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Exploring EFL students' problems in comprehending phonetics courses

A Case of first year LMD Students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

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Dedication

To my beloved **MOTHER** who supports me with her precious advice and her continual support. She is always with me in sorrow and happiness, wiping my tears as I cry, and smiling with me as I am happy.

To my lovely **FATHER** who always fits my needs and requirements.

To my best **Bothers Toufik And Abdelhamid**

To all my **SISTERS**

To my **fiancé**

To all my **FAMILY MEMBERS.**

To all my **FRIENDS. Specialy : Bouchra ,Meriam and ikram**

To all who are **DEAR** to me

I dedicate this modest work.



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Abstarct

This study aims to find out the difficulties that mostly encountered by students in comprehending phonetics courses. Therefore, the appropriate research method is the discipline in which we describe the major phonetics difficulties that foreign language learners may face. Using simple random sampling, fifteen students out of 400 students and three teachers were selected as the respondents. Data were collected through a sequence of questionnaire administered for students and an interview for teachers, which contained three teachers and fifteen students of first year LMD students from the department of foreign language at Biskra University. The results obtained from this present research demonstrate that students find difficulties in understanding the theoretical rules and due to a range of inappropriate working circumstances such as: time, lack of materials, the overlocked classes, teachers and students show negative attitudes towards phonetics learning. Hence, the hypothesis is confirmed. Finally, it is recommended that phonetics should be taught in language laboratories using small groups taught by qualified teachers given the time and the materials required.

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General introduction

Today, all the domains of modern life are familiar with an interesting development of technology, cultural, social, business, political, economic, educational and agricultural systems. Teachers need to observe this great progress and development by transforming their traditional methods of teaching foreign language into more up to date ones by incorporating new strategies through the data display in the classroom presentation to enable their learners to be exposed to authentic materials and thus make them fluent, accurate and free. English is considered as the global language of communication in our present world. Similarly, in Algeria, learning English now is given sufficient emphasis to develop the communication skills of its people through the basic skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Phonetics is one aspect of English that should be taught in order to produce fluent and intelligible speech and sound pronunciation as native. However, learning proper pronunciation is the most difficult part. Teaching pronunciation is important, because it is a sub speaking skill, therefore, good pronunciation avoids communication misunderstanding. English teachers need many things to provide into their limited class time; vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pronunciation is often pushed down on the list. Many teachers say the time to teach pronunciation is not enough, depending on where to teach, many or all of students must speak and understand English in real life in order to communicate with both English and other language speakers, even if the grammar and vocabulary of students are strong, their communication will fail if their pronunciation is not easy to understand. It should owe students the tools they need to communicate in English successfully.

1.Statement of the problem

The fact that Arabic and English Language vary in their sound systems arises some problems, this variation poses some serious difficulties because certain phonemic segments and patterns encountered in English are not found in Arabic. This research tried to shed light on the difficulties that English learners faced with understanding phonetic courses. Such difficulties force some serious errors, which are considered as a big defect in the pronunciation of English language. This study aims to identify the difficulties encountered by Biskra University's first - year students in understanding phonetic courses.

2.Research question

This study aims to answer the following research question:

- What are the problems faced by the first year students of biskra university in comprehending phonetics?

3.Research hypothesis

We suggest the following hypotheses as an attempt to answer the research questions:

- EFL first year student may find difficulties in understanding the rules introduced during the lesson or the ability to use this rules
- EFL first year student may not comprehend phonetics in large classroom.
- The time of teaching phonetics session is not sufficient for first year students and the students do not have much chance to practice and develop their pronunciation .

4.Aims of the study

The main aim of this study is to spot light on the main difficulties that first year EFL students face in comprehending phonetic courses.

5.Significance of the study

This study is significant because it will help you to know the most difficulties that face EFF first year students when they learn phonetic courses at Biskra University, and it will provide teachers with information on what their students need to understand and learn, so they can identify the problem and make valuable recommendations as well.

6.Research method

In this study, we adopted a descriptive method for investigating difficulties in comprehending phonetics courses because it was easy and did not take a long time.

7.Research tool

The interview has been deoted for teacher of phonetics, and questionnaire for first year students since it was the appropriate tool for our study. The interview which was prepared for the teacher seeks to know their attitudes, opinions and experiences about teaching phonetics. Whereas the questionnaire intended for students seeks to identify the main difficulties in the learning of phonetics courses.

8.Sample of the study

We chose only few first - year students of English at Biskra University because we cannot conduct our research with all the students and because of the time consuming.

For both teachers and students, the subject has been selected randomly, we choose only three Phonetics teachers.

9. Outline of the study

Our study divided into two parts: theoretical part and practical one. The theoretical part included one chapter divided into two sections: section one, which entailed an overview of teaching pronunciation; in this section, we mentioned definition of pronunciation, the importance of teaching pronunciation and the main aspects of it. In section two: we discussed the methods of teaching pronunciation.

Chapter two dealt with data analysis, results and discussion. In this chapter we analysed the data that we gathered from the interview and questionnaire and sum up with a conclusion about the whole research.

Chapter One: Overview of teaching pronunciation

Section One: Teaching pronunciation

Introduction

As the importance of the English language grows and its status as a global language is strengthened every day, many people begin to understand that the only knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary is not sufficiently good, in today's increasingly international world, it is not only necessary to understand what other English speakers say, but also to make speech understandable to others. Although, many English students and teachers need to improve pronunciation skills throughout the world, many English students still manage mispronouncing sounds, misplacing stress in sentences and using sound patterns in the wrong way. Many researchers explain this problem in terms of the habits that our mother tongue strongly combines in our language patterns, and the ability to pretend language weakens perfectly with age, as children 10 years of age or younger are able to gain excellent knowledge of any language they are exposed to, but children older than 10 are more likely to struggle with difficulty in pronunciation management. Thus for students whose first language belongs to the syllable language group where all syllables are stressed equally it is very difficult to adopt the English stress patterns, this is why so many adults struggle properly to pronounce English sounds and do not eliminate their habits of native pronunciation.

I - 2-Definition of pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the production of meaningful sounds, it takes into account the specific sounds of a language (segments), parts of speech beyond the individual's level, such as sound, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected. In its broadest definition, is paid attention to actions and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language, and it is an act or way of pronouncing words, utterance of words, a way of speaking a word, in particular, a way that is accepted or generally understood, and a graphical representation of the way a word is spoken, using phonetic symbols.(Harmer; 2005)

I -3-Phonetics and phonology

The pronunciation study consists of two fields: phonetics and phonology. Phonetics refers to the study of speech sounds, is a broad field and does not necessarily have a direct link to language study itself, while the phonetic disciplines can be studied independently of each other, they are clearly linked: Speech organs move to produce sounds that travel in sound waves received by the ears and transmitted to the brain, if phonetics deals with the physical reality of speech sounds, on the other hand, phonology is primarily about how we interpret and systematize sounds, phonology deals with the system and pattern of sounds in a given language, The study of English phonology examines the language's vowels, consonants and suprasegments. In the phonology discipline, when we talk about vowels and consonants, we refer to the different sounds we make when we speak, and not to consonant letters we refer to when we talk about spelling (Rogers, 2000). Supposing that phonology is always monolingual would be wrong, much phonological study

work deals with generalizations in the organization and interpretation of sounds that can be applied in different languages.(Rogers,2000)

I-4-The importance of teaching pronunciation

Pronunciation is an act or manner of pronouncing words; utterance of speech, a way of speaking a word, in particular, an accepted or generally understood way, and a graphic representation of how a word is spoken using phonetic symbols. Teaching pronunciation has undergone a long evolution, at the beginning of the 20th century everything was subordinated to grammar teaching and lexis and pronunciation was completely overlooked, according to Scrivener, this is partly because teachers themselves may feel more uncertain about it than grammar and lexis, worried that they do not have sufficient technical knowledge to help students properly .It is widely recognized that acquiring good pronunciation is very important because it is not easy to correct bad pronunciation habits, Kelly states that it can be extremely difficult for a speaker from another language community to understand a learner who consistently mispronounces a range of phonemes, this can be very frustrating for the student who has good grammar and lexicon but has difficulty understanding by a native speaker.(Kelly,2000)

I -4-1-Intellegibility

Since pronunciation is a complex and important part of the learning and teaching process, teachers must set their goals and objectives with their students as perfect accents are difficult if not impossible to achieve in a foreign language , teachers must aim to make their students easily understandable when communicating with others, when talking about intelligibility there is no clear definition of it, but in general we can say that intelligibility means that a listener can understand a speaker at a certain

time and without major difficulties, in other words, the more words a listener can accurately identify when a particular speaker says, the more intelligible the speaker is (Ken 1990: 13). Therefore, the pronunciation of the speaker must not be error free if the listener is able to understand the utterance, Dalton and Seidlhofer point out that linguistic similarity and phonetic accuracy do not guarantee intelligibility, but cultural and economic factors often override it (Ken 1994: 11). Therefore, there are other points that can influence intelligibility, despite the language factors, such as whether the topic is familiar to both a speaker and a listener or whether a speaker expects to speak.

I -4-2-Model

Although there are approximately 4,000 languages spoken in the world, English is slowly becoming a lingua franca for business and political negotiations of non-native speakers. Initially, teachers need to think about whether they want their students to speak with an RP accent or whether they want them to be able to speak accurately enough to be understood and communicate, even if teachers use a model of accents that are always marked with their mother tongue and modified for their students, they should also be aware of other English varieties and introduce them to their students, since there is no general statement on which accent model teachers should be taught, their students should be able to choose their own target model as long as it is widely understood. (Ken, 1994)

I -5-The main features of pronunciation

The concept of pronunciation includes the segmental characteristics of speech production or phonemes, which can be regarded as the individual sounds of a language, that distinguish one word from another. On the other hand, pronunciation

involves supragmental features such as accent, stress, intonation and how sounds change in related speech:

I -5-1-Phonemes

Phonemes are the various sounds in a language, although there are slight differences in how people articulate sounds, we can still describe how each sound is produced with reasonable accuracy. When we consider its meaning, we see how one sound can change the meaning of the word instead of another, this principle gives us the total number of phonemes in a given language. For example, the word "rat" has the phonemes / r a ə t / , if we change the middle phonemes, we get / r ə d / red, another word, if we say / r / slightly differently, the word doesn't change, and we still understand that we mean the same thing. In order to make an analogy, your individual perceptions of colours can theoretically vary, but we know intuitively that we are likely to think more or less of the same thing, we can both look at a green traffic light and understand its magnificence and how it differs from red.

