University of Mohamed Kheider-Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of Language and English Literature

MASTER DISSERTATION

Letters and Foreign Languages

English Language

Sciences of the language

Submitted by:

Ms. Selsabil BELKHADEM

TITLE:

Exploring the Impact of the Mother Tongue (Arabic) on EFL Students' Pronunciation

The Case Study of First year EFL Students at Biskra University

---

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Language and English Literature in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master Degree in Sciences of the Language

Board of examiners:

Dr. Leila LOUCIF	University of Biskra	Chairperson
Pr. Ramdane MEHIRI	University of Biskra	Supervisor
Dr. Nadjet MOUSSAOUI	University of Biskra	Examiner

Academic year: 2024-2025

Declaration

I, Belkhdem Selsabil, do hereby declare that the presented work under the title

"**Exploring the Impact of the Mother Tongue (Arabic) on EFL Students' Pronunciation"**

is my own work, and has not been presented by anyone before.

This work was undertaken at the University of Mohamed Kheider Biskra.

Date:

Signature:

Dedication

All praise is due to Allah, who taught by the pen, taught mankind what they knew not. And peace and blessing be upon the noblest of creation, our Prophet who was sent as a teacher and a perfect example of noble, Muhammed (ﷺ).

I dedicate this modest work to the one woman who has been there for me through it all, my mother who always works hard to see me as a successful person. Also to the man who taught me, guided me, and shaped the person I am today, my father.

Also to my sisters and brothers, my unwavering supporters, who would never hesitate to be in the front row, cheering me on with love and pride.

To all my friends, who helped me though this work and guided me through.

Thank you all for being part of this modest work,

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This study explores how the mother tongue, Arabic, impacts the pronunciation of first-year EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. It emphasize on identifying the main phonological differences between Arabic and English in order to understand how these differences lead to students' pronunciation difficulties. Additionally, the study opts to gain teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding the impact of Arabic on English. Another major objective is to understand if this influence is negatively affecting students' pronunciation. To accomplish these aims, a qualitative approach was adopted, by using two data collection tools, which are a questionnaire distributed to five phonetics teachers of first year EFL to obtain their perceptions and recommendation towards this phenomenon and a classroom observation, which was conducted with two groups of first year EFL classrooms at the Department Language and English Literature, during speaking and listening sessions for the sake of highlighting the pronunciation difficulties faced by EFL students in a real classroom context. The findings of this research showed that due to the phonological differences between these two languages, EFL students at the University of Biskra tend to replace certain sounds of English with those of their native language Arabic such as: /p/ with /b/, /t/ with /ط/, /v/ with /f/, /tʃ/ with /ʃ/, /ð/ with /d/, their inability to distinguish between vowels and diphthongs, and the misplacement of stress. Another noticeable result was the teachers' passive reaction towards these errors as they show no sign of providing feedback on the matter.

Key words: the Mother Tongue, Foreign Language, Arabic, English, Pronunciation, Phonological Differences, EFL Students

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ESL: English as a Second language.

SLA: Second Language Acquisition.

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic.

L1: First Language.

L2: Second language.

MT: Mother Tongue.

FL: Foreign language.

CA: Contrastive Analysis.

CF: Corrective Feedback.

List of Tables

List of Figures

Table of Content

General Introduction

Chapter One: Pronunciation

Chapter Two: Mother Tongue vs. Foreign Language

CHAPTER THREE: Field Work

General Introduction

Introduction

In today's world, English is recognized as the International universal language for communication, as it helps expressing ideas and sharing information between people from different regions, and cultures. Therefore, in Algeria, English holds an important position as a foreign language within its educational system and society. Nowadays, the need to be fluent in English has increased and is required due to globalization, since it has become included in many sectors such education, politics, and employment opportunities.

When we talk about the foreign language learning, it is vital to point out that developing its four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing is important for achieving communicative competence. Among these skills, speaking is generally regarded as one of the most challenging for Algerian EFL students. This is because this skill requires focusing on various sub-skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. Pronunciation, in particular presents many challenges for Algerian students. The main reason for this difficulty is the influence of the students' mother tongue, Arabic, which have different phonological properties compared to English. These distinctive properties make it hard for students to pronounce some English words correctly, influencing their ability to communicate clearly.

1. Statement of the Problem

Learning a foreign language is a challenging process for students, especially for English as foreign language students, when some factors interfere with it. One of the main factors that may create an obstacle in this process is the students' first language (Arabic), as it, like any other language it has its own distinctive features that may influence the way we learn the English language.

We may notice at Biskra University that EFL students sometimes find it challenging to pronounce specific English sounds due to the influence of their mother tongue. This

influence may results in pronunciation errors that impact the clarity of the speech, which often leads to a misunderstanding. Thornbury (2006, p. 185) stated, "Faulty pronunciation is one of the most common causes of Misunderstanding." Mispronunciation not only hinders effective communication but also creates difficulties and barriers in learning the correct pronunciation, gradually slowing down the learning process. Therefore, this research aims to explore the impact of EFL students' mother tongue on their pronunciation of the English language.

2. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it addresses the challenges that EFL first year students at Biskra University face when learning the foreign language pronunciation. Understanding this influence may help students improve their pronunciation skills. Also, it seeks to explore teachers' attitude and reactions towards this problem.

3. Aims of the Study

This research aims to identify the impact of the mother tongue on first-year EFL students' pronunciation skills. Specifically, it explores how some Arabic phonetic features affect pronunciation in English.

4. Research Questions

• What are the specific pronunciation challenges faced by EFL students due to interference of their mother language?

• What are the teachers' perceptions of the interference of the native language on foreign language?

5. Research Hypotheses

• It is hypothesized that Arabic may affect negatively EFL students' pronunciation.

• It is hypothesized that there are pronunciation errors among EFL students at Biskra University that is due to the phonetic differences between Arabic and English.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Approach

In order to accomplish the aims of this study a qualitative approach is adopted. This research approach helps in gathering a valid and in-depth data for understanding the influence of Arabic language on the EFL students' pronunciation, as well as the challenges they encounter.

6.2 Population

The target population of this study is first year EFL students. Which consist of 851 students, divided into 15 groups and teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

6.3 Sample

• We select teachers from the first year LMD teachers who teach phonetics.

• We select two groups among the 15 groups of EFL first year students at

Mohamed Kheider Biskra. These groups consist of 25-30 students, with whom we conduct a classroom observation.

6.4 Data Collection Methods

This study relies on two different instruments:

- **Teachers' Questionnaire**:

Semi-structured questionnaire is distributed to teachers of phonetics in order to gather their opinions and perceptions regarding the students' pronunciation difficulties, and the interference of the mother tongue.

- **Classroom Observation**

This tool is used in oral sessions of first year EFL students in order to observe the students' pronunciation errors in real-life and to highlight the most difficulties that they face.

7   Structure of the Study

In the first chapter, we explain pronunciation and its segmental and suprasegmental features. We describe each element in details, highlighting their characteristics and the way they are produced correctly. Also, this chapter explains various factors that affect English pronunciation and gives more emphasis on the native language as one on these factors.

The second chapter focuses on defining both the mother tongue and the foreign language, shedding a light on the phonological differences between the two languages. Also, it also describes ways to provide corrective feedback on their errors.

Moreover, the third chapter deals with the practical part of the study, analyzing the gathered data from phonetics teachers and first-year English students at the Department of Language and English Literature, and interpreting it to develop insightful findings.

CHAPTER ONE: Pronunciation

Introduction

Pronunciation is a crucial aspect of language learning, since it plays an essential role in communication among students. Being able to produce words correctly in a foreign language is thought to be the main goal for students, especially for English as foreign language students. However, it can be a difficult skill to be fluent at. In this chapter, we tend to look into each element of English pronunciation so that we have a clear understanding of how it is spoken.

1.1 Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the production of speech sounds. As confirmed by Yates and Zielinski (2009), pronunciation is the way we pronounce sounds to convey meaning. Pronunciation involves two different features segmental and supra-segmental as well as voice quality, which affects how speech is projected. Furthermore, pronunciation is the way a language is spoken including how specific sounds, stress, and intonation are used in words. Clear and appropriate pronunciation allows speakers to communicate effectively and understand what is being said.

When learning English, students should keep in mind that learning the language is not only a process of mastering its grammar, vocabulary, or even culture but to be able to produce words correctly. When people cannot pronounce the language correctly they may be seen as incompetent speakers even if they have a strong vocabulary and understand English well, that cannot help them to communicate effectively. (Breitkreutz, Derwing, and Rossiter, 2001)

According to Kráľová et al. (2021), "people with worse pronunciation can be considered incompetent and uneducated."(p. X). Sometimes when we talk with someone in a foreign language, we may   hear   how   the   speaker   mispronounces   words   and

sounds, and we immediately make judgments about their level of speaking competence in that language.

1.2   Features of Pronunciation

Pronunciation involves two main features: Segmental and supra-segmental features that work together to produce effective communication.

Figure1.1

Various Features of English Language Pronunciation
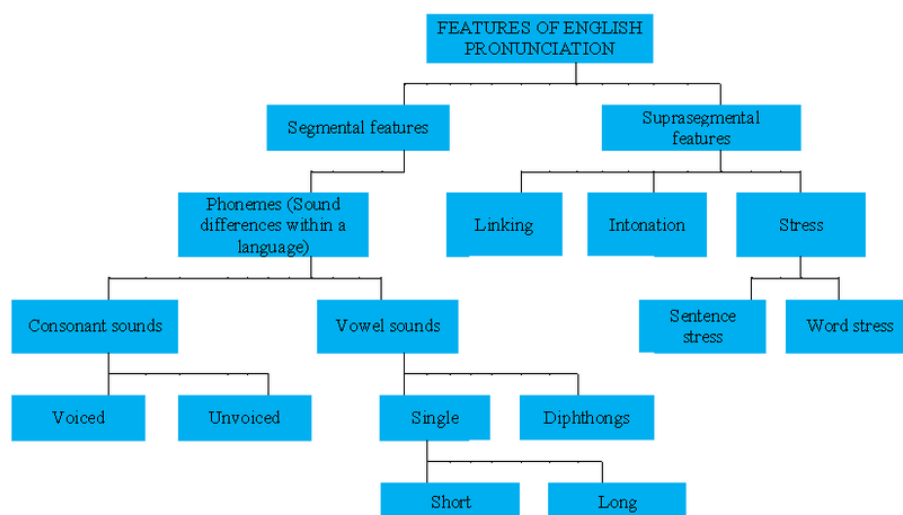
Note: from *A Descriptive Study: Factors Affecting the Pronunciation of English Language (L2)*, by Khan, 2019.

1.2.1   Segmental Features

Segmental features are the smaller units in pronunciation. They are the individual sounds or phonemes in a language, the building blocks of words that help us tell one word from another. Segmental refers to distinct units that can be recognized either physically or audibly within the flow of any language (Sharma, 2021). These phonemes include consonant, vowel, diphthong, and triphthong sounds.

