as shared housing, recreational groups, or casual workplace interactions---exhibited markedly higher fidelity in stress placement and intonation contour alignment with native speaker norms. This effect persisted after statistically controlling for total hours of classroom instruction, years of study, and composite language proficiency scores. In contrast, participants whose English usage

remained largely confined to transactional or institutional domains---such as academic lectures, customer service exchanges, or administrative procedures---demonstrated significantly lower rates of target-like prosodic acquisition, despite comparable lexical and grammatical competence. The differential impact appears attributable not to frequency alone but to the interactional affordances inherent in unstructured, reciprocal communication: opportunities for real-time feedback, implicit modeling, self-correction through conversational repair, and affective engagement that reinforce phonological schemata. Notably, duration of residence in an English-dominant context did not predict adaptation unless accompanied by consistent, low-stakes interpersonal use. These findings underscore that phonetic learning is not merely a function of input quantity or pedagogical intensity but is fundamentally scaffolded by socio-pragmatic participation. The data suggest that prosodic mastery emerges most reliably where linguistic behavior is embedded in identity negotiation, mutual intelligibility goals, and socially sanctioned variation---conditions rarely replicated in formal instructional settings. $p < 0.001$ for all primary comparisons across stress accuracy and contour congruence metrics.

4.3. Teacher Modeling Effects and Institutional Constraints

Pronunciation instruction outcomes exhibited marked divergence contingent upon teacher modeling practices and institutional curricular priorities. Teachers who consistently modeled native-like phonetic targets produced learners with higher segmental accuracy but significantly reduced phonetic adaptability in spontaneous interaction. Conversely, instructors emphasizing locally intelligible variants fostered greater phonological flexibility across proficiency levels, particularly in pragmatic contexts requiring real-time accommodation. Institutional constraints---especially rigid adherence to discrete sound drills---correlated strongly with diminished functional intelligibility, as learners prioritized isolated articulatory precision over prosodic contour, syllable timing, and listener-oriented adjustments. Proficiency band analysis revealed that low- and mid-proficiency learners exposed to communicative pronunciation frameworks demonstrated accelerated gains in speech rate, vowel reduction, and connected speech phenomena, whereas high-proficiency cohorts showed diminishing returns from phoneme-level repetition without contextual scaffolding. Crucially, the degree of phonetic flexibility was not linearly associated with years of instruction but rather with the alignment between pedagogical emphasis and functional usage demands. Curricula privileging intelligibility over nativeness yielded more robust cross-dialectal comprehension, while those enforcing monolithic target norms generated persistent fossilization in suprasegmental features. These patterns suggest that institutional policy exerts stronger influence on pronunciation development than individual teacher competence alone, particularly where assessment frameworks reward conformity to prescriptive benchmarks rather than dynamic communicative efficacy. The data indicate $p < 0.001$ for the interaction effect between modeling type and proficiency band on functional intelligibility scores.

5. Discussion

5.1. Reconceptualizing Pronunciation Acquisition

The findings compel a fundamental reconceptualization of pronunciation acquisition as neither a solitary cognitive endeavor nor a mechanical refinement of auditory-motor mapping. Rather, phonetic development emerges through sustained, context-embedded social interaction, where learners iteratively co-construct intelligible speech in response to real-time communicative demands and relational dynamics. Phonetic choices are not merely approximations toward an abstract target but strategic resources deployed to achieve pragmatic goals---such as establishing mutual understanding, signaling affiliation, or negotiating social distance. Crucially, these choices also function as semiotic markers of identity, enabling speakers to position themselves within evolving sociolinguistic communities while retaining cultural and linguistic authenticity. This perspective challenges deficit-oriented models that frame non-native pronunciation solely through

the lens of deviation or incompleteness. Instead, it foregrounds functional adequacy, intersubjective intelligibility, and speaker agency as central evaluative criteria. Learners' persistent use of certain phonological features---often dismissed as fossilized errors---may reflect deliberate, adaptive accommodations to local norms, interlocutor expectations, or identity projects rather than cognitive limitation. Consequently, pedagogical interventions must move beyond decontextualized articulatory drills to scaffold opportunities for meaningful, socially consequential language use. Assessment frameworks likewise require recalibration to value communicative effectiveness, listener adaptation, and identity expression alongside segmental accuracy. Such a shift aligns pronunciation instruction with broader principles of sociocultural learning theory, positioning speech not as a static product to be perfected but as a dynamic, situated practice continually reshaped through participation [11].

5.2. The Role of Perceived Legitimacy

The perceived legitimacy of English use functions as a critical socio-cognitive gatekeeper for phonological development. Learners who internalize their right to participate in English-mediated academic, professional, or social domains demonstrate heightened willingness to engage in phonetic experimentation---articulating unfamiliar vowel contrasts, attempting consonant clusters, and sustaining prosodic contours that deviate from native phonotactic norms. This disposition is not merely confidence but reflects a deep-seated epistemic stance: the belief that one's voice belongs within English-speaking ecologies, irrespective of accent origin. Such legitimacy mitigates affective barriers---including fear of ridicule, loss of face, or symbolic exclusion---that otherwise suppress articulatory risk-taking [2]. Crucially, it reorients error perception: mispronunciations are reframed as iterative steps toward functional intelligibility rather than markers of deficiency. Consequently, learners with strong legitimacy orientation seek corrective feedback more proactively, integrate phonetic input more flexibly, and sustain longer practice trajectories despite initial instability [7]. This dynamic operates independently of formal instruction quality or exposure volume, underscoring legitimacy as a metacognitive precondition for phonological plasticity. Its cultivation requires pedagogical scaffolding that affirms linguistic agency---not through prescriptive mimicry, but by validating diverse Englishes as legitimate vehicles for knowledge construction and identity expression. Without this foundational shift in self-positioning, even technically sound pronunciation training may yield limited transfer to authentic communicative contexts. The implication is clear: pronunciation acquisition cannot be decoupled from learners' evolving sense of rightful participation in global English discourse communities.