Sounds can be voiced or unvoiced (voiceless), voiced sounds occur when the vocal cords in the larynx are vibrated. It is easy to tell whether or not the sound is voiced by placing one or two fingers on the Adam's apple, if we produce a voiced sound, we will be vibrating, if we make an unvoiced sound, we won't. For example, you can hear the difference between /f/ and /v/ by placing your top teeth on your bottom lip, breathe out in a continuous stream to produce / f / then add your voice to make / v /, hold Adam's apple while doing this, and you will feel the vibration.

The set of phonemes consists of two categories: Vowel sounds and consonant sounds. However, they do not necessarily match the vowels and consonants known in the alphabet, all vowel sounds are voiced, and may be single (like /e /, as in /let /),

or a combination involving a movement from one vowel sound to another (such as /ei /, as late) ; this combination is known as diphthong, which describes the combination of three vowel sounds (such as /aʊə / in 'our 'vowel or' power', single vowel may be short (such as / I /, as in / bit /) or long (such as / I:, as in / beat /). Consonants sound essentially the same with the exception of the voicing element (e.g. /f /, as in 'fan', and /v /, as in 'van'). (Kelly, 2000)

(a)-English Vowels

According to Jones, vowels are some of the continuous voiced sound, produced by any frictional noise in the mouth without obstruction, in his book "The Pronunciation of English," Jones (1958:15) classifies the vowels as 5 based on the language position:

1-Front vowels

In the production of which the tongue's ' front ' is elevated towards the hard palate. For example, /i:/ in /fi:d/ feed.

2-Back vowel

In the production from which the tongue's ' back ' is raised in the soft palate direction. For example, /u:/ in /fu:d/ food.

3-Central vowels

When the tongue's position is in the middle or in the front and back intermediate. For example, /ɜ:/ in /bɜ:d/ bird.

4-Close vowels

When the tongue is held consistently as high as possible with no frictional noise being produced. For example, /i:/ in /fi:d/ feed and /u:/ in /fu:d/ food.

5-Open vowels

When the tongue is kept as low as possible, as in /a:/ in /fa:ðə / father.

(b)-English consonants

Phonetically, the consonant is a sound that comes from the closure or narrowing of the vocal tract so that the airflow is either completely blocked or limited. People use speech organs to produce consonants that are mostly used to use the term 'articulation' to address consonant production. According to Kelly (2000:47) consonants can be described in terms:

B-1 The place of articulation

The place of the articulation refers to the location where the constriction of the airflow is exactly made in the vocal tract shown in Fig. 1 For the production of the English consonants, there are 9 main places of articulation that can be identified; these places are summarized as follows:

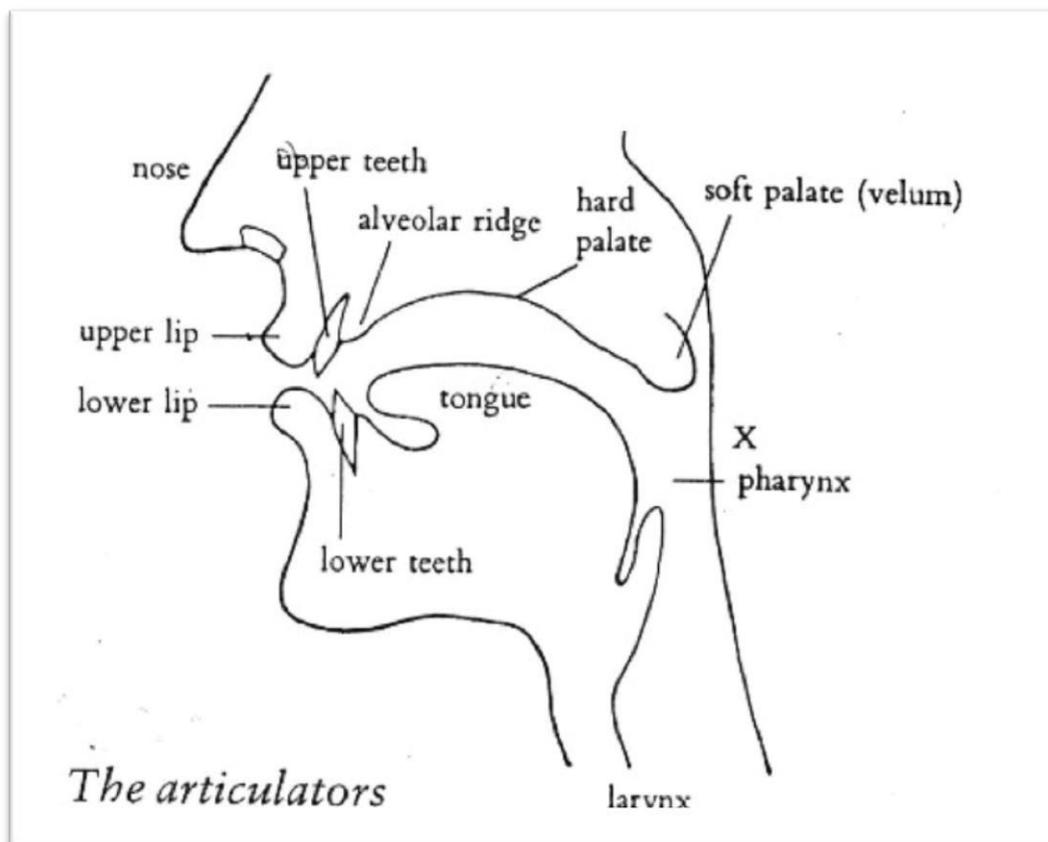


Fig 1: the vocal tract (Kelly,2000)

- 1-Labiodental Sound articulated against the upper teeth by the tip tongue e.g.: /f/.
- 2-Dental Sounds articulated against the upper teeth by the tip tongue, e.g.: / ð /.
- 3-Alveolar Sounds articulated against the teeth - ridge by the tip or blade of the tongue, e.g.:/t/.
- 4-Palatal Sounds articulated against the hard palate by the back of the tongue, e.g. / j/
- 5-Velars Sounds articulated against the soft palate by the back of the tongue ,e.g: /k/.
- 6-Gottal sounds articulated in the glottis, e.g.: /h/.

B-2 Manner of articulation

The manner of the articulation refers to the degree and the type of the obstruction formed in the vocal tract (Rogers, 2000).

1-Plosive Somewhere in the vocal tract a complete closure is made and the soft palate is also raised, air pressure increases after closure, and then ' explosively ' is released 11 times, e.g. /p/ and /b/

2-Affricative somewhere in the mouth, a complete closure is made and the soft palate is elevated, after closing, air pressure increases and is released more slowly than in plosives,

3-Fricative when two vocal organs come together enough for the air to be heard between them, e.g. /f/ and /v/.

4-Nasal The lips or the tongue closes against the plate, the soft plate lowers and air flows through the nose, e.g. /m/ and /n/.

5-Lateral a partial closure is made against the alveolar ridge by the tongue blade, air can flow around the tongue's sides, e.g. /l/.

6-Approximant vocal organs come close, but not so close to each other that they cause audible friction, e.g. /r/ and /w/.

The Place of the Articulation

Both lips(bilabial): p, b; m, w

Lower lip and upper teeth (labiodentals): f, v

Tip of the tongue and teeth (interdental): θ , ð

Tip of the tongue and tooth ridge (alveolar):t,d,n, s, z, l, r

Blade of the tongue and the hard palate (alveo palatal) : ʃ ,ʒ, dʒ, tʃ, j

Blade of the tongue and the soft palate (velar) : k, ,g, ŋ, w

The Manner of the Articulation

Stops: p, b, t, d, k, g

Fricatives: f, v, θ , ð,s, z, ʃ,ʒ

Affricates: dʒ, tʃ

Liquids:l, r

Semi-vowels :w, j

Voicing

Voiceless	Example	Voiced	Example
P	Put	b	Boot
t	tin	d	drive
k	cape	g	gone
f	foot	v	vote
θ	think	z	them
s	sink	ʒ	zoo
ʃ	ship	dʒ	measure
tʃ	choose	m	gem

		v	move
		n	nose
		ŋ	sing
		l	lose
		r	race
		w	win
		j	yes

Table 1: The Classification of English Consonants (Rogers,2000)

I -5-2-Suprasegmental features

Phonemes, as we have seen, are units of sounds that we can analyse, which are also known as segments. Suprasegmentally features as the name implies are speech characteristics that generally apply to segment groups or phonemes. Stress, intonation and how sounds change in connected speech are the important features in English , as for individual words, we can identify and teach word stress usually one syllable in one word sounds more prominent than the other, as in paper or bottle, word stresses are usually shown in dictionaries, in terms of utterances, intonation and stress can be analysed and taught, although as features they can sometimes be quite difficult to recognize and describe consciously, stress rhythms the speech, one or more words in each speech are selected as worthy of stressing by the speaker and thus made prominent to the listener. On the other hand, intonation is the way the voice's pitch goes up and down in the course of an utterance, stress of utterance and intonation patterns are often associated with meaning communication (Rogers,2000).

I -6-Pronunciation aspects

The first aspects of pronunciation are sounds consisting of two types: Vowels and consonants. Vowels and consonants perform different syllable functions, each syllable has a vowel in its centre (salt, tab ...) and the consonants "surround" the vowel, preceding it and cutting it off, as in the word "any" it is also possible to have a vowel syllable (a - ny).

1-Combination of sounds

Sometimes sounds is occurred in groups, at the end of the word 'salt' there are two consonants, if this happens ,a word is called consonant cluster .