1.2.1.1 Consonants

Consonants are defined by Crystal (2008) as, "sounds made by a closure or narrowing in the vocal tract so that the airflow is either completely blocked, or so restricted that audible friction is produced." (P.103). Additionally, Verma and Krishnaswamy (1999) stated that consonant is "a sound characterized by constriction accompanied by some measure of friction or closure followed by release" (p.35, cited in Sharma, 2021). More precisely, consonant sounds are produced when the airflow is whether completely blocked or slightly blocked in the vocal tract.

Figure1.2

The Organs of Speech
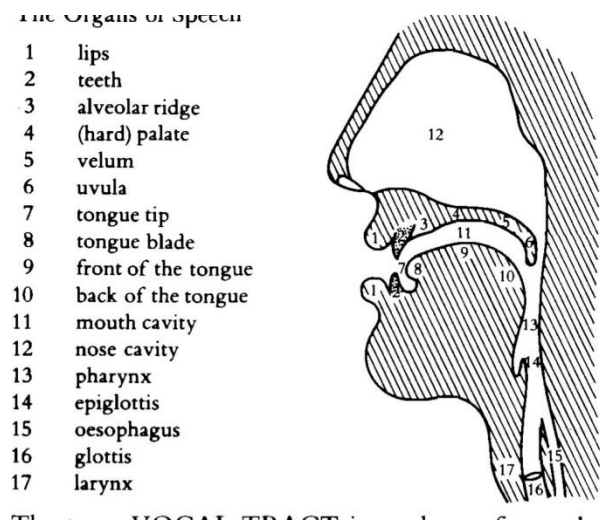
Note: from *An Introduction to Phonology,* by Katamba, 1989.

1.2.1.1.1   Criteria of English Consonants

1.   Voicing

One important criterion in consonant sounds is voicing, which described by Katamba (1989) as, when the vocal cords are separated, which means the glottis is open, air streams freely. This type of sounds created is called voiceless. However, when the vocal cords are placed extremely close to one another, the air will force them apart as it passes through. This

action will cause them to vibrate, making a voiced sound. Altaie and Furqan (2021) affirmed, "If the vocal folds are vibrated, the sound produced is called voiced. If the vocal folds are not vibrated, the sound produced is called voiceless sound." (p. 431). Therefore, voicing in consonant is defined by the existence of vibration in the vocal tract.

2. Place of Articulation

The place of articulation is the place where sounds are produced. According to Katamba (1989), it is "the place in the vocal tract where the airstream is obstructed in the production of a consonant."(p. 8). There are 24 English consonants. These sounds are produced from different places of articulation, it includes bilabial sounds, which is generated by both lips; labiodental sounds, which is created by the movements of the lower lip against the upper teeth; dental or interdental sounds, made with the tip of tongue and the rims of the upper and lower teeth; alveolar sounds, articulated with the tongue tip touching and the alveolar ridge; postalveolar sounds, made with the tongue tip touching the area behind the alveolar ridge; palatal sounds, produced when the tongue touches the hard palate; velar sounds, made by placing the back of the tongue near the soft palate; and glottal sound, produced in the larynx. (Skandera and Burleigh, 2005)

3. Manner of Articulation

Manner of articulation is how the air passes through the organs of speech. Skandera and Burleigh (2005) defined manner of articulation as "the type or degree of closure of the speech organs."(p. 22); Katamba (1989) stated that manner of articulation "refers to the way in which the airstream is interfered with in producing a consonant." (p. 8). According to Katamba (1989), Consonant sounds can be produced using six different manners of articulation such as:

- **Stop:** Also known as plosives. The speech organs come together and completely

block airflow momentarily before they separate abruptly, releasing it. Plosives such as /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/.

- **Affricate:** The production of affricate is similar to plosives but they differ in the release of air as for the affricate, the release is gradual. Affricates are like /tʃ/ as chain and /dʒ/ as Jane.

- **Fricatives:** The speech organs came close together creating a very channel where the air come through, creating turbulence. The fricatives are: /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/.

- **Approximants:** The speech organs are close to one another, yet the gap is large enough for the air to come through without creating turbulence. Approximants such as, /r/ like read, /l/ as lead, /w/ like weed, and /j/ as yield.

- **Nasals:** The velum in nasal sounds is lowered in order to allow air to escape through the nose. Nasals sound such as /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/. However, in oral sounds the velum is raised, stopping nasal passage where the air escapes only through the mouth. Oral sounds are: /p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/, /g/, /s/, and /z/.

- **Lateral:** In lateral sounds the tongue blocks the center of the mouth where the air escapes through the sides. Lateral sounds like /l/ as in peddle, battle, and kettle.

Table1.1

Consonants of English

	Bilabial		Labio-dental		Dental		Alveolar		Palato-alveolar (Post-alveolar)		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
Unvoiced (-V) Voiced (+V)	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V	-V	+V
Stops (Plosives)	p	b					t	d					k	g	ʔ[1]	
Fricatives			f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ					h	
Affricates									tʃ	dʒ						
Nasals		m						n						ŋ		
Lateral (approximants)								l								
Approximants		w[2]						r				j		w[2]		

Note: from *The Vowels & Consonants of English Lecture Notes,* by Musk, 2010

Consonants are an important element in pronunciation because they help shape the structure of words, distinguish between words that might sound similar, and when pronounced correctly, ensure the production of clear and understandable speech.

1.2.1.2 Vowels

Vowels refer to speech sounds that do not need any blockage of the airflow in the vocal tract. Vowels are sounds produced without a complete closure in the mouth or any narrowing that creates a noticeable friction (Crystal, 2008). Vowel sounds are voiced and produced by different lip shapes such as round and unrounded, and various tongue placement. In English, Vowels can be long as: /iː /, /ɜː/, /aː/, /uː/, /ɔː/ or short as /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ə/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɔ/.

Celce-Murica et al., (2010) claimed that there are various dimensions to take into account when detailing the production of vowels based on the movement or placement of specific mouth parts. The elevation of the tongue vowels can be high like [i] [ɪ] [u] [ʊ], mid like [e] [ɛ] [o] [ə] [ʌ] [ɔ] or low like [æ] [a]. The tongue's vowels can be categorized as front [i] [ɪ] [e] [ɛ] [æ], central [ə] [ʌ], or back [u] [ɔ] [o] [æ] [a]. The rounding of the lips vowels can be diffuse, rounded, or neutral as [u] [ʊ] [o] [ɔ] (as cited in Remeiche, 2021).

Figure1.3

Vowels Diagram
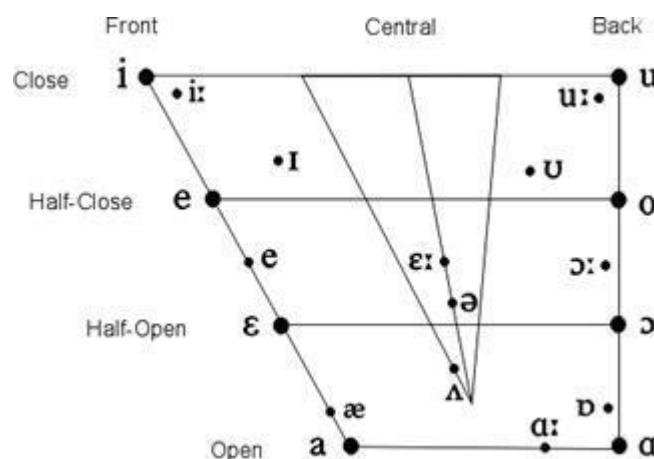
Note: from *Pronunciation Errors of English Triphthong Sounds Produced by EFL Students,* by Riska, 2023

1.2.1.3 Diphthongs

Diphthongs consist of distinct vowels that occur together in one syllable. It starts by pronouncing one vowel and then moving towards the other vowel, and thus it is called a glide vowel. A key point to note about diphthongs is that the first part is longer and stronger than the second part (Roach, 2009). According to Roach (2009), the English diphthongs consist of eight and are divided into centering and closing diphthongs.

Closing Diphthong: The tongue moves from an open vowel position to a closer vowel. It consists of diphthong sounds where the second vowel is closer than the first.

Centering Diphthong: The tongue moves toward the central vowel [ə]. It has a second vowel that is more central than the first vowel. (Ramelan, 1999, cited Mustikareni, 2013)

Figure1.4

English Diphthongs
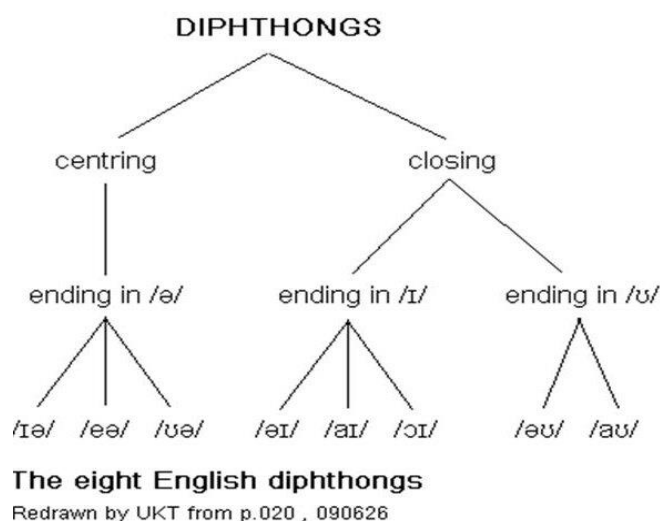
Note: from *A Descriptive study between Iraqi EFL Learners and English Native Speakers in Pronouncing English Vowels: A Contrastive Study,* by Altaie and Furqan, 2021

1.2.1.4 Triphthongs

Triphthongs are considered as difficult vowel sounds. Skandera and Burleigh (2005) claimed that English includes vowel sequences that are made of three sounds. They are referred to as triphthongs as derived from Greek triphthonggos, which means tripple sound; in the same context Richard and Schmidt (2002) defined triphthongs as" a term sometimes used for a combination of three vowels." (p. 565); Roach (2009) explained "a triphthong is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption." (pp. 18-19). There five English triphthongs such as /eɪə/, /aɪə/, /ɔɪə/, /əʊə/, and /aʊə/.

Figure1.5

Triphthongs Diagram
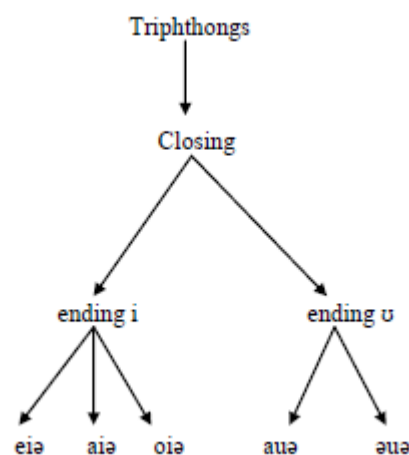
Note: from *Pronunciation Errors of English Triphthong Sounds Produced by EFL Students,* by Riska, 2023

1.2.2 Suprasegmental Features

Supra-segmental features focus on the way in which the speech is produced. Ladefoged and Johnson (2010, p 243) identified them as "those aspects of speech that involve more than single consonants or vowels." These features include stress, intonation, and rhythm.

