**Findings**

From the data collected, teachers reported several shared difficulties concerning their teaching of English pronunciation in public elementary school. The table below provides a summary of the major themes and subthemes that emerged in relation to Korean elementary public school English teachers’ perceived difficulties related to English pronunciation instruction.

**Table 2**

*Pronunciation Teaching Difficulties of Korean English Teachers*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Themes | Subthemes |
| Self | * Lack of confidence in one’s own pronunciation (model prejudice) * Lack of pronunciation teaching knowledge and skill |
| Students | * Dealing with students’ pronunciation prejudice * Dealing with students with different levels of pronunciation |
| Curriculum & Materials | * Lack of pronunciation teaching time * Lack of teaching materials |

The following sections present the findings related to teachers’ shared difficulties under each of these major themes and subthemes. Difficulties that may have been mentioned only by one of the participants were thought to have been an individual/ personal difficulty and therefore are not included under the shared difficulty themes presented below. Although the teachers’ shared difficulties are presented categorically, it is important to note that we do not intend for them to be conceived as independent from one another. Rather, difficulties related to the self, students, and curriculum and materials should be viewed as interrelated and overlapping at times.

**Self-related Difficulties**

Perceived difficulties related to a teacher’s knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence in pronunciation teaching were categorized under the theme self-related difficulties. Within the theme of self-related difficulties, three subthemes emerged: *lack of confidence in one’s own pronunciation,* and *lack of pronunciation teaching knowledge and skill*. The first subtheme, *lack of confidence*, contains data related to the participants’ lack of confidence in their own English pronunciation. The subtheme, *lack of pronunciation teaching and knowledge*, contains data that relates to Korean English teachers lacking pronunciation teaching knowledge and skill that limits their teaching of pronunciation.

***Lack of Confidence in One’s Own Pronunciation***

The most prominent perceived difficulty to emerge under self-related difficulties that was mentioned by 11 teachers was a lack of confidence in their own pronunciation. The participating teachers reported that they struggle to meet the perceived standard of good pronunciation in Korea. Shin (F, 30s, Highly Intelligible, Y, 4-6 years teaching), despite having highly comprehensible pronunciation, recalled one of her lessons when she felt inadequate to teach English pronunciation due to her different dialect.

*Even though I am teaching English at school, I believe my pronunciation of English is lacking. It sounds like Korean, like I am speaking in Korean. Because I have a strong Busan dialect, my English comes out like that also.*

Some teachers also explained how having non-nativelike pronunciation has influenced them when teaching pronunciation. Kim (F, 20s, Basically Intelligible, Y, 1-3 years teaching) described how not being a native speaker affected her confidence in her English pronunciation which, in turn, negatively impacted her pronunciation teaching confidence.

*Mostly because I am not a native speaker and I am Korean, it is difficult to teach accurate pronunciation to my students. I am already having difficulties distinguishing /r/ and /l/sounds, so I do not have a clear idea of how to teach them to my students.*

One of the factors commonly reported to have a negative impact on teachers’ confidence was being challenged, criticized, and even corrected by high-level students who felt that the teacher’s pronunciation was inaccurate. Seo (F, 40s, Highly Intelligible, N, 11-16 years teaching) despite having highly intelligible pronunciation described how higher-level students have questioned her ability because of her Korean accent which has led to a lack of confidence in her own pronunciation of English.

*Well, I am not a native speaker, so I actually was told by one of my advanced level students that I don’t sound natural because I have a Korean accent. After that, I felt I lack the ability to teach using various pronunciation models such as American, Australian, or British.*

However, it is not just students’ critique that Korean public elementary school teachers expressed negatively impacts their confidence in their own pronunciation. Participants described how in South Korea, having English pronunciation that is not nativelike is viewed by many stakeholders (i.e., parents, administrators, and the majority of the general public) as insufficient since it falls below their acceptance line of what they believe good pronunciation is. This feeling of having inadequate English pronunciation ability was reported to contribute to their overall lack of confidence to teach English pronunciation. The difficulties that emerged under this theme seem to relate to the Nativeness Principle in that teachers and other stakeholders in the country are of the opinion that both the teacher and the students should have as nativelike pronunciation as possible.