2-Word stress

If an English word has more than one syllable ("polysyllabic"), one of these is more distinctive than the other, this is done by saying the syllable slightly louder, holding the vowel a little longer and very clearly pronouncing the consonants, these features combine to give the prominence or stress of the syllable, in "table," "isn't," and "any" first syllable is stressed.

3-Linkage of words

When English speakers do not usually pause between each word, but move smoothly from one word to another, there are special ways to do this. For example, a speaker who says that our sentence moves directly from the "t" of "salt" to the "o" of "on" and from the "t" of "is not" to the "a" of "any" (Rogers,2000)

4-Rhythm

English speech looks like music because it has a beat, there are groups of syllables just like music bars, and there are strong and weak beats in each group, in English, there is a tendency for strong beats to fall on nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and weak beats on prepositions, articles and pronouns.

5-Weak forms

If a word with only one syllable is not stressed in a phrase, its pronunciation is often quite different from when stressed, the definite article "the" is an example, if it is said alone or stressed, the vowel will sound like the one in "me," but when it is unstressed, the vowel will be quite short and indistinct, the most useful vowel in unstressed syllables is schwa / ə /, which is the name given to the vowel sound that many English people make when they hesitate to speak, the most extreme example of a drastic change in pronunciation in our phrase is 't, ' which is the unstressed form of 'not, ' which has completely lost its vowel and only the two consonants.(Rogers,2000)

6-Sentence stress

So far, we have been able to say a lot about the pronunciation of our sentence by looking at it alone, but to go further, for example, we have to put it in a conversation context, for example:

A: There is plenty of salt.

B: There is not any salt on the table.

Speakers often decide that they want a particular word to be more or less prominent, a word can be given less weight because it has already been said, or it can be given more weight because the speaker wants to highlight it.(Rogers,2000)

7-Intonation

Speech is also like music because it uses pitch changes; speakers can change their voice's pitch when they speak, making it higher or lower in pitch at will, they can even suddenly jump up in the pitch as singers do, so speech has a melody called intonation, the two basic melodies rise and fall, these can be very sudden or gradual and can be combined in different combinations (rise - fall - rise, fall - rise, fall - rise, etc.).Speakers use pitches to send different messages, for example, if a speaker said "there's no salt on the table," he might have repeated the same words, but with a gradually rising pitch, and this would have had the effect of sending a message.(Rogers,2000)

I -7-The physiology of pronunciation

Teachers must also consider how the sounds we use come about and study the physiology that enables us to use them; we all use the same speech organs to produce the sounds we acquire. However, it may vary e.g. An English speaking child develops English - speaking phonemes, a French - speaking child develops a different set, and so on, we also learn to use appropriate stress and intonation patterns, and the child who speaks Cantonese will learn to use tones to give the same set of sounds different meanings. To some extent, we can learn to use our speech organs in new ways to produce learned sounds in a foreign language or to lose sounds from our own language that are not suitable in a foreign language. However,

it seems that childhood is somewhat diminishing our ability to adopt an unfamiliar set of sounds.(Rogers,2000)

I -8-Learning pronunciation takes time

Pronouncing sounds involves both human's minds and bodies, when they learn new sounds they need to learn to move their mouth muscles in new ways and change their pronunciation habits throughout their lives, it is not easy and it takes a long time to learn any other muscular activity, most people cannot immediately learn to dance or play a musical instrument ; they must slowly start, practice a lot, and gradually accelerate and develop skills, their mouths also need to build up muscle memory, muscles begin to "remember" how to move because they have often done so, it also takes time to teach pronunciation, teachers cannot teach anything once and expect their students to master it immediately, they need to repeatedly return to the same point, giving students a lot of review and continued practice.(Kelly,2000)

I -9- Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning

The pronunciation of any learner might be affected by a combination of factors which some researchers, for example, Celce-murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2000) believe that there are some factors promote or impede the mastery of pronunciation. These factors include age, personality, mother tongue influence, gender, and learning context. It is well acknowledged that age, personality, and L1 background are the most important factors that affect learners' mastery of L2 pronunciation. However, these factors are briefly summarized below.(Celce,1996)

I -9.1. The biological factor

It is one of the most important factors in the learning of foreign language especially pronunciation. According to the “Critical Period Hypothesis” (CPH) which based on the claims of Penfield and Roberts (1959) and further developed by Lenneberg (1967, cited in Barros, 2003) states that the adults will find difficulties in learning a second language if they did not expose to it before the critical period which ends around the age of FL. To put it in other words, children who are exposed to more than one language before the age of puberty, they probably will achieve native-like pronunciation; whereas the adults will have problems in learning a second language particularly pronunciation and intonation. Krashen(1988) strengthened the CPH by mentioning that learners who begin exposure to a second language during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than adults. Briefly stated, Children are more likely to reach higher levels of attainment in both pronunciation and grammar than adults are.

As a result, since children are better in learning the language in short run, teaching pronunciation process should be started before puberty. Besides, the aged learners pick up the correct pronunciation a little bit late, so the foreign language teachers must be very patient in this sense, and must prepare special pronunciation drills and have the students repeat. They will obtain an acceptable level of good articulation in the long term.(Celce,1996)

I -9.2. Personality Factor

This is also another important factor affects the pronunciation of EFL learners. Avery and Ehrlich (2008) believe that shy or introvert students who do not want to take part in classroom activities achieve higher scores on reading and grammar

components, but they cannot find any opportunities to make practice and to make use of pronunciation activities. While, learners who are outgoing and confident and get involved in interactions with their classmates or native speakers are liable to practice their foreign language pronunciation.

In order to engage the introvert learners in classroom participation, the good teacher should be aware in his giving feedback. The given feedback should be delivered in a positive emotional tone not with annoyance or frustration since learners need to feel safe in asking for assistance.(Celce,1996)

I -9.3. Native Language Factor

Every language in the world has different varieties and different accents. Therefore, the way we speak is a part of our identity that leads learners to pronounce the target language in different ways: sometimes slightly different and sometimes highly different than the native speakers' do. This is known as mother tongue interference. Avery and Ehrlich(2008) claim that the sound pattern of the learner's first language is transferred into the second language and is likely to cause foreign accents. The mispronunciations of words by non-native speakers reflect the influence of the sounds, rules, stress, and intonation of their native language. In other words, Peoples' view of world influences their language and also people adopt the view of the world around them through the experience and categories of their language.

Avery and Ehrlich(2008) stated that the sound system of the native language can influence the learners' pronunciation of a target language in at least three ways: First, there are some English sounds that do not exist in the learner's mother tongue, or vice versa. In this case, the more differences there are the more difficulties the learner will have in pronouncing English. Arab learners of English Language, always

have problems in learning such sounds that do not exist in the Arabic language like /v/, /p/, /tʃ/, some diphthongs like /əʊ/, /eɪ/, /ɪə/, etc, or other existed sounds in our language but in different realizations as /ŋ/, /θ/, /ð/, /r/, /l/ and /dʒ/. Most learners tend to convert them into other sounds that are easier to produce or closer to their mother tongue. Second, the learners' mother rules of combining sounds into words are not the same as those of the target language. Third, learners may transfer the patterns of stress and intonation from their native language to the target language.(Celce,1996)

I -9.4. Amount of Exposure

The last but not the least factor that may affect the learning of pronunciation is the amount of exposure to the target language. The exposure is not necessarily living in an English-speaking country since there are many learners live in a foreign country but they spent much time using their mother tongue, but it is how the learners respond to the opportunities. Kenworthy(1987) mentions that if learners are aware of the necessity of the target language exposure and make use of its opportunities, they will be more successful in improving their pronunciation. Besides, in a study of learners of Spanish, Shively(2008) found that accuracy in the production of Spanish is significantly related to age at first, exposure to the language, amount of formal instruction in Spanish, residence in a Spanish-speaking country, amount of out-of-class contact with Spanish, and focus on pronunciation in class. Therefore, in addition to focusing on pronunciation and accent in class, teachers encourage learners to speak English outside the classroom and provide them with assignments that structure those interactions. The best ways of being exposed would be, videos shows, films, CDs, radio or TV programs, computer assisted language teaching programs, and etc. In addition, the amount of exposure is crucial and it must make

the students creative and active, not passive and dull. Therefore, the dose of exposure must be adjusted with caution.(Ken,1987)

I -10-Teacher's role

Teachers as pronunciation models carry a great responsibility in their classrooms, they influence their students positively or negatively and their main objective is to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere. On the other hand, their practical skills are not sufficient, because if the teacher can only illustrate pronunciation by his or her own speech performance, the students are left to work out what is important for them (Ken,1996)

1-Helping students to make sounds

In this situation, teachers must explain how to imitate and pronounce new sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue and guide their students.

2-Helping students to hear

Teachers ' role is to help their students perceive sounds that are often misperceived due to the false similarity in the mother tongue of learners. Teachers must check whether their students listen to sounds according to the appropriate categories and if necessary help them to develop new categories.(Ken,1996)

3-Pointing out what is going on

Since speaking is unconsciously controlled, students can miss important conversational features and teachers should always emphasize the key features.

4-Providing feedback

Teachers must provide their students with accurate and constructive feedback on how they do it, as they cannot judge whether their pronunciation is understandable or not, failure to provide feedback to students could lead to incorrect pronunciation assumptions.(Ken,1996)

5-Setting priorities

Learners themselves know that their pronunciation differs in some ways from native speakers, but they do not know whether it is relevant or not, teachers guide them on what features they should focus on and what they should not.

6-Development of activities

Students learning styles must also be taken into account as the effect of their progress when selecting the most appropriate activities that offer the best opportunities for practical teachers.(Ken,1996)

7-Evaluating progress

Evaluating progress is not an easy task for any teacher, but it is essential for further motivation to provide students with information about their progress.