1.2.2.1 Stress

Stress is also called a stress-time language. Crystal (2008) defined stress "A term used in phonetics to refer to the degree of force used in producing a syllable." (454) Similarly, Jones (1922, p. 110) claimed that "The force of the breath with which a sound or a syllable is pronounced is called its stress." In other words, stress refers to the emphasis placed on a particular syllable in a word or on a word in a sentence. Stress distinguishes the weak syllable from the strong one. This placement whether being in a syllable within a word or in a word within a sentence, can change the way we perceive it and the meaning of the word or the sentence. Stress is concerned with two main levels:

Word stress refers to the emphasis on a particular syllable in one word over the others. As explained by Underhill (2005, p. 51), "Word stress is the term used to describe the accent or emphasis given to a particular syllable of a word, and it is a more or less invariable attribute of that word when spoken in isolation." Stress in syllables may have three different degrees such as: primary stress, secondary stress, and unstressed. For instance, ˌcel_e_ˈbra_tion

The emphasis placed on a word within a sentence is called a sentence stress. It involves highlighting a particular word or phrase in a sentence, which is mainly emphasized in pronunciation in a certain way (Fudge, 2015). There are two categories of sentence stress: content words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, which carry the main meaning in a sentence that needs to be stressed, and function words such as articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs that do not carry stress. For example, 'I never wanted to believe this.' in this sentence, the content words are 'never', 'wanted', 'believe', and 'this'. These words that carry the main meaning are stressed because it allows the listener to understand the intention of the speaker, which is his or her reluctance and unwillingness to believe something. While 'I' and

'to' are the function words, they are unstressed because they play the grammatical roles in this sentence.

1.2.2.2 Intonation

Intonation refers to the way the voice changes by rising or falling in pitch when speaking. (Lasi, 2020) Intonation in language helps the speaker to express, emotions, attitudes, or where the main focus in the sentence or phrase is. Harmer (2001, p.28) identified intonation as "the music of speech".

1.2.2.3 Rhythm

Another element in suprasegmental features is rhythm, which refers to the "pattern beat of stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses in an utterance."(Celce, Brinton, Godwin, and Griner). Rhythm provides the speech with smoothness and flow. It also contributes to make the speech clearer and easier to understand and engaging to listeners.

1.3 Importance of Pronunciation for EFL Students

Pronunciation is an essential component in language speaking. According to Zhang (2009), "As individuals, we always learn to speak earlier than learning to read and write. Learning a language means to performance the sounds, utterances, and the words properly and correctly."(pp. 34-35). In other words, when learning a new language, students should first focus on speaking, producing and understanding sounds and spoken words, even before they learn its grammar rules or how to write in the new language. Furthermore, sometimes when we are speaking English with others, the most noticeable thing in our performance is the way we pronounce sounds. This may give a positive perception of our language skills. However, if our pronunciation is poor, or unclear, this will mostly cause discomfort and confusion for both speakers and listeners. In addition, it is evident that limited pronunciation skills will cause learners to lose their self-confidence, leading to a negative impact on their perception of their credibility and capabilities. (Morley, 1998, cited in Zhang, 2009). That is, when the

speakers produce accurate and appropriate sounds and words and are aware of the language' rules it will be very easy for them to present themselves more confidently and be perceived by others as good English learners.

Pronunciation tends to be more important because a learner's vocabulary and grammar do not matter if no one can understand them. To be understood, learners need to become skilled at the sounds and rhythms of English. Good pronunciation permits comprehension even with mistakes, however poor pronunciation leads to misunderstanding and negative assumptions about the learner's abilities (Yates and Zielinski, 2009). Therefore, Good and correct pronunciation allows students to communicate more freely without fear of being misunderstood or judged. It is important to speak English fluently with proper pronunciation because it helps speakers maintain a positive image.

1.4   Native Speakers vs. Intelligibility in EFL Pronunciation

In the learning process of EFL, students' main aim is to be able to produce speech correctly and appropriately so that they would be easily understood by others and to achieve improvement in their level. This concept is known as intelligibility and is defined by Kenworthy (1987, p. 13) as "being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation." While some students aim to be able to speak like native speakers by mimicking their speech patterns and accent others tend to focus on achieving intelligibility, which is to be able to speak and produce the language in a way that is understandable by as many listeners as possible without paying too much attention to the accent. Since 1990, the focus on intelligibility in pronunciation teaching has been increased instead of aiming to achieve a native-like pronunciation due to the growing use of English as a lingua franca. (Wang & Wen, 2023).

1.5 Key Factors Influencing Pronunciation

Pronunciation is an essential component of a spoken language particularly English as a foreign language. When EFL students start to learn English their first aim is to be able to express themselves and communicate with others in a clear and understandable spoken language. However, achieving this goal is not that easy since various factors may influence the way they pronounce words. Moreover, according to linguists, these factors are separated into two main categories which are external and internal factors. (Khan, 2019). According to Zhang (2009), internal factors relate to learner's biology, such as age, ear perception, and aptitude, as well as individual differences like personality, attitude, motivation, identity, individual efforts, and goal setting, while external factors include learners' native language, exposure, and educational factors.

1. **Internal Factors**

a) **Age**

Age plays an important factor in influencing the students' pronunciation, learning a language at a younger age tends to be effective more than learning it at an adult age. Khan (2019, p. 7) stated that younger learners "face less difficulty in understanding novel sounds and in uttering them, whereas older learners face more trouble in fixing their pronunciation." Therefore, Younger learners are expected to have more opportunities in learning the correct pronunciation than older learners and that is due to their brain flexibility and cognitive abilities. As Harmer (2001) assumed, the reason behind the ability of children to learn languages faster and effortlessly is the plasticity of a young brain.

b) **Ear Perception**

Ear perception refers to the learners' ability to listen, distinguish, and recognize different sounds in the language. It is considered one of the important factors that affect the development of pronunciation because if the students are not able to perceive sounds correctly

they may end up mispronouncing sounds. Zhang (2009, p. 39) confirmed, "There is a common sense that different people have different level of hearing abilities. Some people have a better ear capacity for language learning but some learners do not." This shows that, while some people are able to perceive the language being produced well others are unable to.

c) Aptitude

It is commonly known that some learners tend to be able to perform well in any task such as pronunciation than others and make even more progress in their learning due to their aptitude. It is defined by McDonough (1981, p.17) as "a disposition to be able to do something well" (as cited in Khan, 2019, p. 8).

d) Types of Learners (Personality)

There are two types of learners: extroverted learners and introverted learners. These different personalities may either enhance their pronunciation or hinder its development. Khan (2019) stated that an extrovert learner usually exhibits precise pronunciation of the target language since they comprehends his duties more effectively. Moreover, extroverted learners are more likely to have more opportunities to develop their pronunciation due to their ongoing, talkative, socialized personality which helps them to express themselves, communicate, and actively participate using the foreign language. This will allow them to recognize their mistakes, correct them, and improve their pronunciation. However, introverted learners generally prefer to be alone. They are often shy, quiet, and sometimes prefer to sit at the back of the classroom to watch and learn rather than participate. Their reluctance and hesitance to speak out loud for fear of making mistakes and being judged might hinder their ability to improve their pronunciation.

e) Attitude and Identity

Both attitude and identity play an important role in affecting pronunciation whether positively or negatively. Zhang (2009) claimed that if a student has a constructive mindset and

a receptive attitude towards the target language or target culture, it will facilitate his/her pronunciation improvement easily and accurately helping them to have a native-like accent. Therefore, when students are less motivated and willing to learn the foreign language, they will put limited effort into practicing and improving their pronunciation.

f) Motivation

It is considered as the driving force of passion that encourages the learners to put in more effort, achieve success, and persist in practicing even when they face difficulties. When learners are motivated enough to learn the language and enhance their pronunciation, they will continue striving to overcome challenges each time they encounter obstacles. Meléndez (2006) noted that "Empirical research shows that besides motivation there are other factors such as self-confidence, intelligence, and goals that play important roles in the formation of motivation." (Cited in Khan, 20019, pp. 10-11).

g) Individual Efforts and Goal Setting

For several EFL and ESL learners, it is the classroom that serves as the major location for acquiring a second language, but we must also understand that teaching does not directly result in learning but rather, creates the conditions that facilitate it. This makes individual effort a key element in L2 learning. Developing good pronunciation is challenging for many learners and requires persistence and long-term practice, much like building muscle. The more time a learner dedicates to practicing pronunciation, the more improvement they will achieve (Zhang, 2009).

Furthermore, learners play an equally important role in their language learning process. While teachers provide guidance and instruction, effective learning appears when students actively engage and participate with the language during and after the classroom. Without consistent effort, progress will be slow or even nonexistent.

Moreover, when students set clear and realistic goals, it helps them determine the direction and effort of their practice. For EFL student achieving effective communication should be their ultimate goal rather than a native like pronunciation. Students' aim should not be to achieve flawless pronunciation but rather to develop strong communication skills. In general, good pronunciation is associated with being both intelligible and acceptable to listeners. (Khan, 2019)

2. External Factors

a) Exposure

It refers to the amount of time spent and quality of interaction a learner has with the foreign language. "It does not matter the place or country the learners stay, but depends on how much they use English in their daily life. The more they spend their time for listening and speaking English, the better their English pronunciation will be." (Zhang, 2009, p. 44).

b) Native Language

It is common knowledge that native language can affect how students pronounce words and sounds in a foreign language due to the distinctive phonological system each language possesses. When learning a new language, people naturally try to use the sounds they already know from their L1. If a certain sound does not exist in their mother tongue, they may struggle to find something similar, making it harder to pronounce correctly. (Zhang, 2009). Similar to this, Nation and Newton, (2009) stated, "Teachers' experience and research studies show that the learners' first language can have a major influence on learning the sound system of another language." (p. 79) In other words students' first language can be a primer factor in shaping the way the students learn the foreign language. It may impact the way they produce certain sounds of the target language. Additionally, Avery & Ehrlich (1987) explained that the phonetic system of the first language can affect the learner's articulation of English in various ways, particularly when a student comes across sounds in English that do

not exist in the phonetic system of the student's native language (cited in Suwanaroa et al., 2020). That is, the differences in sounds system between L1 and L2 can influence the students' process of learning the accurate pronunciation of the target language. In the same context, Rivers (1968) stated most of learners encountered situation where they face a challenging obstacle in comprehending the speech of the foreigner. The reason behind it was not due to their inability of understanding the vocabulary, language structure, or grammar, but rather due to the sounds they articulated sounded unusual and the intonation where placed in surprising locations in the speech. (Cited in Zhang, 2009).