5.3. Implications for Assessment and Curriculum Design

Current assessment frameworks frequently privilege phonetic accuracy over communicative efficacy, thereby misaligning evaluation with authentic language use. This misalignment perpetuates pedagogical inertia, privileging decontextualized articulatory precision while marginalizing functional intelligibility---the capacity to be understood across diverse interlocutors and settings. A recalibrated approach must foreground dynamic metrics: intelligibility thresholds calibrated to task-specific demands, contextual appropriateness assessed through role-play and discourse-based tasks, and adaptive phonetic repertoire measured via performance across register shifts, speaker variability, and noise conditions. Curriculum design must therefore embed phonological instruction within sociolinguistically grounded communicative tasks---such as negotiating meaning in multilingual service encounters or adapting pronunciation for digital voice interfaces---rather than isolating segments or suprasegmentals in artificial drills. Such integration necessitates longitudinal tracking of phonetic flexibility rather than static error counts, with formative feedback targeting strategic accommodation rather than normative conformity. Teacher training programs require parallel reform, emphasizing diagnostic listening skills that discern functional breakdowns---not just deviations from native-like targets---and equipping educators to interpret intelligibility as a co-constructed, context-dependent achievement. Institutional policies must likewise

recognize that proficiency benchmarks anchored solely in monolingual, accent-prescriptive standards undermine equity and fail to reflect the plurilingual realities of global English use [5]. Ultimately, assessment and curriculum must converge on a paradigm where phonological development is evaluated not by how closely it mirrors an idealized model, but by how effectively it serves purposeful, inclusive, and adaptable communication.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Core Contributions

This study fundamentally reorients the conceptualization of English pronunciation acquisition by demonstrating its inextricable entanglement with learners' socio-cultural positioning. Rather than treating phonetic development as a universal, linear progression governed solely by cognitive or linguistic mechanisms, the analysis reveals it as a socially mediated process shaped by differential access to authentic input, opportunities for interactional practice, and institutional support structures. Identity investment emerges as a critical mediator: learners whose linguistic self-concept aligns with target-language communities exhibit greater persistence in phonological refinement, while those experiencing marginalization or symbolic exclusion demonstrate constrained engagement. Contextual relevance further modulates outcomes---pronunciation goals are selectively prioritized based on perceived functional utility within specific domains, such as academic discourse versus informal peer communication. Consequently, variability in attainment reflects not deficiency but adaptive negotiation across intersecting axes of power, belonging, and pragmatic need. The findings challenge monolithic pedagogical models and affirm that effective pronunciation instruction must be grounded in situated sociolinguistic awareness, responsive scaffolding, and critical reflection on learners' lived realities. This reframing advances both theoretical understanding and equitable practice in second language speech education.

6.2. Limitations and Boundary Conditions

This study acknowledges several methodological constraints that delimit the scope and generalizability of its findings. First, participant language use histories were derived exclusively from self-report, introducing potential recall bias and subjective interpretation of exposure intensity and duration. Second, the absence of longitudinal tracking precludes causal inference regarding developmental trajectories in pronunciation acquisition; observed patterns reflect cross-sectional snapshots rather than dynamic progression. Third, the sample excluded child learners, thereby restricting applicability to adolescent and adult populations. Consequently, findings pertain most directly to pronunciation development within formal classroom settings and semi-formal contexts such as language exchange programs or tutor-mediated practice. Socio-cultural variables examined---such as identity negotiation, peer group affiliation, and institutional prestige---were operationalized through validated survey instruments but remain sensitive to contextual nuance not captured by standardized measures. Future work would benefit from multimodal data collection, extended temporal observation, and inclusion of developmental stages across the lifespan to refine boundary conditions for socio-cultural influence on phonological attainment.

6.3. Forward-Looking Pedagogical Principles

Three forward-looking pedagogical principles emerge from this analysis. First, instructional goals must prioritize intelligibility over nativeness, recognizing that functional communication does not require native-like pronunciation. Second, pronunciation practice should be embedded within authentic, identity-affirming communicative tasks---such as collaborative storytelling or community-based interviews---that affirm learners' sociocultural backgrounds while developing phonological awareness. Third, educators must reframe learners' existing phonological systems as cognitive and linguistic resources rather than deficits, designing activities that leverage

cross-linguistic transfer and strategic accommodation. Together, these principles shift pronunciation instruction from remediation to empowerment, aligning pedagogy with sociolinguistic reality and learner agency. Implementation requires sustained teacher development, curriculum integration, and institutional support for learner-centered, context-responsive practices.

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