I -11-Student's role

The role of the learners is not only responding to their teacher but also taking actions toward their own learning as well as their improvement. As an effective element in the teaching/learning process, the learners of English have to direct their learning strategies towards promoting self-autonomy in and outside the classroom. As claimed by Benson “we are born self-directed learners” .In the classroom, the learner has to do many things to insure that output becomes input, for instance,

taking notes, paying attention to the teacher, collaborating with the teacher and the classmates...etc. Outside the classroom, each learner is responsible for his/ her own progress by organizing data driven from the course, memorizing the courses, revising for the exam, surfing the web for more information about a specific point that needs more clarification, checking dictionaries...etc. All these strategies are beneficial for the learner; such strategies may lead to the development of the learners' competences in pronunciation including checking the transcription of every new word, especially if the learner uses a notebook to record the new transcriptions and recall them whenever s/he speaks. This rehearsal activity (recall and practice) expands the scope of pronunciation learning and reinforces precise storage in long-term memory.(Brazil,D.(1994))

I -12-Problems in teaching pronunciation

There are two key problems with teaching pronunciation, firstly it tends to be neglected, and secondly, if it is not neglected, it tends to react to a particular problem that arises in the classroom rather than strategically planned.(Morley,J.1991)

I .12.1 paradox

The fact that pronunciation tends to suffer from neglect may not be due to lack of interest in the subject by teachers, but rather to a sense of doubt about how to teach it, many experienced teachers would acknowledge a lack of knowledge of pronunciation theory and thus feel the need to improve their practical skills in pronunciation teaching. Although trainees and less experienced teachers may be very interested in pronunciation, their grammar and vocabulary concerns tend to take precedence. On the other hand, language learners are often very enthusiastic about

pronunciation; they feel that it would help them communicate better. So, paradoxically, although both teachers and students are interested in the subject, it is often neglected. (Morley,1991)

I .12.2.From reactive to planned teaching

Many pronunciation teaching tends to be done in response to errors made by students in the classroom, of course, such reactive teaching is absolutely necessary and will always be so, grammatical and lexical difficulties also arise in the classroom and these are also addressed reactively by teachers. However, when planning a lesson or drawing up a work schedule, teachers tend to make grammar their first concern ,lexis follows closely behind, where appropriate vocabulary items and longer phrases are "slotted in “, a look at language organization in terms of grammatical structures, although some more recent publications claim to have a lexically arranged syllabus. It is therefore quite natural to make grammar the primary reference when planning lessons. However, work on pronunciation can and should also be planned, teachers should regard pronunciation features as integral to language analysis and lesson planning, any language analysis that does not take into account pronunciation factors or otherwise is incomplete. Similarly, a lesson focusing on specific language structures or lexis must include pronunciation features in order to give students a complete picture, and thus a better chance of successful communication. During planning, teachers should decide which pronunciation problems are relevant to the specific structures and lexis addressed in the lesson; they can also anticipate their students' pronunciation difficulties and plan their lessons accordingly. (Morley,1991)

I -13-Some Pronunciation difficulties

Many students have problems in learning, particularly in spoken English; these are some common difficulties facing students while learning English pronunciation (Walker,2010)

I.13.1. Pronouncing Consonants

While speaking English, Learners try to emphasize consonants unnecessarily and add extra stress to the syllables, even for those English words where written consonants are omitted in speech, students tend to articulate consonants fully and clearly, reading English is particularly challenging for non-native learners, because they are scared to drop consonants even at places they must be. Some students find it difficult to make a distinction between voiced and voiceless sounds. Hence, there is confusion in case of voiced and voiceless plosives. For example:

-/p/ Many Arabic learners tend to substitute /p/ for /b/; to help learners, they should be informed that the variant of /b/ occurs in Arabic words as in the word ‘kabf’ [kapf] (lamp) which is similar to /p/; it also occurs in loan speech as wordslike ‘pasta’.

-/tʃ/ and /dʒ/ These sounds are not part of the standard Arabic sound system, due to this, Arabic learners encounter problems with them, but this sounds can be found in loan words like ‘champion’, or when they are adjacent as in ‘tʃæmær’ or ‘majar’ / madʒar /, they exist even in local varieties.

-/ŋ/ This consonant is not a part of Arabic sound system, but it can be found in dialects as variant of /n/ especially when it comes after /k/as in ‘iŋka:na’ (if he was) and ‘fiŋkam’(where is it/he) (Walker, 2010).

I.13.2. Pronouncing Vowels

Some students face difficulties in distinguishing the short English vowels. During articulation, they skip short vowels completely, leading to the production of elided and shortened word forms, all English vowels cause some degree of confusion, some speakers break diphthongs and add a syllable to keep the gliding effect between them . Hence, they articulate the English word / fʌɪn/ as /fa:jin/. There is an inclusion of /j/ in between the diphthong.

-Problems with: /i: / vs. / ɪ /, /eɪ / vs. /e/, /u: / vs. /ʊ/ .These are the English tense vowels that Arabic learners confuse.

-Problems with: /e/ vs. /æ/, /ʌ/ and /ɒ/.Arabic learners face difficulties in differentiating between these distinctive vowels because the standard Arabic has just one low vowel which is /ɒ/.

-Problem with: /e/ vs. / ɪ /.These vowels cause a difficulty for Arabic learners as they cannot differentiate between them producing a vowel between the two.(Walker,2010)

I.13.3. What students can say

Learning a foreign language often presents a problem of physical unfamiliarity (i.e. making the sound with certain parts of the mouth or nasal cavity is physically difficult).

I.13.4. What students can hear

Some students have great difficulty hearing characteristics of pronunciation that want to reproduce; speakers of various first languages often have problems with different sounds.

I.13.5. The intonation problem

Some students find it extremely difficult to hear tunes or to identify the various patterns of falling and rising tones. A native language has already been suggested that it can play an important role in learning English, it is one of the reasons why the errors of the learner may arise because certain aspects of the mother tongue interfere with the target language, some aspects of English make it relatively complicated to achieve its pronunciation, the lack of one to one equivalence between spelling and pronunciation is one of its characteristics, in other words, the spoken word does not correspond to phonemes in its written form and vice versa. (Walker,2010)

I.13.6. “B”/ “P” and “F”/ “V” Sounds

Some people specially the Arabic students they often substitute the sound ‘P’ by ‘B’ e.g. parking becomes barking / pepper becomes bepper. Also they change the sound ‘V’ by ‘F’, for instance: ‘voice’ becomes ‘foice’ .

I.13.7. Pronouncing Silent Letters

Some Arabic students accidentally try to use the same pronunciation rules of their language when speaking English. For example : ‘foreign’ becomes ‘for-i-gen’ / ‘sign’ becomes ‘si-gen’ .(Walker,2010)

I.13.8. Adding vowel sounds to words

In Arabic, there are far fewer consonant clusters, "sp," "gr," "spl," and "str" all contain sounds that are either not produced in Arabic, or pronounced differently. English words such as "stress," "split" or "gray" lead to mistakes. For instance: stress becomes e-set-ress / split becomes e-spi-lit /gray becomes gi-ray . Native Arabic speaking students in ESL usually insert vowel sounds before and between consonant clusters resulting in more syllables and wild pronunciation errors.(Walker,2010)

I.13.9. /s/and /z/ sounds

Some students usually struggle with differentiating between voiced /z/ sound and unvoiced /s/ sound.

Section two: Methods of teaching pronunciation

I .2.1 History and scope of teaching pronunciation

Pronunciation has been depicted as the “Cinderilla” of foreign language teaching because the Western philosophers have been long centering their attention on studying grammar and vocabulary marginalizing pronunciation. This explains why Grammar and vocabulary have been much more understood than pronunciation by most of English language teachers. It was until the beginning of the twentieth century that pronunciation started to be studied systematically (Kelly 1969 cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2009).

Two approaches to teaching pronunciation have been founded in the field of modern language teaching, namely, the intuitive-imitative approach and the analytic-linguistic approach, but in fact the only approach that was used and supplemented by the teacher’s textbook is the imitative approach which was not applied just until the late of the twentiethcentury (Celce-Murciaet al., 2009).

A-The Intuitive-Imitative approach

The name indicates, the major focus of this approach is to develop learners’ ability to listen and imitate the rhythms and sounds of the target language. It enhances learners’ possibilities of listening to good models of English by providing

materials that are gradually used in different phases; earlier there was the use of the phonograph recorder, then the tape recorder, and the language laboratories in the mid of the twentieth, and later there were the use of the audio- and video cassettes and compact discs (Celce-Murcia et al., 2009).

B-The Analytic-Linguistic Approach

This approach came as a supplement for the intuitive-imitative approach; it also focuses on listening, but it depends more on phonological insights and uses different tools such as: the phonetic alphabet, articulatory description, charts of the vocal tract, contractive information, and production; in addition to other listening aids to teach listening. Lessons are explicitly transmitted to students with a great emphasis placed on target language's sounds and rhythm (Celce-Murcia et al., 2009).

I.2.2. Methods of teaching pronunciation

There are different language teaching methods that have considered the role of pronunciation from different viewpoints; these methods are as follows;

I.2.2.1. Direct method

Teaching pronunciation in the direct method took the form of imitation and intuition. Students are supposed to listen to the model (the teacher, or a recording) and try as best as they can to sound like him/it through repetitive imitation. The threshold of this instructional method was drawn from an observation and a comparison made between children learning their first language, and children and adults learning foreign languages in naturalistic settings. The proponents of this approach are called the naturalistic methods (e.g., Ashar's Total Physical approach Krashen and Terrel's Natural approach); they encourage allowing students to have a

silent period to internalize the L 2 sound system before speaking; as soon as they are ready to speak, their pronunciation is expected to be quite good even though they have not received any direct instruction (Celce-Murcia et al., 2009).

I .2.2.2 The reform movement

For many years of neglect pronunciation has seen the light in the late of the ninetieth century and stood as a principled, theoretically, founded discipline of second language teaching methodology as a result of the emergence of reform Movement. Besides to the establishment of the International Phonetics Association which has developed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which is the universally agreed transcription system for the accurate representation of the sound system of any language. The API is largely used in dictionaries and textbooks; the foundation of the API has drawn new direction in the modern era where oral ability becomes of primary concern, and phonetics training is seen to be necessary for students and teachers alike (Seidhofer, 2005). A number of historians think that the reform movement had a significant role in the emergence of Audiolingualism in USA and the Oral Approach in Britain during the 1940s and 1950s.