Furthermore, the native language is often seen as the main factor that hinders students' learning of the target language. This influence can appear at the level of speaking, making it obvious to listeners that the speaker is not yet proficient in the target language.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the importance of pronunciation for EFL students who aim to achieve fluency and communicate effectively. Mastering pronunciation involves; sounds, stress, and intonation which would help EFL students in producing clear, and understandable speech and presenting themselves in a good image. It is also important to bear in mind that achieving an understandable pronunciation is more essential than mastering native-like speaking. Furthermore, alongside the native language, there are other factors that affect student's pronunciation.

CHAPTER TWO: Mother Tongue vs. Foreign Language

Introduction

The mother tongue is known as the first language one acquires and use for the rest of their lives. It plays an important role in people's life as it helps shaping their identity and the way they communicate. However, when it comes to EFL students, it becomes the first main factor that interferes in their learning of the foreign language. This chapter aims to explain the mother tongue and its variation. Also it aims to highlights the differences between Arabic and English languages.

2.1 The Mother Tongue

The mother tongue represents the identity of its people. Yadav (2014) stated,

> The mother tongue, native or first language, is what a person has learned from birth or within a critical period, where the ability to acquire a language is biologically linked to age, and thus becomes the basis for social identity and becomes the medium of learning in school and society.(p. 573)

Moreover, the mother tongue is the language that people acquire from the environment around them starting from their family. It is the language that people use since early years of their life. Also, Adams and Tulasiewics (2005) defined the mother tongue as a first language of a person, which they acquired naturally through engaging with their family and the world around them. It becomes a significant part of their subconscious and allows them to connect to their society (cited in Omogho, 2021). However, Denizer (2017) argued that MT is also known as native language, which considered as the language most used at home and not only the language learned from their mother. That is, the mother tongue refers to the language that is used more frequently at home, and has an important role in the speaker's daily life. MT plays an essential role in peoples' lives as it shapes their identity in the society.

2.2 Arabic Language

Arabic is the language spoken all over Arab countries. It is the official language used in different areas such as political speeches, government, and education.

2.3 Arabic Language Varieties

2.3.1 Classical Arabic

One of the varieties in Arabic language is the Classical Arabic, which Harrat et al (2016) defined it as "the Arabic used in the Qur'an and in the earliest literature from the Arabian Peninsula, but also forms the core of much literature until the present day." (p.385); Huthaily (2003, p. 2) explained "Arabs consider Classical Arabic to be the purest, most perfect and most beautiful form of the Arabic language." Furthermore, Bensalah and Betta (2022, p. 23) described Classical Arabic as "This type of Arabic is obviously harder to understand for those who have not at all studied older texts." In simple words, Classical Arabic is the language of the holy Quran, which can be difficult to understand by some people.

2.3.2 Modern Standard Arabic

Modern standard Arabic is a language mostly used in all formal aspect of people's life such as education, medical, business, and to communicate with the same native speakers. Mouili (2021) described MSA as "the language used in formal and official circumstances. It is also considered as the most prestigious one for the fact that it is the language of religion and the large history and literature it holds during the pre-Islamic period." (p. 348). In the same context, Javed (2013) confirmed that modern language is also known as the literary language. Recently, it is regarded as the official Arabic used in written documents, including formal situation such as lectures and news broadcasts. Additionally, Hameurlain (2019) affirmed, MSA is a prestigious and standardized language. It functions as the national and official language all over Arab countries and is used in academic and formal contexts, like

education and media. Moreover, Harrat et al., (2016) said that MSA "is the variety of Arabic which was retained as the official language in all Arab countries, and as a common language." (p.385). In simple words, MSA is the official language of all Arab countries and is included in formal settings.

2.3.3 Dialect

Dialect is a language used in daily life communication. According to Crystal (2008), dialect is a language variety that is related to a specific region or society and is differentiated by a unique vocabulary and grammatical structures. Normally, spoken dialects are also connected to a particular accent or pronunciation. Additionally, Budiarsa (2017) described dialect as a form of certain language spoken by a specific group of people, marked by consistent features in syntax, phonology, and grammar. That is, a dialect is the language that is spoken by a particular region with in a country that has its own words, rules, and accent. Dialect is the language that people use in their daily life in their informal context.

Furthermore, according to Harrat et al (2016), Arabic dialects, also known as colloquial Arabic or vernaculars, are spoken varieties of Arabic language. They differ significantly from classical Arabic and MSA as they are not written. These dialects are influenced by ancient local tongues and European languages, which can be unintelligible to one another. Arabic dialects are classified into Middle East dialects and Maghreb dialects such as dialects spoken in Algeria.

2.4 Foreign Language

Foreign language is the language that is not native to a person. Unlike the mother tongue that is acquired naturally at an early ages, foreign language is learned for a purpose whether educational, business, or traveling purposes. Freed and stern (1983) pointed out that a child's mother tongue (MT), first language, and native language are all the languages that they acquire at birth, but a foreign language (FL) is a language that is not native to them.

(cited in Saad, 2020). Similar to that, Knapp et al (2009), mention that foreign languages are "languages which are taught and learnt, and not acquired." (p. 3) Therefor, FL is learnt while mother tongue is acquired. Furthermore, Richard and Schmidt (2002) identified foreign language as:

> A language which is not the NATIVE LANGUAGE of large numbers of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language. (p. 206)

In other words, foreign language is considered as a non-native language that most people in a country or region do not use for everyday life activities within the country. Rather, it is usually learnt in schools as a subject to interact with foreigners or access foreign materials.

2.5 Phonological Differences Between Arabic and English

Phonology focuses on how sounds work in a language. Ramamurthi (2004) explained, "Phonology concerns itself with the evolution, analysis, arrangement, and description of the phonemes or meaningful sounds of a language" (as cited in Shariq, 2015, p. 146). Furthermore, phonology is the study of sound system within the language, including the way sounds are organized, pronounced, and perceived. Arabic and English are two different languages that have distinctive features especially in the phonological system. These differences often lead to pronunciation difficulties, making the acquisition of English complex for Arabic students.

2.5.1 Contrastive Analysis of Arabic and English Sound Systems

It is important to talk about contrastive analysis in order to compare and contrast two languages, Arabic and English, to highlights the main differences between the two languages.

According to Lado (1957), the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), which claim that learners will find L2 features that are similar to their L1 are much simpler to understand while the different ones may create difficulties, should be brought when addressing how L1 impact L2. That is, it is evident that knowledge of L1 and L2 structures is essential for both language instructors and language learners. This information can help the language teacher identify how L1 affect L2 and develop plans to deal with this interference. (cited in Al-Zoubi, 2019). However, Al-Zoubi (2019) defined CA as "a second language acquisition approach that compares the features of the first language and second language to determine the similarities and differences between them."(p. 15). In simple words, CA concerns itself with describing the differences and similarities of two different languages.

2.5.1.1 Arabic vs. English Alphabet

As explained by Javed (2013), the Arabic alphabet, which is called Arab abjad or (الأبجدية العربية). It includes 28 letters

Table 2.2

Arabic Alphabet

ي	و	ه	ن	م	ل	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	ب	أ
y	w	h	n	m	l	k	q	f	gh	'	ẓ	ṭ	ḍ	ṣ	sh	s	z	r	dh	d	kh	ḥ	j	th	t	b	'

Note: from *Arabic and English Phonetics: A Comparative Study,* by Javed, 2013

And as for English alphabet, they are organized in an alphabetic order as they start with 'A' and ends with 'Z'.

Table2.3

English Alphabetic

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Note: from *Arabic and English Phonetics: A Comparative Study,* by Javed, 2013

2.5.1.2 Consonants and Vowels

   a) Consonants

The consonant sounds in Arabic differ from those in English. According to Huthaily (2003), there are 28 consonant phonemes in Arabic. There is a one-to-one connection between the Arabic letters and consonant phonemes; each one of these phonemes is represented by a letter of alphabet. Four of these 28 phonemes are velarized, making velarization phonemic. It is fundamental to understand the major location for articulation of these four phonemes. El-Hossary (2016) explained that in terms of consonants, the Arabic phonological system do not consist of the three distinctive sounds that are addressed in English such as /v/, /p/, and the approximant /r/. Meanwhile Arabic consists of nine distinct consonants that are not found in English. These consonants are: /dˤ/, /tˤ/, /ðˤ/, /ʕ/, /ɣ/, /x/, /ħ/, /q/, and trill /rˤ/

Figure 2.6

Modern Standard Arabic Consonants

		Labial	Emphatic [2]		Plain		Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal/Epiglottal	Glottal
			Dental	Alveolar	Alveolar	Dental						
Nasal		m			n							
Stop	voiceless	(p) [8]	tˤ [4]		t [9]				k	q		ʔ
	voiced	b	dˤ [4]		d [9]		d͡ʒ~ʒ~ɟ~g [1]					
Fricative	voiced	(v) [8]	ðˤ~zˤ		z	ð			ɣ~ʁ [5]		ʕ~ʢ [3]	
	voiceless	f		sˤ	s	θ	ʃ		x~χ [5]		ħ~ʜ [3]	h
Approximant		w		ɫ~l [6]				j				
Trill				rˤ~r [7]								

Note: from *A Contrastive Analysis of English and Arabic Phonetics and Phonology and in Relation to Teaching*, by El-Hossary, 2016

Moreover, as reported by Amer (2010), the analysis between Arabic and English consonants show a number of sounds in both languages, where some sounds of English do not exist in Arabic, and Arabic sounds that do not have their equivalent in English. Such as:

- /p/ does not exist in Arabic.

- /t/ and /d/ are dental in Arabic but alveolar in English.

- /v/ is absent in Arabic, leading to confusion with /f/.

Additionally, another difference between the two languages is consonant clusters. While English permits complex cluster from two to seven consonants, Arabic has no more than two consonant clusters. For example:

- Initial clusters: <u>sl</u>eep, <u>str</u>eet.

- Final clusters: fa<u>cts</u>, stre<u>ngths.</u>

b) Vowels

In terms of vowels, Javed (2013, p. 4) mentioned that "Modern Standard Arabic has six pure vowels, with short /a i u/ and corresponding long vowels /aː iː uː/." Amer (2010) asserted that Arabic vowels are mostly allophonic, and divided into short and long vowels. Short vowels in Arabic are produced by notion not by letters which is distinct from English vowels. These vowels are:

Short Vowel:

- /i/ (Kasrah): written under the letter. the tongue when producing this vowel is in half close position, and the lips unrounded. Used in genitive case

- /u/ (Dammah): written above the letter. The tongue half closed and the lips are rounded when producing this vowel. It indicates the nominative case

- /a/ (Fatha): written above the letter. When producing this vowel the tongue is in half

open position and the lips are neutral. It marks the accusative case.