I .2.2.3. Audiolingualism

In the Audiolingualism and the Oral Approach, pronunciation is placed at the forefront of instruction; it is taught explicitly from the beginning. Pronunciation teaching is the same as in the direct method, it is taught by imitation and repetition; the teacher (or recording) models a sound, a word, or an utterance and the students are going to imitate or repeat. However, the teacher relies tremendously on the use of phonetic information; For instance, the use of visual transcription system (e.g., IPA) or charts of sound articulation (Celce-Murcia et al. 2009). Besides the teacher from

time to time employs techniques derived from the structural linguistics such as minimal pair drill; this technique depends on the use of words that differ in one phoneme to teach distinctive sounds (Bloomfield, 1933 cited in Celce-Murcia et al. 2009); minimal pairs are used in listening practice and controlled oral production.

I .2.2.4-The silent way

Similar to the Audiolingual method, the silent way has much stressed both the correctness of the speech production and linguistic structures. In this method, learners should, from the first day, pay attention to all pronunciation aspects including: the individual sounds, the word' combination mechanism, stress, intonation and all what concerns the production of an utterance. The supporters of this method propose that this helps the Silent Way learners to strengthen their potential for accurate pronunciation. The special feature about this method is the teacher who keeps silent for most of the time; he uses gestures to indicate what his learners are supposed to do and this involves elaborate system of signals. Furthermore, he uses numerous available tools like the soundcolor chart, the field chart, word chart, and colored rods (Celce-Murcia et al.2009).

I .2.2.5-Communicative language teaching

A pronunciation lesson in Communicative Language teaching classroom proceeds as the following: the students sit in a circle around the table with a tape recorder which is the main tool used in this method. The teacher who acts the role of a counselor stands behind one of the students and asks them to provide him with a sentence in their native language, that they want to say it in English; the teacher translates it adequately to English, then he says again- divided to individual words- to help students to get it, and asks them to repeat with him several times; when they

become able to pronounce the utterance accurately and fluently, it is then recorded (Celce-Murcia et al.2009).

Next, the students listen to the recorded utterances and try to link the new English words in accordance with the teacher's word for word translation. Right after, the teacher asks the students if they want more pronunciation practice on the newly learnt utterances, if no, the teacher proceeds with another technique which is called 'the human computer'; in this technique the teacher functions as a computer that is turned on or switched off by the students who ask for the correct pronunciation of a particular utterance. This technique is intended to provide students with a speech model that they imitate and repeat until they reach a high level of proficiency (Celce-Murcia et al. 2009).

I.2.3.Pronunciation Teaching Today

In the current integrative approach, pronunciation is viewed as an integral component of communication, rather than an isolated drill and practice sub-skill. Pronunciation is practised within meaningful task-based activities. Learners use pronunciation-focused listening activities to facilitate the listening of pronunciation. There is more focus on the supra-segmental of stress, rhythm, and intonation as practised in extended discourse beyond the phoneme and word level. Pronunciation is taught to meet the learner's particular needs. There is a dual-focus oral communication programme where the micro level instruction is focused on linguistic (i.e., phonetic-phonological) competence through practice segmental and supra-segmental, and the macro level attend to more global elements of communicability, with the goal of developing discourse, sociolinguistics, and strategic competence by using language for communicative purposes. In this approach the primary goals of

pronunciation teaching are for the learners to develop intelligible speech and to be able to effectively communicate in the target language. In this context Morley (1991) identified the four basic pronunciation goals of functional intelligibility, functional communicability, increased self confidence, speech monitoring ability and modification strategies. Mac Carthy (1967) states that everyone who teaches a modern language by word of mouth cannot escape the necessity for pronouncing it and for teaching the pronunciation of it to his pupils. Currently, the Competency Based Approach is the dominant one in language teaching. It focuses on the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of the language for meaningful purposes as stated by Lindsay and knight (2006: 20): “It is no actually a method but an approach to teaching based on the view that learning a language means leaning how to communicate effectively in the world outside the classroom.” According to Celce-Murcia et.al (2007), this approach indicates that if nonnative speakers of English fall below the threshold level of pronunciation, they will have oral communication problems regardless of how good they are at mastering grammar and vocabulary. The goal of technique pronunciation then is to enable learners to pass the threshold level so that their pronunciation will not detract from their ability to communicate. Briefly stated, the current method of teaching pronunciation includes new thoughts from other fields, such as drama, psychology, and speech pathology. There are some used techniques like: the use of fluency-building activities, accuracy-oriented exercises, appeals to multisensory modes of learning, adaptation of authentic materials, and use of instructional technology in the teaching of pronunciation.

I .2.3 Techniques for teaching pronunciation

Since the language teaching profession has changed its positions on pronunciation teaching many times, it can be assumed that the methods and techniques used to teach the ability have also changed, these are many traditional and time tested methods as well as new pronunciation teaching directions (Richards,C.2001)

1.Auditory reinforcement

There is a common assumption among teachers, that perceptual and productive language skills such as listening and speaking are taught by the same medium, namely speaking and listening. As a result, despite the current tendency to teach communicative language many of them use the traditional listen and repeat approach, techniques based on this method are often productive - oriented and aim to improve the spoken English of students, many of these techniques employ minimal pairs that are words with different meanings, and their pronunciation differs only in one sound, during the audiolingual era, minimal pair drills were introduced and were still used in isolation, both at word level and in context, at a sentence level the technique is useful to make learners aware of disturbing sounds through the practice of listening and discrimination.(Richards,2001)

2.Visual reinforcement

Visual reinforcement has been connected with pronunciation teaching ,since the time of silent way the skill was taught through the use of word charts and colour rods, several other ways of pronunciation visualization have been introduced since that time, they may be particularly useful to adult learners undergoing the

fossilization process, while children benefit from oral repetition, drilling, and taping themselves, the patterns of intonation, stress, and rhythm are difficult to learn for adult learners, because they do not know whether the patterns they produce are acceptable, real time visual displays are designed to show students the relationship between the patterns they produce and the patterns they need to repeat.(Richards,2001)

3.Tactile reinforcement

Using the sense of touch is another technique that is frequently used, although it is not very often discussed, some teachers might make the most of it without even realizing it, one form of this reinforcement includes placing fingers on the throat to feel the vocal cord vibration, and it can be useful to teach the distinction between voiceless and voiced consonants .e.g.: When you pronounce /r/ your tongue feels liquid and your jaw is tight.(Richards,2001)

4.Phonetic transcription

One of the most useful techniques is phonetic transcription, which is the phonetic symbol code; each symbol describes a single sound that is actually different from an alphabet letter true as it is, it takes time and effort to use phonetic transcription to learn the code, although pronunciation can be learned without the code, many linguists believe it is a valuable tool for learning the foreign sound system, the ability to find the pronunciation of unfamiliar words in a dictionary is an obvious advantage of learning the code, all good dictionaries of modern learners use phonetic symbols to indicate pronunciation, and therefore learners must be familiar with it.(Richards,2001)

5.Audio feedback

For a dual purpose, teachers have taken advantage of the audio medium in traditional methods, which have been used for a long time now, namely a tape recorder, to listen to the native speakers discourse recorded, and to tap students and replay their own production. In fact, audio feedback still plays an important role in today's pronunciation classroom, most of all learners are provided with authentic material and unlimited access to native-speaker's discourse, they may also record written passages and request feedback from teachers.(Richards,2001)

6.Drama voice methods

Both the ability to generate isolated sounds or to recognize suprasegmental characteristics and fluency contribute to effective communication. Today's pronunciation curriculum which has communicative language teaching, thus its goal is to identify the most important features and integrate them into courses, using drama techniques can highlight the interactive aspect of pronunciation as well as other aspects of English, where these techniques are used, they help reduce the stress that accompanies oral production in a foreign language classes, it is fun and relaxing, they also increase the confidence of learners because they help learners to speak more clearly, louder and in a variety of tones, one means in which drama voice techniques can enter pronunciation classroom is for teachers to employ poetry, tongue twisters and raps.(Richards,2001)

7.Multimedia enhancement

Video recorders and the use of software are one of the major developments in the field of linguistics following the audio medium; they provide visual support over

audio tapes, which is important in pronunciation teaching as auditory. Computer displays, are another innovative technique, which are becoming more and more frequently used in pronunciation teaching, the benefits of this medium include: visual feedback, entertainment, game , like program quality, a great deal of individual feedback, and the opportunity to compare learner's own speech production with a native speaker model, the only limitation of this medium that learners and teachers may encounter is software availability as many schools are not yet equipped with sufficiently large computer labs to meet user needs.(Richards,2001)

I .2.4 Some activities for teaching pronunciation

There are also many techniques that teachers can use and the ways in which they sequence activities to teach a specific pronunciation feature, these techniques may come from other fields, including psychology, neurolinguistics, and theatrical arts. Here are some examples.(Hewing,2004)

1.Drills

Drills have gone out of fashion with audiolingualism because they have become associated with mental and repetitive teaching approaches. But drills definitely do not have to be mindless, and they offer an opportunity to get their languages around new language without the extra strain of trying to communicate, most students love them as long as they are done with confidence and do not dominate teaching, choral drills, in which the entire class repeats a clear model from the teacher, are useful for anonymous practice. (Hewing,2004)

2. Marking stress

Stress must be marked when dealing with new vocabulary. For stressed syllables, some teachers use big dots in a single word and small dots for unstressed syllables, one set of dots is plenty for word stress teaching, although the smaller dots are useful to mark unstressed syllables within a sentence, it is possible to use claps, clicks, stamps or punching gestures to mark stress when speaking, trying to get them to extend an elastic band around their fingers if learners have trouble with the concept of stress. (Hewing, 2004)

3. Correcting adults

Some people are hesitant to correct the speech of adults, especially those with little previous experience in the classroom. However, the learners themselves are needed some feedback and guidance in their pronunciation, thus any kind of correction needs to be targeted, sensitive and constructive. (Hewing, 2004)

4. Breathing and relaxing techniques

Such as guided imaging activities can help students relax in order to make their pronunciation more natural. In addition to breathing techniques, fluency building techniques are helpful, these may appear to be "just speaking activities," but they do provide students with the practice they need to pronounce sounds and sentences beyond very structured activities. (Hewing, 2004)

5. Multisensory techniques

Multisensory techniques of reinforcement help students understand how to pronounce sounds and help them relax and improve pronunciation.