Long Vowel:

- /ii/ (yā): proceeded by kasrah.

- /uu/ (wāw): proceeded by ḍammah.

- /aa/ (alif): proceeded by fatha.

Figure 2.7

Arabic and English Vowels
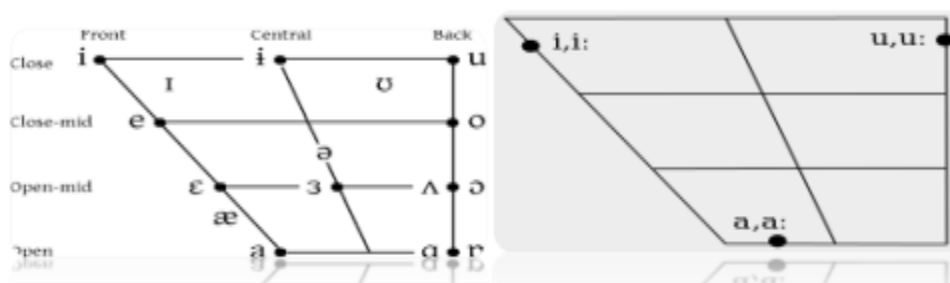
Note: from *A Contrastive Analysis of English and Arabic Phonetics and Phonology and in Relation to Teaching*, by El-Hossary, 2016

Amer (2010) highlighted three main differences of Arabic and English vowels. Firstly, the numbers of English vowels are more than the Arabic vowels, showing that Arabic vowels are allophonic while English vowels are more phonemic, interested with vowel quality. Secondly, English vowels such as /e/, /ɔ:/, /ɒ/, /ɜ:/, /ə/, and /ɑ:/ are not found in Arabic. Thirdly, unlike English, Arabic vowels are unaffected by the consonants that come after them.

2.5.1.3 Diphthongs

At diphthongs level Arabic also differ from English diphthongs in term of the numbers. According to Javed (2013), Arabic diphthongs consists of two, which are /aj/ and /aw/

Figure2.8

Arabic Diphthongs

Diphthongs (fully vocalized text)	Name	Trans.	Value
064E 064A �َي	fatḥah yā'	*ay*	/aj/
064E 0648 �َو	fatḥah wāw	*aw*	/aw/

Note: from *Arabic and English Phonetics: A Comparative Study,* by Javed, 2013

However, the English diphthongs are: /ɪə/, /ʊə/, /eə/, /eɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aɪ/, /əʊ/, and /aʊ/. In simple words, Arabic diphthongs are lesser that English diphthongs, which means that there are English diphthongs that do not exist in Arabic language.

2.5.1.4 Stress

Although stress exists in both languages, it works differently in each language. In English stress is phonemic, which means it can change the meaning and grammatical class of words while in Arabic, stress is non-phonemic, meaning it only serve to highlight meaning without changing it. Furthermore, the placement of the stress differs. For example, Arabic stress is mainly found at the beginning or end of a word. However, as noted by Marlett (2001), English stress can take place on initial, final, or penultimate syllables (Ashour, 2017).

2.6 Corrective Feedback

During EFL learning process it is important for teachers or the instructors to evaluate and provide helpful information about the students' oral performance. One interesting type of feedback the teachers can provide to students is corrective feedback. According to Hinkle

(2011, p. 593), "Corrective feedback (CF) refers to the feedback that learners receive on the linguistic errors they make in their oral or written production in a second language (L2)" In other words, this teaching strategy helps students to be more aware of the errors they have made during their language use such as in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and even writing. By having such awareness they will be able to improve and correct their errors. This technique is mainly used in both EFL, and in SLA.

2.6.1   Ways to Provide Corrective Feedback

In order for the teacher to provide CF that help, students to understand and improve their mistakes it is important to know the different types of CF. Lyster and Ranta (1997) stated that there are six different ways to provide a corrective feedback such as:

2.6.1.1 Explicit Correction, is a type of correction where the teacher directly highlights the students' mistakes and corrects them on the spot. Example:

Student: she stole my */bɛn/.*

Teacher: We say **/pɛn/** with /p/ sound. Here the teacher directly pointed out the mistake and corrected it.

2.6.1.2 Recast is also called implicit correction. The teacher reformulates the students' Incorrect sentences into a correct form without explicitly pointing out the mistake. Example:

Student: My family and I went to the /fɪlɪdʒ/.

Teacher: You and your family went to the /ˈvɪlɪdʒ/? Good. Here the teacher corrected the students' mistake without pointing it out directly.

2.6.1.3 Clarification Request, the teacher requests the student to repeat or explain the speech because it is not clear enough, cannot be understood, or because it contains mistakes that affect the clarity of the speech. Example:

Student: My grandfather has a /ʃɪp/ (sheep) in his farm.

Teacher: Excuse me? The teacher here asks the student for clarification because his sentence contains a mistake which is the mispronunciation of the vowel /i: / which it becomes /ʃɪːp/

2.6.1.4 Metalinguistic Feedback the teacher here corrects the students by providing them with rules or hints rather than directly correct their mistakes. Example:

Student: My favorite activity is to /klaɪmb/ mountains.

Teacher: Remember, the "b" in the word "climb" is silent. Instead we say /klaɪm/.

2.6.1.5 Elicitation, in this type of correction the teacher makes a pause or asks the student a question in order to encourage them to self-correct their mistakes. This correction encourages students to actively participate during the classroom or the learning process and help them to improve their self-correction skills. Example:

Student: I want to deVELop my writing skills (instead of "DEvelop")

Teacher: you want to….? The teacher here asks a question and encourages the student at the same time to realize his/her mistake which is the incorrect placement of the stress to correct it themselves.

2.6.1.6 Repetition is a type of correction where the teacher repeats the students' mistakes and adds a question tone to his utterance to draw students' attention to the mistake. Example:

Student: The king and queen lived happily ever after in their /ˈkæstl̩/.

Teacher: in a /ˈkæstl̩/? The teacher here repeats the students' mistake in a question tone as if pointing out at the mispronunciation of the word which should be pronounced like /ˈkæsl/

2.6.2   Shadowing Technique

Another technique that teachers might include in their pronunciation teaching is shadowing technique, which is a language learning technique where students are exposed to an audio or a video clip and are expected to imitate the speakers in terms of sound patterns such as pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation. By doing this they are learning the correct

way to produce the language. For example, if a student is facing a difficulty in pronouncing certain sounds in the foreign language they may listen to another speaker pronunciation of these sounds and start copying them, which later with regular practice they would be able to pronounce these sounds appropriately and may achieve fluency. As claimed by Hoadjli and Manseur (2016), some researchers find the implementations of shadowing technique can help learners improving their oral performance of foreign language. In simple words, this teaching and learning technique is helpful for students to improve their pronunciation, fluency, and listening skills. Julian (2012) stated that "one of the best features of this technique is that it enables the learner to practice pronunciation and train him/herself to be fluent in speaking even at home" (cited in Hoadjli and Manseur, 2016, pp. 101-102).

2.6.2.1 Shadowing Technique Procedures

There are 10 steps of shadowing technique procedures, which are presented by Hayakawa (2004, as cited in Sugiarto et al., 2020) as follows:

1. **Listening:** Students listen carefully to a given record and try to understand it.

2. **Slash Listening:** Students look at the textbook and mark the pronunciation features while listening.

3. **Mumbling:** students shadow the input speech in a low voice.

4. **Parallel Reading:** While listening to the audio, students check textbook to highlight part that they did not understand.

5. **Understanding the Meaning:** Students check dictionaries for the meaning of words or sentences, they find difficult to comprehend.

6. **Prosody Shadowing:** Students shadow the pronunciation elements produced in the audio, making sure not to use their accent.

7. **Content Shadowing:** Students shadow the audio smoothly with understanding the content well.

8. **Recording:** they record their shadowing.

9. **Listen and Compare:** They listen to their recording and compare it to the original audio to highlight their errors.

10. **Review/Reflect:** The teacher reviews and reflects on the lesson orally with students.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explained the Arabic language and in comparison to the English language, shedding light on the phonological differences between the two languages in term of consonants, vowels, and stress. This comparison helps to highlight the distinctive phonological features of each language. Also in this chapter we have discussed the corrective feedback as a possible way for teachers to use to improve pronunciation along with shadowing technique.

CHAPTER THREE: Field Work

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to present the practical work carried out in this study. It identifies the overall methodology employed in this research. It aims to describe, interpret, and analyze the data obtained through the two different tools that have been used in this study. The primary aim of this study is to describe the impact of the mother tongue, Arabic, on the pronunciation of EFL students.

3.2   Review of the Methodology Employed

Research methodology is the overall plan that a researcher consider when conducting a study. Rajasekar, Philominathan, and Chinnathambi (2013) explained Research methodology is a systematic approach to problem-solving, studying research procedures for describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena, with the aim of providing a work plan for research. In other words, research methodology is the scientific study of how research is conducted. It explains both the methods used and the logic behind them to solve a research problem systematically.

3.3   Research Approach

There are three main research approaches that are presented by Creswell and Creswell (2018), which are defined as follows:

Qualitative research approach is used to understand the meaning individuals or groups attach to social or human issues. It involves inductive analysis of data collected in the participant's setting, interpretation of the data, and a flexible written report. This approach emphasizes individual meaning and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Similar to this, Dornyei (2007) stated that "Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open- ended, non-numerical data, which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods. Typical example: interview research, with the transcribed recordings analyzed by qualitative content

analysis." (p. 24) That is, qualitative research mostly deals with words, opinions, perception of particular social phenomena. The researcher in such approach is concerned with gaining a deep insights and interpreting the meaning of the problem and data.

On the other hand, the quantitative research approach tests objective theories by examining variable relationships. It uses instruments to measure variables, allowing for statistical analysis. The final report includes an introduction, literature, theory, methods, results, and discussion. It assumes deductive testing, bias protection, control for alternative explanations, and generalization of findings (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Additionally Dornyei (2007) described "quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analysed primarily by statistical methods. Typical example: survey research using questionnaire, analysed by statistical such as SPSS." (p. 24) In other words, quantitative research mainly deals with numerical data and analyzing the relationship between variables. It uses tools such as surveys that deal with numbers and statistical data.

Furthermore, mixed methods research involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating them, and using distinct designs with philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption is that integrating data provides additional insights. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). According to Dornyei (2007), mixed-methods is an "approach involves a different combination of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or the analysis levels. Typical examples: consecutive and interrelated questionnaires and interview studies." (p.24). More precisely, instead of using just words or just numbers, mixed-methods approach combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to collect both types of data, blend them, and then analyze them together to get a well-rounded data, and a deep understanding of the research problem.