- **Visual**

models, pictures, charts, diagrams, color coding, watching the teacher

- **Auditory**

“Listen and repeat,” mnemonic devices, memory pegs

- **Tactile**

Rubber bands, feathers, straws, kazoos, touching the throat

- **Kinaesthetic**

Hand signals, body movements, waving, using hands as a model of the mouth,
“Conducting an orchestra”

Neurolinguistics programming

combines relaxation and multisensory techniques to enhance the awareness of the pronunciation of learners and then change it positively.

6.Drama techniques

Drama techniques used by actors, skits, role plays, improvisations and simulations can be useful in getting students to try new habits of pronunciation in a relaxed atmosphere.(Hewing,2004)

7.Imitation techniques

Students imitate a recording in shadowing and mirroring, like a video clip, trying to speak in exactly the same way as the actors do.(Hewing,2004)

I .2.5 Tools for teaching pronunciation

Pronunciation teaching tools include physical objects, practical written materials, games, and songs; these appeal to the senses of the students and are fun too (Richards,2001)

1.Gadgets and props

Mirrors, rubber bands, sticks of popsicles, straws, rods, blobs of glass, giant teeth and many other objects can help to show pronunciation in a memorable way.

2.Cartoons

Cartoons carefully selected can be a fun way to illustrate normal casual speech.

3.Games

Games requiring students to speak freely allow them to practice fluently pronouncing words.

4.Poetry, rhymes, jazz chants and songs

They all provide authentic material in a fun and relaxing way for pronunciation practice.

5.Other authentic materials such as:

Advertisements, excerpts from story books and literature, restaurant menus, and magazines, are also useful in teaching pronunciation.(Richards,2004)

Conclusion

Pronunciation should be regarded as more than just making individual sounds or words correctly. It should be seen as an important part of communication incorporated into the activities of the classroom, teachers can urge their students to monitor their own pronunciation and practice their speaking skills in and out of the classroom as much as possible, understandable pronunciation is a key component of communication skills , if learners are unable to pronounce the correct version of a word, they cannot communicate properly .Considering this, teachers should set achievable goals that are applicable and appropriate for learners communication needs, pronunciation guidance must be aimed at smart pronunciation and teachers can actively encourage the actual production, awareness of pronunciation, and practice of their learners, because it is the primary source of understanding and it helps learners to understand native speakers better and enhances their ability to communicate easily and effectively .

Chapter two

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the research findings, as long as is to reflect teachers and students' attitudes towards the problems that are encountered by first year LMD students in comprehending phonetic courses. Thus in this section we are going to analyze and show the general results of our questionnaire and interview.

II.1. Description and analysis of students' questionnaire

Student's questionnaire is the first tool that we choose to gather data, because it is thought that is appropriate instrument for our study. We attempt to discover the difficulties in comprehending phonetic courses. In addition we aim to know how often students make pronunciation errors. Moreover we aim to discover the reasons behind these problems.

II .1.1. Description and structure of the questionnaire

To carry out our research, we adapt unstructured questionnaire, it was distributed to 15 first –year students, and we are trying to choose very simple questions to avoid ambiguity, the questionnaire consists of both open –ended questions and close ended ones which involve yes /no answers and selected items. This questionnaire has two sections, section one; consists of 04 questions aimed at determining general information about student's age, gender, type of bacalaureate, and the reasons behind choosing English as a speciality. Section two; consists of 10 questions, this section is about the student's perception about pronunciation, we asked them about: the importance of learning phonetics for improving English language, how they see the phonetic session, if their pronunciation training they receive enough, if they have any problems in

learning phonetics , how often they make pronunciation errors , do teachers emphasis on pronunciation while taking English classes , do they correct pronunciation errors in classes , if they find it difficult to understand phonetic courses in large classes , and to which extent they feel their level in pronunciation.

II .1.1.1 The analysis of the student’s questionnaire

Section one : General information

Question one:

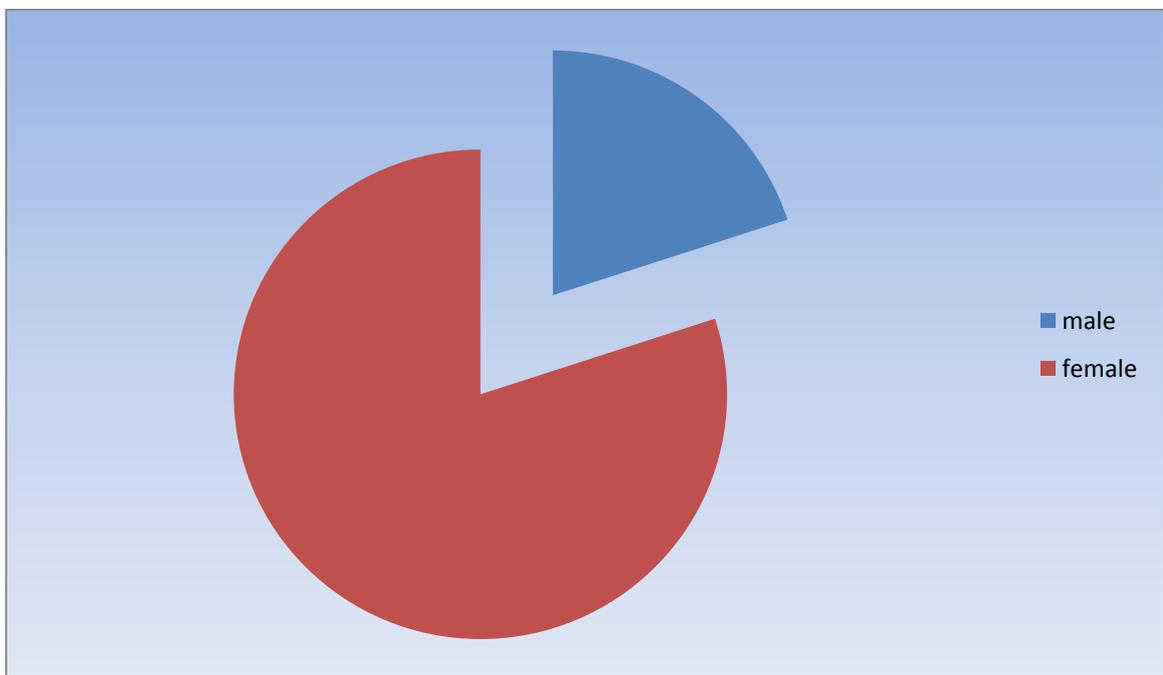


Figure 02: Student’s gender

Table one shows that 12 of students 80% are females .Whereas, the others 03 (20%) are males .This indicates that the majority of students are females because they like to study foreign languages.

Question two: Student's age

Age	Participants	Percentage
17-18	9	60%
18-19	4	26.66%
19-20	2	13.33%

Table (02): Student's age

As shown in table two , most of students are aged between (17-18) years old (60%) , because they hold new baccalaureate , this means that more than the half of students are young and this age may influence in learning and acquiring language easily. In other hand (26.66%) and (13.33%) of the students are aged between (18-19) and (19-20) , this might be due unknown reasons.

Question 03: Type of baccalaureate

Type of bac	Participants	Percentage
Literacy	12	80%
Scientific	03	20%
Technical	0	0%

Table 03: Type of baccalaureate

Table 3 tells that the majority of first year students section of Biskra University (80%) hold literacy baccalaureate, (20%) is scientific BAC and there is no one comes from technical branches. This means that there is different student's level to learn English.

Question 04: You have chosen English as?

Student's choice	Participants	Percentage
Personal choice	10	66.66%
Parent's choice	03	20%
Imposed by the department	02	13.33%

Table 04: Student's choice to learn English

This table reveals that the majority of students (66.66%) have listed at the department of English contentedly, this indicate that they are interested to learn English language .Whereas, the other students (20%) and (13.33%) have listed at the department of English as their parents' choice or imposed by the department .This demonstrate that each one of first year LMD students has his /her personal reason to learn English.

Section two: Student perception about pronunciation

Question 01 : Do you think that learning pronunciation is ?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Very important	14	93.33%
Important	01	6.66%
Less important	01	0%

Table 05: The importance of phonetic session

This table shows that the majority of students (93.33%) agree that pronunciation is very important to learn .Whereas the others (6.66%) are state that it is important.

Question 02: Students' attitudes towards phonetic session

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Very interesting	02	13.33%
Interesting	03	20%
Normal	03	20%
Boring	07	46.66%

Table 06: Students' attitude towards phonetic session

The above table indicate that (13.33%) of students see the phonetic session as very interesting module, (20%) of them shows neutral attitudes, whereas the highest percentage of the respondents opted for boring. These answers revealed that many of first year students are not excited about learning phonetics; this can be referred to the way that pronunciation is approaches; it is treated as abstract rules rather than real speech features.

Question 03: was the pronunciation training you received enough?

- Yes
- No

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	01	6.66%
No	14	93.33%

Table 07: Students' attitude towards pronunciation training

These Answers shows that the majority of students agree that the pronunciation training they receive is not enough.

Question 04: do you have any problems in learning phonetics?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	10	66.66%
No	05	33.33%

Table 08: Student's problems in learning phonetics

This question intends to determine if first year students encounter difficulties in learning phonetics the answers show that 66.66% of the students find problems in learning phonetics, and just about 33.33% having any pronunciation learning difficulties

If yes, these problems are related to:

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Understanding the rules	02	13.33%
The ability to use these rules	08	53.33%
Both of them	05	33.33%

Table 09: The reasons behind students' problems in learning phonetics

The results reveals that the first reason (53.33%) behind students' problems in learning phonetics is their ability to learn , whereas the second reason (33.33%) is their inability to understand the rules introduced during the lesson, the rest (13.33%) referred to both of them. The assumption that can be drawn from these two last questions is that there is a certain problem that can be referred back the way of pronunciation is taught.