3.3.1 The research Approach Employed in this Study

Based on the nature, objectives, and the aims of this study, which is to understand, describe and explore the impact of L1 on L2, a qualitative approach is adopted. This research approach aids in gathering in-depth data for understanding the influence of Arabic language on EFL students' pronunciation, as well as the challenges they encounter.

3.4 Research Design

Since our main objective is to obtain an in-depth understanding about the influence of the first language on the foreign language, as well as the nature of our study, which is to explore and describe this phenomenon, a qualitative research design is adopted to fulfill these aims.

3.4.1 Population and Sample

The target population of this study consists of first year LMD students at the Department of Language and English Literature, as well as phonetics teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The total number of students in this population is 827 students, distributed into 15 groups.

In order to collect the necessary data for this research, a purposive sampling was selected. It includes two groups of first-year LDM students, each comprising approximately 20-30 students. In addition, five teachers of phonetics were chosen. These samples were selected because they met the specific criteria and were most relevant to our research objectives.

3.4.2 Data Collection Methods

Data collection was described by Taherdoost (2021, p. 11) as "the process of collecting data aiming to gain insights regarding the research topic." According to Kabir (2016), data collection is the systematic process of obtaining and evaluating data on variables of interest in order to address research questions, test hypothesis, and assess results is known

as data collecting. It seeks to gather quality evidence for rich data analysis and construct convincing and credible answers to the questions that have been addressed.

Kabir (2016) described the type of qualitative data collection as being mostly non-numerical and descriptive. This type is primarily concerned with collecting data in forms of words and sentences, which capture feeling and subjective perception. Data collection methods use open-ended questions, focus group, group discussion, and interviews to explore the subject matter in depth. The results also only apply to the group that participated in the program and cannot be extended to participants outside of it.

3.4.2.1 Data Collection Methods Employed in this Study

A qualitative data collection method is adopted for this study, using two different tools, which are a questionnaire for the teachers and a classroom observation for two classes of first year English students:

3.4.2.1.1   Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a data collection tool that helps the researcher to obtain information from participants. According to Pandey and Pandey (2015, p. 58), a questionnaire method is "a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions. It is a device for securing answers to questions by using a form which the respondent will fill by himself." Additionally, Ranganathan and Caduff1 (2023) stated, "A research questionnaire can be defined as a data collection tool consisting of a series of questions or items that are used to collect information from respondents and thus learn about their knowledge, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior." (p.152). In other words, a questionnaire is one of the most common tools used in research as they allow the researcher to gather as many data as possible at the same time and are easy to be conducted and analyzed.

As reported by Nicolas (2024), qualitative research questionnaires can be structured or semi-structured questions. This type of questionnaires tends to gather detailed, open-ended

answers from participants. They help researchers to understand underlying reasons, opinions, and gathering deep insights about a specific problem. They also help participants to express their opinions more freely. However, quantitative questionnaires consist of a closed-ended questions and numerical responses. In simple words, qualitative questionnaires deals more with words, opinions, attitudes and helps respondents to answer freely, allowing for unusual or surprising responses while quantitative questionnaire deals with numbers and statistics.

Since our main goal is to explore and understand teachers' opinion, perception, and attitude towards the impact of the mother tongue on EFL students' pronunciation, a semi-structured questionnaire is chosen for this study.

3.4.2.1.2   Classroom Observation

When the researcher records field notes on people's behaviors and actions at the study location, this is called a qualitative observation. The researcher has two ways to use when recording these notes which are unstructured and semi-structured while using some pre-existing questions the researcher wishes to know (Creswell and Creswell 2018). One unique characteristic of observation as a research process is that it allows a researcher to gain real-time data from naturally occurring social context (Cohen et al., 2007). Similar to this, Taherdoost (2021, p. 23) claimed that "In these techniques, first-hand data is gathered through the observation of events, behaviors, interactions, processes, etc. directly to obtain an understanding of the concepts." That is, classroom observation tends to gather a live data such as behaviors, reactions, actions, and attitudes of people from a real-life setting.

Since the primary aim of our study is to gather students' behavior and attitude in a real setting, we decide on choosing classroom observation. This method allows us to observe how students deal with English language, as well as how do they use and communicate with the language inside the classroom in a real life situation and context.

3.5   Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

3.5.1   Description

Semi-structured questionnaire is distributed to five teachers of phonetics in order to obtain their insights and professional opinions regarding the students' pronunciation difficulties in English, as well as the interference of the mother tongue. This questionnaire consists of an overall 12 questions with 6 close-ended questions and 6 open-ended questions. These questions are divided into four sections, each section aims to gather specific information of a particular aspect of the current study.

For instance, section one tends to collect personal information about the teachers such as gender, academic degree, and their experience; section two aims to gather teachers' opinion on the impact of the mother tongue on students' pronunciation; the third section aims to collect the perceptions and reactions of the teachers to specific pronunciation challenges; and the last section tends to obtain the teachers' suggestions and recommendations to overcome this problem.

The data collected from the close ended questions are manually calculated and presented in tables while the data gathered from the open ended questions are analyzed thematically.

3.5.2   Aims

The aim of the teachers' questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of the challenges EFL students face in acquiring correct English pronunciation and the influence of their native language. Also it seeks to explore the teachers' perspective on the specific pronunciation challenges that the students face, as well as the teachers' recommendation and suggestions to solve such issue.

3.5.3   Administration

This questionnaire was given to first year phonetics teachers at the Department of Language and English Literature, particularly to seven teachers of phonetics during the holy month of fasting, Ramadan. It was handed to four teachers, while two questionnaires were sent via email. However, we received only one response, which resulted in only five teachers contributed in this questionnaire development.

Section one: Personal Information

Item 1: Gender

Table3.4

Teachers' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	04	80%
Male	01	20%
Total	05	100%

The table above reveals that out of five participants, most of them are females while one is male. This shows that the number of female teachers participated in this questionnaire is more than the number of male teachers, that is, within the sample of first year phonetics teachers, females teachers seems to be more than male teachers.

Item 2: What degree do you hold?

Table 3.5

Teachers' Acadmic Degree

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Master	00	—
Magister	03	60%
Doctorate	O2	40%
Total	05	100%

This table shows that among five teachers, more than half of the teachers participated have their magister degree while less than a half of them have doctorate degree. This shows that, the teachers involved in this questionnaire are mostly qualified and competent in the field of teaching English.

Item 3: How long have you been teaching English?

Table 3.6

Teachers' Experience

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
From 1 to 5 years	01	20%
From 6 to 10 years	02	40%
More than 10 years	02	40%
Total	05	100%

The table above shows that only a few teachers participated has been teaching English for 1-5 years, and a limited number of teachers were teaching English for 6-10 years, and less than a half of them have been teaching English for more than ten years. This suggests that a

group of teachers participating in this questionnaire are more experienced and knowledgeable.

Section two: The impact of the Mother Tongue on Student's Pronunciation

Item 4: In your opinion, how important is pronunciation for EFL students?

Table 3.7

The Importance of pronunciation for EFL students

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	05	100%
Somehow important	00	__
Not very important	00	__
Total	05	100%

In the table above we can notice that a total number of teachers participated consider pronunciation very essential for EFL students, that is, pronunciation is a crucial aspect in teaching and learning English.

Item 5: To what extent do you think students' mother tongue impacts their pronunciation?

Table 3.8

The impact of Students' Mother Tongue on their Pronunciation

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	00	__
Slightly	01	20%
Moderately	01	20%
Significantly	03	60%
Total	05	100%

In this table, it is evident that only a few teachers believe that the mother tongue slightly affects EFL students' pronunciation; while small portion of teachers claim that the influence was moderate. However, considerable number of teachers believes that the impact was significant. This indicates a variation in teachers' perception and that the students' mother tongue indeed plays a role in affecting students' pronunciation as stated by most teachers.

Item 6: Do you think the differences between Arabic and English phonetics create a challenge in students' pronunciation? Why?

Based on the gathered data of this item, the majority of teachers believe that due to the phonetics differences between the two languages, students face a difficulty in learning the English language, particularly learning its correct pronunciation.

T1: "The differences of phonetics between the two languages sometimes can create challenges especially for beginners. These challenges require focused practices."

T2: "Yes, it might cause challenges to them, but only if students have not been exposed to the foreign language and did not try to practice the foreign sounds. This teacher believes that the interference of L1 would be reduced if the necessary efforts and strategies are effectively implemented."

T3: "Definitely, the differences in phonemes articulation and the contrastive nature between Arabic and English can create a challenge for Arab learners to master the English pronunciation."

T4: "Yes, it creates a challenge as the articulatory system differs between languages, that is, the way sounds are produced as well as the sounds themselves are not the same."

T5: "Initially yes, but with practice they usually get better at distinguishing between sounds in Arabic and English and the phonemic nuances of consonantal and vowel phonemes found in English."

This reveals that the phonetics distinctive features between Arabic and English can create a noticeable obstacle for EFL students that can hinder their ability to learn the target language pronunciation. However, the consistent practice and targeted strategies can help students overcome these issues and improve their pronunciation skills.

Section three: Specific Pronunciation Challenges

Item 7: Which English specific sounds you noticed your students struggle with because of the impact of Arabic? Please provide example?

T1: "Mostly, the difficulties lie in vowel phonemes, that is, the segmental features of English pronunciation. The wide variety of vowels in English that has no equivalence in Arabic can hinder EFL learners from mastering the English pronunciation."

T2: "It is much more with the vowels than consonants. This occurs when they do not distinguish between short and long vowels, long vowels and diphthongs, or voiced and voiceless sounds."

T3: "The /t/ sound, especially at Biskra University, is often pronounced as /tʃ/."

T4: "Students struggle with specific sounds such as the /p/ sound, which some students sometimes pronounce it as /b/, and the /f/ sound, which they pronounce it as /v/.

T5: "The main difficulties lie mainly on diphthongs and triphthongs."

Based on the responses above, we can conclude that students struggle not only with individual sounds but also with vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs. This due to the interference of their first language (L1), which often leaves them confused and makes it difficult for them to improve their pronunciation.

Item 8: How often do your students replace certain English sounds due to their mother tongue's phonetic system?

Table 3.9

Replacement of English Sounds Due to Mother Tongue

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Always	01	20%
Often	00	—
Sometimes	04	80%
Rarely	00	—
Total	05	100%

Based on the table above, a significant majority of teachers observe that students sometimes replace certain English sounds due to their mother tongue's phonetic system while minimal number of teachers notices that it always occurs. This implies that while replacing English sounds with those of the native language is not constant; it is still a reoccurring challenge for EFL students.

Item 9: How do your students react when they struggle with pronunciation?

T1: "Students show hesitation, frustration and they sometimes ask for help, but when they repeat after the teacher, they tend to repeat the same mistake as if it has been fossilized in their minds."