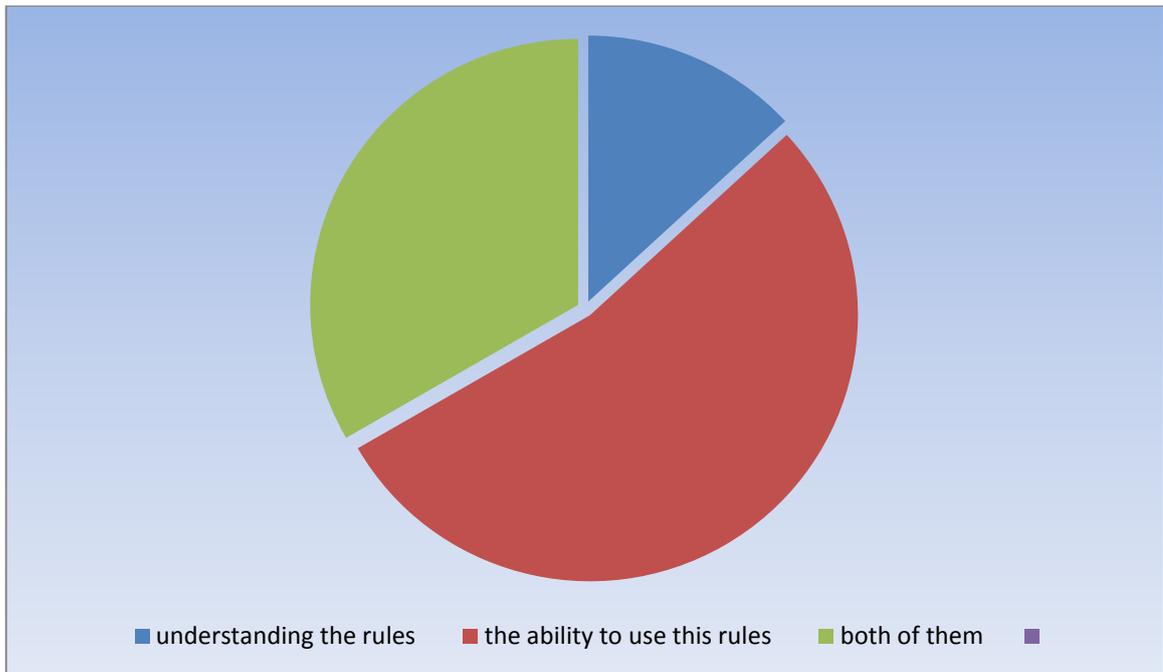


Figure 03: The reasons behind students' problems in learning phonetics

Question 05: How often do you make pronunciation errors?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Always	02	13.33%
Often	07	46.66%
Sometimes	03	20%
Rarely	03	20%

Table 10: Students' error frequency

This question reveals that 13.33% of the respondents admitted that they always commit errors; the majority of them 46.66% answered that often, whereas the others 20% and 20% answered that sometimes and rarely commit errors.

Question 06: Teachers do not emphasis on pronunciation while taking English classes?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Strongly agree	02	13.33%
Agree	05	33.33%
Neutral	07	46.66%
Disagree	01	6.66%

Table 11: students' degree of agreement about teacher's emphasis on pronunciation

According to the table we observed that 13.33% of the students have strongly agreed that the teacher do not give important on pronunciation in the English classes. In the other hand, 33.33% agreed that he give emphasis on pronunciation, whereas the majority showed neutral attitudes, while the other 6.66% disagreed about that.

Question 07: teachers do not correct pronunciation errors in classes?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Strongly agree	02	13.33%
Agree	05	33.33%
Neutral	05	33.33%
Disagree	03	20%

Table 12: Students' degree of agreement about teacher's correction of pronunciation errors in classes

This table shows that 13.33% of students strongly agreed that teacher do not correct pronunciation errors in classes, 33.33% agreed about that, another 33.33% showed neutral attitudes, while 20% disagreed about that.

Question 08: do you find it difficult in understanding phonetic courses in large classroom?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	13	86.66%
No	02	13.33%

Table 13: Students' attitude towards understanding phonetic in large classroom

The majority of subjects' answers 86.66% reveal that students find it difficult in understanding phonetics courses in large classroom. While the others 13.33% state that they do not find any difficulties in that.

Question 09: How often does your teacher involve you in practice?

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Always	03	20%
Often	02	13.33%
Sometimes	08	53.33%
Rarely	02	13.33%

Table 14: Frequency of students' involvement in practice

This question aims at determine the degree of teachers' awareness about the importance of involving the students in practice as an effective way in the improvement of their pronunciation accuracy. The answers indicate that 20% of student are always involved in practice, 13.33% of them are often involved, whereas the majority 53.33% said that they are just sometimes involved, and 13.33% answered rarely.

Question 10: Making pronunciation errors when you are speaking:

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Encourage you	04	26.66%
Frustrate you	11	73.33%

Table 15: The effect of making pronunciation errors on students

From the table we notice that 73.33% of answers detect that making pronunciation errors have negative effects on them, it frustrates them and stop them from speaking English again in front of the others .In the other hand 26.66% of the answers detect that making pronunciation errors have positive effects on them, it encourage them to working hard to improve their pronunciation.

II .1.3 Discussion of the result:

The results of this questionnaire shows that the majority of first year LMD students are more females than males and they are aged between 17-18 years old .the majority of them seem to be motivated to learn English in general and phonetics in particular, they are highly aware of the importance of phonetics in developing their skills, but they have shown negative attitudes towards learning phonetics because they are bored to study theoretical notions. Moreover, many students have some pronunciation errors and face problems in learning phonetics because they are neither able to understand the phonological rules that are being introduced nor the use of them in real speech. Furthermore, the majority of students find it difficult to understand phonetics in large classrooms, and these problems led them to be frustrated and they do not like to speak English in front of the others again.

II .2.Description and structure of the teacher's interview:

The teacher's interview is what we select as a second tool to gathering data, it was distributed to 03 phonetics' teachers of first year LMD classes, it consists of 13 questions composed of both open ended and close ended questions and it provides a free space for their personal suggestions. It is divided into two sections. Section one, consists of 2 personal questions aimed at determine general information about the teacher's qualifications, and their experience.

Section two, it consists of 11 questions concerned with teacher perception about teaching phonetics, starting with asking them ; if teaching phonetics requires enough experience, if they follow any specific program in teaching phonetics, then if this program involve the use of any pedagogical materials. In addition, we asked them if students are motivated to learn phonetics or no, and in another question we try to know how they correct students' errors, and what are the reasons behind the pronunciation problems, also we ask them about the number of students in pre-group, and if this number helps them to work in good conditions. The last three questions are about the hours that are programmed for teaching phonetics, if this time is sufficient to cover the program, and to sum up, we ask them if they can provide us with any suggestion concerning the improvement of phonetic courses.

II .2.1 the analysis of the teacher’s interview

Section one: Background information question

Question 01: The teachers’ qualification

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
Magister degree	Doctorate degree	Doctorate degree

Table (16): The teacher’s qualification

The teachers’ answers reveals that one has magister degree while the two others has doctorate degree, this means that they are qualified enough to teach phonetics.

Question 02: work experience

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
06 years	30 years	25 years

Table (17): work experience

This question seeks to confirm whether teachers’ experience affects pronunciation learning , one teacher has been teaching for 06 years , and the others for 30 and 25 years .This indicate that they have enough experience in teaching phonetics, so the experience has no effect on student’ failure in learning pronunciation.

Section two: Teachers’ attitudes towards teaching phonetics

Question 01: Teacher’s opinion about the importance of training and experience in teaching phonetics

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
Agree	Totally agree	Agree

Table 18: Teacher’s opinion about the importance and experience in teaching phonetics

Question 02: Investigating if teachers follow any specific program in teaching phonetics

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
No, it is my own program that is modified every year	No, I adapt my the program according to the curriculum	Yes, it is just a list of items to be included in phonetics session

Table 19: teacher's opinion about the use of any specific program

Question 03: Asking if this program involve the use of any pedagogical materials

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
We can use videos	Games and the data show are the most appropriate materials	Language laboratories and the data show

Table 20: teacher's opinion about the use of the pedagogical materials

All teachers answers yes, and said that the pedagogical materials that are supposed to be used in teaching phonetics are; the videos, games, the data show and language laboratories.

Question 04: The availability of these materials

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
The data show	Videos and data show	The data show

Table 21: The availability of the materials

Question 05: Students' motivation to learn phonetics

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
Yes, my students are motivated to learn phonetics	Yes, they have the willingness to attend the phonetics session	Yes, they have no problems with motivation

Table 22: teacher's opinion about student's motivation to learn phonetics

All teachers answered yes, which means that their students have the willingness to attend the phonetics session and to learn pronunciation, so they have no problems with motivation.

Question 06: The frequency of correcting students' pronunciation errors

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
Sometimes	Always	Always and immediately

Table 23: The frequency of correcting students' pronunciation errors

The first teacher answered that he sometimes correct his students' errors , the second one answered always , whereas the last one is answered that he correct the students' error always and immediately .This indicate that all teachers have the tendency to correct their student's errors.

Question 07: Teacher's opinion about the reasons of student's pronunciation errors

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
The effect of the mother tongue and the use of Arabic in classes	They find difficulties in understanding the rules in classes	Both understanding the rules and the use of them

Table 24: Teacher's opinion about the reasons of student's pronunciation errors

One teachers answered that the effect of the mother tongue and ,use of Arabic in the classes ,and the lack of practice is the reasons behind the pronunciation errors ,the second teacher answered that they find difficulties in understanding the rules in classes and both students and teacher find some obstacles due to the large classroom , whereas the other teacher answered that both of understanding the rules and the use of them are the main reasons behind the students' pronunciation problems instead of the lack of the authentic materials .

Question 08: Student's number

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
45 students	More than 45 students	More than 50

Table 25: Student's number in per group

One teacher said that he has 45 students per class, the other answered that he has more than 45 students, whereas the third one said that he has more than 50 per group.