T2: "Students are motivated to improve."

T3: "Students tend to get frustrated when they make mistakes and try to avoid any further participation so that they will not be judged or made fun of."

T4: "Students find it difficult to reach native-speakerism as a goal, so they become shy or embarrassed, avoiding speaking up in class."

T5: "students usually avoid pronouncing challenging sounds and sometimes even words when reading passages found in lesson handouts."

In short, we understand that some students get motivated to improve. However, other students tend to get frustrated, hesitant, shy, or even embarrassed when they struggle with the appropriate pronunciation of the language. This reaction from students may cause them to take more time to improve, making it difficult to acquire the right pronunciation.

Section four: Teachers' Recommendation

Item 10: In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges in teaching pronunciation to EFL students?

From the data obtained from this item, we found that some teachers suggest that the main challenges in teaching pronunciation to EFL students are:

- EFL students do not practice English enough.

- Lack of listening to English by native speakers.

- Lack of digital tools and materials to expose students to real-world and authentic speech of the English speakers.

- Lack of motivation.

- Interference of L1.

- Time consuming for both teachers and students.

- Fossilization.

- Teachers' need to be well trained and highly competent.

- The interaction between students and teachers should be established since if there were any issues between them can impact the teaching-learning process.

- The unpredictability in spelling and pronunciation that usually prompts students to utilize an avoidance technique when performing reading or speaking exercise in class.

- Students' inability to master distinctions in vowel sounds.

Item 11: Have you found any particular teaching methods or resources effective in improving students' pronunciation? If yes, please describe them.

According to the findings from this item, all the teachers report that they have indeed found several teaching methods and resources effective in improving students' pronunciation. These included incorporating many sources, multimedia tools, and authentic materials such as:

- Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) software.

- BBC learning English videos.

- Minimal pair word lists.

- Podcasts and books.

The effective teaching methods mentioned were:

- Asking students to repeat the word many times after illustrating the correct

Pronunciation.

- Advise students to listen to native speaker's speech regularly.

- Encouraging the use of the shadowing technique to mimic natural speech patterns.

This indicates that, teachers are aware that the effective use teaching methods and materials are the key for a successful pronunciation teaching to EFL students. Also the diverse use of such resources and tools show a flexible and student-centered approach that aim at addressing different learning needs and improving students' pronunciation.

Item 12: In your opinion what possible solutions you may suggest for this problem?

Based on the findings of this item, teachers suggest various potential solutions to address the issue of L1 interference on EFL students' pronunciation and they were as follows:

- More listening to native speakers such as listening to podcasts and audiobooks.

- More practicing, especially outside the classroom.

- To illustrate more using multimedia tools such as mobile apps.

- Using audio exercises with interactive content.

- Time management.

- Motivation. i.e., keeping students motivated by making activities more engaging and fun.

- Effective student-teachers interaction.

- The selection of engaging teaching materials such as interesting topics and real-life contexts.

- Using phonetic transcription exercises and regular pronunciation drills to practice common spelling-to-sound patterns.

- Using words with irregular/unfamiliar pronunciation, so they can understand their pronunciation even if the spelling is unusual.

- Using the vowel chart and vowel discrimination exercises which can be quite helpful in practicing such important sound discernments.

In short, these proposed solutions provide well effective and practical solutions to address L1 influence in EFL students' pronunciation. These suggestions incorporate both the traditional methods such as pronunciation drills and phonetics transcription, and modern tools like mobile apps and multimedia content, as well as the focus on practicing inside and outside the classroom due to its effectiveness.

3.5.4 Summary of the Findings of Teachers' Questionnaire

The findings obtained from the teachers' questionnaire indicate that female teachers are more interested in teaching phonetics than their male colleagues. This shows that the teachers who answered this questionnaire are mainly qualified, competent, experienced, and informed in English language teaching. According to our findings, pronunciation is essential for teaching and learning English because it helps students to communicate clearly and effectively. The majority of educators agree that students' mother tongue significantly affects their pronunciation. EFL students often struggle with individual sounds such as /t/, /p/, and /f/, which are replaced by /tʃ/, /b/, and /v/, as well as vowels, diphthongs, and triphthongs due

to the influence of their L1. This influence can lead to confusion and hinder their ability to present themselves more appropriately. Even though this replacement is not always consistent, it remains a recurring challenge for EFL students. While some students are motivated to get better, others may experience embarrassment or frustration when they face a trouble pronouncing words correctly. Such emotional reaction may slow their improvement and make it more difficult to acquire accurate pronunciation. Materials such as CAPT, BBC, podcasts and books, as well as methods like repetition and shadowing technique are essential for successful pronunciation. Additionally, this varied use of resources and tools illustrate a flexible, students-centered approach aimed at meeting diverse learning needs and improving students' pronunciation skills.

3.6   Classroom Observation Analysis

3.6.1   Description

The classroom observation is conducted with two groups of first year EFL students. Each group contains 25-30 students. It consists of 6 sessions, three sessions with each group conducted over a two-week period. It was undertaken during Speaking and Listening sessions in order to gather direct information about their pronunciation performance in real classroom settings. Also, the possible pronunciation errors, especially those made due to first language, and the reactions of both students and teachers. The classroom observation consists of 8 questions divided among three sections. The first section titled, "the influence of the mother tongue on students' pronunciation", this section aims to highlight the specific consonants and vowels of English that are influenced by Arabic, as well as, whether or not this influence affects speech intelligibility. The second section titled as "students' attitudes" tend to observe students' reactions and behaviors when they make mistakes on the pronunciation level due to their native language and the reaction of their classmates. The last section titled, "teachers'

reaction" where the main goal in this section is to see whether the teacher react towards this type of interference or not, and how do they handle this situation.

The data obtained from this method is analyzed thematically, where we transcribe the recordings of each session, we identified the patterns of the data, and then we grouped the similar themes together.

3.6.2 Aims

The main aim of the classroom observation is to highlight the pronunciation difficulties faced by EFL students in real classroom context. It also seeks to observe the students' attitudes and teachers' reactions on how they address these errors.

3.6.3 Administration

The classroom observation was conducted during the second semester of 2024-2025 academic year at the Department of Language and English Literature. It was performed with groups 2 and 6 of First-Year English students. The sessions were recorded with the consent of both teachers and students. The observer sat at the back of the classroom without participating, in order to maintain a neutral presence and avoid influencing the session.

Section One: The influence of the mother tongue on students' pronunciation.

Item 1: In what way does the students' first language affect their English pronunciation?

In the most six sessions, we notice that Arabic impact students' English pronunciation in various aspects such as consonants, vowels, diphthongs and stress. In terms of consonants, some students replace certain sounds with ones from Arabic. These sounds are:

- The sound /p/ replaced with /b/ like the word panic /ˈpænɪk/ pronounced as banic /ˈbænɪk/, this mistake occurs because Arabic lack /p/ sound, which lead students to replace it with its closest equivalent in Arabic /b/.

- /t/ with /ط/. For example, in the word topic /ˈtɒpɪk/, /t/ is mispronounced as /ط/. This

Substitutions happen when Arabic students give an extra emphasis on /t/ creating a pharyngealized sound /ط/, making the words sounds thick and heavy.

- /v/ with /f/ as observed in the word motives /ˈmoʊtɪvz/, which is pronounced by some students as motifs /moʊˈtiːfs/. This error is due to the absence of the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ in Arabic that causes some students to substitute it with its Arabic voicless counterpart /f/.

  - /tʃ/ with /ʃ/. Some students mispronounce the word chose /tʃoʊz/ as shose /ʃəʊz/. This error is due to the absence of the sound /tʃ/ in Arabic, so students use it familiar /ʃ/.

  - /ð/ with /d/. This error is observed in the word 'this' /ðɪs/, where some students mispronounce as /dɪs/.

In terms of diphthongs, the noticeable errors were in the inability of students to distinguish between vowels and diphthongs, which cause them to commit errors such as:

- The student replace the correct long vowel /iː/ with a diphthong /eɪ/, as in the word cheat /tʃiːt/, they mispronounce it as /tʃeɪt/.

- replacing a diphthong /aɪ/ with /ɪ/ like the word 'widely' /ˈwaɪdli/ is mispronounced as /ˈwɪdli/.

- In vowels, as in Central vowel /ɜː/ is replaced by /ɔː/. For example, the word 'murder' /ˈmɜːdə(r)/ as /ˈmɔːdə(r)/

- Another error is in the word infidelity /ˌɪn.fɪˈdel.ə.ti/ pronounced as /ˌɪn.fɪˈdæl.ə.ti/

In terms of stress student make errors due to their lack of awareness of the correct syllable to emphasize, this possibly influenced by differences in stress patterns between English and Arabic. These errors indicate the extent to which L1 influence L2 pronunciation due to the many distinctive features between the two languages.

Item 2: To what extent does mother tongue interference impact speech comprehension by the listener?

Within the six sessions, we have observed that errors such as sounds replacement and mispronunciation affected students' speech clarity and smoothness. Some students begin to feel confused when they hear mispronounced words and often ask for clarification. While in some occasions some students seems to understand their classmates' speech even if they make mistakes. This suggests that, although pronunciation errors can impact effective communication for some listeners, others may depend on their clues or prior knowledge to understand the intended words. This shows that the extent of the mother tongue interference depends on the severity of the influence and listeners' experience.

Section Two: students' attitudes

Item 3: Are students aware of these mistakes?

As we have noticed during few sessions, some students seem to be completely unaware of the errors they are making due to their L1. In many cases, they did not attempt to correct themselves and continued to speak without acknowledging the errors. This may be connected to a lack of awareness or ignorance regarding L1 interference, or that these errors are fossilized in their minds and got used to make these errors.

However, in certain cases, few other students show a sense of awareness of their speech patterns. This is evident in their hesitation while speaking English and in the uncertainty that marks their tone.

Item 4: How do students react when they make these mistakes?

Since some students are not aware of the errors they are making due to their MT influence, they show no reaction towards these errors. As a result, they do no attempt to correct themselves and resume their speaking without interruption. This ignorance sheds light on the importance of raising these students' awareness.

Meanwhile, in some sessions, students who are aware of their mistakes often tend to correct their mistakes independently. In contrast, others may become hesitant, anxious, or shy

when they recognize errors in their speech, which can lead to increase stress and reluctance to continue speaking.

Item 5: Do students hesitate to speak in English due to fear of making mistakes?

Almost in all session we have notice the way students hesitate when they are being asked to speak in English, afraid of the possibility of making mistakes and being judged by their classmates. They get anxious to stand on the spotlight and being the center of attention. This reaction is shown in the way they dart their eyes nervously and fidgeting with their hands, as a sign of their nervousness and fear of speaking in the foreign language. This indicates that, this overwhelming emotion, and the fear of making mistakes can cause students to be unable to recognize these mistakes and hinder their improvement.