Question 09: The effect of students' number in teaching phonetics

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
Negative effect	Negative effect	Negative effect

Table 26: The effect of students' number in teaching phonetics

All teachers state that this number of students has negative effect in the teaching and learning process, and working in bad conditions, they stated that the teacher cannot give clear information and the students cannot receive enough information.

Question 10: The number of hours per week

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
1 hour	1:30 hour	1 hour

Table 27: The number of hours per week in teaching phonetics

The teachers answered that just 1-1.30 hour per week is programmed to the phonetics session

Question 11: Teacher's opinion about the effect of the time on teaching phonetics

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
No , it is not sufficient	No	No, is not enough

Table 28: Teacher's opinion about the effect of time on teaching phonetics

Teachers answered that no, this time is not sufficient for teaching phonetics for first year students, this indicates that this time cannot serves the program.

Question 12: Suggestions of teachers concerning the improvement of the phonetic courses

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03
Give feedback and encourage them	Language laboratories will facilitate the learning of phonetics	We should aware of the learners' needs

Table 29: Teacher's suggestions concerning the improvement of the phonetic courses

The first teacher suggested that teachers should act as the speech coach of pronunciation, give feedback to their learners, and encourage them to improve their

pronunciation teaching, the second one stated that the use of language laboratories ,games ,videos and drills will facilitate the learning of phonetics, while the last teacher stated that the teachers should be aware of their learners' needs and problems in pronunciation, instead of the uses of language laboratories, the data show, the drills and all of the modern materials of teaching are the best solution to avoid phonetics problems

II .2.2 Discussion of the results of the teacher's interview:

On the basis of the analysis of teachers' interview, we summarize that teaching phonetics require enough experience and proficiency, and there is no fixed program to be followed in teaching phonetics , there are just guidelines , also we notice that students are motivated to lea

rn phonetics , and teachers give more attention to correct the students' error , and claims that the main reasons behind this errors is the difficulties in understanding the rules introducing during the lesson and the ability to use these rules and the negative impact the large classroom, their suggestions about improving pronunciation were the language laboratories ,videos and games ,drills , listen and repeat methods .

Conclusion

The analysis of both teacher's interview and student's questionnaire helped us to point out some important things, we can classified them into two types , some of them II are related to the students and the other ones are related to the teachers . Firstly, the student's questionnaire indicates that the first year students LMD in Biskra University are motivated to learn phonetics, but they see it as boring as it is mainly focused on theoretical explanation rather than practical ones, this created a kind of negative attitude

towards learning phonetics and hindered greatly the improvement of students' pronunciation. Moreover, and from the results of teacher's interview, we find that most of teachers are experienced enough to teach phonetics module .Also, the majority of them were not attending training program. In other hand, the ability to practice pronunciation in a meaningful ways is out of teachers' hands, who are met with several obstacles like the absence of language laboratories and any other audio visual aids, the lack of time and the large number of groups. To sum up , it is proved that pronunciation is taught only in a theoretical way, students have little chance of practicing and monitoring their pronunciation , that is why most of them have learning phonetics problems and have even shown frustration and negative attitudes towards how pronunciation is taught .Hence , the hypothesis of this study is confirmed.

General Conclusion

This study was designed to explore the difficulties that encountered by EFL first year students at Biskra University in comprehending phonetics courses. That is why pronunciation has a great importance on our research. To answer The present study indicate that English pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills to acquire and learners should spend lot of time to improve their pronunciation , it is also one of the basic requirements of learners' competence and one of the most important features of language instruction. our questions we adopt descriptive method, dividing our work into two parts theoretical and practical one.

This study aims to reject or confirm the hypothesis that there are many causes which lead the pronunciation difficulties to occur such as: EFL first year students find difficulties in understanding the rules introduced in the lesson and the ability to use these rules, they may not comprehend phonetics in large classes, and the time programed for teaching phonetics is not enough, all these factors are causes the pronunciation difficulties in EFL classes.

The case study was 03 teachers and 15 students of first year LMD students of the department of foreign languages –Biskra-University .We use the questionnaire for students and the interview for students that were helpful tools in findings out the difficulties that students may encounter.

The results we obtained from the research tools which are mentioned above are confirm our hypotheses .EFL students have difficulties in comprehending phonetics courses due to the way phonetics module is taught, the inability to understand the rules introduced in the lesson and the inability to use these rules, instead of the negative effect of the large classes. In other side, teachers are unable to provide their students with

sufficient and appropriate practice because of several obstacles in teaching phonetics, such as the lack of pedagogical materials, essentially language laboratories and audio-visual aids, overcrowded classes

Recommendations

The results that obtained from both teacher's interview and the student's questionnaire give us the light to suggest some recommendations for teachers in order to increase their awareness in phonetics and pronunciation difficulties.

- Teachers should be accurately trained in pronunciation to improve their learners' pronunciation
- Teachers should be provided with courses and materials that help students to improve their pronunciation instruction
- Teachers should perform pronunciation diagnostic analyses and select those aspects that can have a great effect on changing the speech of learners
- Teachers should speak clearly and slowly in the pronunciation classes
- Teachers should aware of their learners' needs and problems in pronunciation
- Teachers should present some appropriate materials to their learners , such as; computer technologies
- Phonetics should be taught in laboratories
- Phonetics I supposed to teach in groups of no more than 20 students to provide special attention to each student
- Devoting more than one session in week for teaching phonetics
- Teachers should act as speech coach of pronunciation and encourage his students to improve their pronunciation

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Appendices

Appendix I

Student's questionnaire

Dear students:

The following questionnaire was devised to collect data about “**the problems facing students in comprehending phonetic courses** “. You are kindly requested to fill in the questionnaire by ticking your answers in the corresponding box(s) that you would think more appropriate.

Section One: General information

1-Gender :

- Male
- Female

2-Age

3-type of baccalaureate you hold?

- Literally
- Scientific
- Technical

4-You have chosen English as:

- Your personal choice
- Your parent's choice
- Impose by the department

Section two: Students' perceptions about pronunciation

1-How learning phonetics is important for improving your English language?

- Very important
- Important
- Not important

2-How do you see the phonetic session?

- Very Interesting
- Interesting
- Normal
- Boring

3-Was the pronunciation training you received enough?

- Yes
- No

4-Do you have any problems in learning phonetics?

- Yes
- No

-If yes, are these problems related to?

- Understanding the rules introduced during the lesson
- The ability to uses these rules

➤ Both of them

5- How often do you make pronunciation errors ?

➤ Always

➤ Often

➤ Sometimes

➤ Rarely

6-Teachers do not emphasis on pronunciation while taking English classes?

➤ Strongly agree

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

7-teachers do not correct pronunciation errors in classes?

➤ Strongly agree

➤ Agree

➤ Neutral

➤ Disagree

8-do you find it difficult in understanding phonetic courses in large classroom?

➤ Yes

➤ No

9- How often does your teacher involve you in practice?

➤ Always

➤ Often

➤ Sometimes

➤ Rarely

10-Making pronunciation errors when you are speaking:

➤ Encourage you to work hard to improve your pronunciation

➤ Frustrate you and you do not like to speak English again in front of others because of
afraid to make pronunciation errors

Thank you for your collaboration.

Appendix II

Teacher's interview

Dear teachers

We are conducting a master degree research that aims at demonstrating the problems facing students in comprehending phonetics courses .We will be very grateful for your precious help and contribution which will hopefully provide our research with valid and relevant data. We appreciate your help.

Section one: background information questions

1-what is your qualification:

- Licence
- Master
- Magister
- Doctorate

2-How many years have you been teaching phonetics?

.....

Section two: teacher's attitudes towards teaching pronunciation

1-Do you think that teaching phonetics requires pre-training and enough experience?

- Yes
- No

2-Do you follow any specific program in teaching phonetics?

• Yes

• No

3-Does this program involve the use of any pedagogical materials?

• Yes

• No

-If yes what they are ?

.....
.....
.....

4-Do you think that your students are motivated to learn phonetics ?

• Yes

• No

5-How do you correct your student's error?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6-In your opinion, what are the reasons behind the student's pronunciation problems?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7-How many students do you have pre- group?

.....

8-Does this number help you to work in good conditions?

- Yes
- No

9-How many hours per week are programmed for teaching phonetics module at level of the first year?

.....
.....

10-Do you think that this time is sufficient to cover the program and to provide students with enough practice?

- Yes
- No

11-Do you have any suggestions concerning the improvement of the phonetic courses?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you.

الملخص

ان تعلم اللغة الأجنبية ليس المهمة السهلة، حيث أن المتعلمين يتعثرون مرار وتكرار خلال مسارهم الدراسي فيقوم معلموهم بتصويب أخطائهم في كل مرة ، فمثلا في جامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة نجد أن طلبة اللغة الانجليزية يدرسون مقياس علم الأصوات لمدة عامين ،لكنهم يعانون من صعوبات في نطق هذه اللغة مما انعكس سلبا على توظيفها كوسيلة تواصل . فكان علينا البحث والاستقصاء لادراك الأسباب الكامنة وراء اخفاق هؤلاء الطلبة في اكتساب النطق الصحيح للغة الانجليزية. وتحقيقا لهذا الهدف ارتأينا استعمال المنهج التحليلي كألية مناسبة لهذا البحث اضافة الى اختيار عينات عشوائية بسيطة ، وقد تم جمع البيانات من خلال سلسلة استبيانات تمت ادارتها للطلبة ومقابلة لأساتذتهم ،وقد تضمنت ثلاثة مدرسين وخمسة عشر طالبا من السنة الأولى ل .م.د بقسم اللغة الانجليزية لجامعة بسكرة.وقد خلص البحث الى أن الطلبة يجدون صعوبات في استيعاب وتعلم القواعد النظرية نتيجة ظروف غير ملائمة كالوقت ، وندرة الوسائل التعليمية ومن هنا تم تأكيد الفرضية ,وأخيرا يوصى بتدريس مقياس علم الأصوات في مجموعات صغيرة من قبل أساتذة مؤهلين لاستغلال أنجع للوقت وللمواد المطلوبة .