Moreover, we observed that in the majority of sessions, students switch to Arabic the moment they face a difficulty such as struggling to find the appropriate words or when attempting to explain their thoughts more clearly. This behavior shows a lack of confidence in using English. Furthermore, many students tend to think in Arabic first and then translate their thoughts into English. This exact behavior often leads to hesitation and affect their speech fluency.

Item 6: How do students react to classmates' pronunciation mistakes?

In some sessions, we notice that some students are ignorant about the errors made by their classmates. They do not show any sign of recognition, reaction, or engagement when these errors happen, which may indicates a lack of attentiveness, linguistic awareness, or willingness to show support to their peer. Nonetheless, in some sessions, students' reactions were quite evident. They would giggle and whisper among each other meanwhile others attempt to correct their classmates errors, or seek for clarification from the teacher when they do not understand. All of this suggests that, although some students were unaware or indifferent, others were actively engaged with what was being said.

Section Three: teachers' reactions

Item 7: How does the teacher react to this influence?

We witnessed in most sessions, that teachers often chose not to address the errors caused by L1 interference, instead of commenting or interrupting these mistakes, they tend to continue the discussion, showing no reaction. This means that, teachers aim to focus on keeping the flow of the discussion and prioritizing student's participation over an instant error correction.

Moreover, sometimes the teacher switches to Arabic when they realize students did not understand what they have said, and start explaining the intended speech in Arabic.

Item 8: Does the teacher correct or provide the students with feedback?

In most observed sessions teachers generally did not attempt to correct students' pronunciation errors. At times they would repeat the correct pronunciation after students, but without highlighting the mistake. The focus seemed to be placed more on grammar than pronunciation. Despite there were occasional instances where the teacher corrected pronunciation, these correction were indirect and were not clearly or directly pointed out to students. The teachers showed constant focus on correcting grammar. This may be due to many reasons such as teachers' prioritization of accuracy over fluency, indicating that teacher may assume that grammatical accuracy is more crucial for language learning, seeing it as the main aspect for communication. Another reason is limited time in class, where teachers believe that correcting grammar is easier than correcting pronunciation that may take time.

3.6.4 Summary of the findings of classroom observation

Arabic was found to have a significant impact on students' pronunciation of English across six sessions, affecting vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and stress. These mistakes frequently go unnoticed by students, possibly as a result of fossilization or ignorance show the significant influence of L1 on L2 speech. While some students corrected their mistakes

independently, others showed anxiety or hesitation, which hindered their progress. Also, while some students are likely to be actively engaging, correcting their classmates' errors, other attempt to be passive. In moments of difficulty, students often switch to Arabic. Another finding is that teachers appeared to prioritize participation and grammatical accuracy over real-time pronunciation correction, suggesting a focus on fluency and structural competence rather than pronunciation.

3.6.5   Discussion of the Results

The findings from both the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observations highlight both agreement and contrast in the teaching of pronunciation. Teachers showed a strong interest in phonetics and recognized the importance of pronunciation for effective communication. They identified Arabic as a major influence on students' English pronunciation, noting common issues with sounds like /p/, /f/, and diphthongs. Teachers also reported using various tools and techniques such as CAPT, podcasts, and shadowing to support pronunciation learning. As for classroom observations, the results showed many pronunciation errors like in consonants, vowels, and stress. In terms of consonants, students tend to replace certain sounds of English with those of their native language Arabic such as: /p/ with /b/, /t/ with /ط/, /v/ with /f/, /tʃ/ with /ʃ/, /ð/ with /d/. Similar to the study of Kharma and Hajjaj (1989), some difficulties for Arab learners of English were found, they focused on consonants and vowels. In terms of consonants, learners often confuse pairs such as /tʃ/ and /ʃ/, /v/ and /f/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/, /p/ and /b/, /ŋ/ and /n/, and /s/ and /θ/. (Cited in Al-Zoubi, 2019). Also, some students showed confidence and self-correction, while others appeared hesitant or anxious, which affected their progress. Arabic was frequently used when students struggled, showing the influence of their first language. Moreover, teachers seemed to prioritize grammar and participation over direct pronunciation correction during lessons.

These findings provide clear answers to the research questions and support the research hypotheses. The data confirmed that specific pronunciation challenges faced by EFL students due to interference of their mother language, as well as showed the teachers' perception of this influence. Also, it affirmed that Arabic may affect negatively EFL students' pronunciation and there are pronunciation errors among EFL students at Biskra University that is due to the phonetic differences between Arabic and English.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have analyzed, interpreted, and discussed the data gathered from both students and teachers, providing insights into their perspectives and experiences related to the research topic. In this chapter, we have also highlighted the main features of English pronunciation impacted by Arabic sounds system. We have also identified the main errors committed by EFL students at the pronunciation level due to the influence of their native language, as well as the teachers' reaction, opinions, and attitudes towards this negative interference.

Recommendations

After going through the result of this study and based on all the findings concerning the impact of L1 on L2, we suggest some points to take into consideration. These recommendations are for EFL university students, EFL university teachers, and for future studies to help them improve in teaching-learning process, particularly in pronunciation of the foreign language.

For EFL University Students:

- Students should listen more to native speakers audios in order to memorize the correct pronunciation.

- They should make more efforts and practice regularly on their English pronunciation.

- They should use methods and material like BBS, podcasts, and apps to learn, track, and improve their pronunciation.

- They should learn how to self-monitor their performance in pronunciation.

For EFL University Teachers:

- Teachers should pay more attention to students' pronunciation errors inside the classrooms.

- They should raise students' awareness about the interference of their first language.

- They should immediately correct students and point out their errors.

- They should illustrate the correct production of English sounds.

- They should insert audio records of native speaks into their lessons to expose students to the correct ways in producing English sounds.

For Future Studies

As for future studies, researchers working on a familiar topic may opt for a mixed method approach and integrate experiments to test students' pronunciation and examine to what extent the mother tongue impacts the pronunciation of EFL students.

Limitations of the Study

As we were working through the current research study we have faced some obstacles that caused this study to be slightly difficult. At the beginning of this study, the researcher aimed at first in conducting an interview with teachers but due to time it was difficult to do it. Another obstacle that the researcher encountered is a difficulty in obtaining suitable classrooms to conduct the observation with. This obstacle limited the number of classroom observation sessions. Also, while distributing the questionnaire to teachers, not all of them responded. This reduced the number of our sample, which out of seven teachers we were supposed to work with only five completed the questionnaire. These two obstacles not only delayed the researcher to collect the data on time but also reduced the sample size of this study.

General conclusion

The present study sought to explore the problem that first-year EFL students at Mouhamed kheider Biskra face when learning the foreign language, which was the impact of their mother tongue on English, particularly on their English pronunciation. This current study was divided into three chapters.

In the initial chapter, we identified pronunciation as one of the main component in language learning. We also described its two different features, segmental features such as consonant, vowels, diphthongs, and triphthongs and suprasegmental features like stress, rhythm, and intonation. Also, the essential role that pronunciation play in presenting EFL students whether in a good image or in bad one based on the way they produce their speech. Additionally, this chapter explained the difference between opting for speaking like native speakers and the ability to produce a comprehensible speech, emphasizing the importance of focusing on intelligibility rather than nativeness. Furthermore, we presented other factors that influence pronunciation along with native language.

The second chapter we opted to identify the native language, Arabic, and the foreign language, English. The researcher clarified the three main varieties of Arabic, which are: Classical Arabic that is used mostly in Quran, Modern Standard Arabic that is used in official setting such education, politics, and Dialect, which is used mainly in casual conversation and daily life. Also we tackle into the phonological differences between L1 and L2. Additionally, we shed light on ways that teacher can use to provide corrective feedback on students pronunciation.

The last chapter was dedicated to the methodology employed and the practical side of this study. It adopted a qualitative research approach for its suitability for the nature and objectives of this study. The data was obtained through two data collection tools, which were a questionnaire for phonetics teachers and a classroom observation for first year English

students. Based on the gathered data from teachers' questionnaires, teachers have recommended some materials, methods and suggested some solutions for L1 influence on L2. Furthermore, based on the findings of the classroom observation, it was obvious that the mother tongue is a major factor that influences first-year EFL students' pronunciation negatively. We have found that students replaced certain sounds of English with those of their native language Arabic, their inability to distinguish between vowels and diphthongs, and the misplacement of stress. Another noticeable result was the teachers' passive reaction towards these errors as they show no sign of providing feedback on the matter. These findings confirmed that the mother tongue indeed affect EFL students' pronunciation negatively. Also, it affirmed that there are pronunciation errors among first year EFL students due to Arabic.

References

Altaie, F. (2021). A descriptive study between Iraqi EFL learners and English native speakers in pronouncing English vowels: A contrastive study. Journal of Misan Researches, 17(34), 428-480. https://doi.org/10.52834/jmr.v17i34.82

Al-Zoubi, S. M. (2019). The speech sounds of Arabic language and their effect on learning English pronunciation: A contrastive analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 9(1), 15–26. https://doi.org/10.30845/ijhss.v9n1p2

Amer, W. M. (2010). *An investigation into the differences between English and Arabic consonant and vowel sounds: A contrastive study with pedagogical implications*.

Ashour, H. M. (2017). Major differences between Arabic and English pronunciation systems: A contrastive analysis study. *AIJLLS: International Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies*, 1(1), 132–150.

Bensalah, R. F., & Betta, A. (2022). *The Impact of the Mother Tongue on the Phonetic Realization of Foreign Language Allophones: Algerian Arabic VS Received Pronunciation English* [Master's thesis].
http://dspace.univ-tiaret.dz:80/handle/123456789/2370

Breitkreutz, J., Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2001). Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. TESL Canada Journal, 19(1), 51.https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v19i1.919

Budiarsa, I. M. (2017). Language, dialect and register in a sociolinguistic perspective. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, *1*(2), 379–387.
https://doi.org/10.22225/jr.1.2.42.379-387

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., Goodwin, J. M., & Griner, B. (2010). Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide (2nd ed.). Cambridge University

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed). SAGE Publications. https://spada.uns.ac.id/pluginfile.php/510378/mod_resource/content/1/creswell.pdf

Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (6th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell. https://hslcorner.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/david-crystal-a-dictionary-of-linguistics-and-phonetics-1.pdf

Denizer, E. N. (2017). *Does mother tongue interfere in second language learning? Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology*, *2*(1), 39–54.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.

Fudge, E. (2015). English word-stress. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315674810

Ranganathan, P., & Caduff, C. (2023). Designing and validating a research questionnaire – Part 1. *Perspectives in Clinical Research, 14*(3), 152–155. https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.picr_140_23

Hameurlaine, A. (2019). *The Current Status of Modern Standard Arabic in the Algerian Speech Repertoire: In between the Reality of Degeneration and Ambition of Revitalization* [Master'sthesis]. http://dspace.univtiaret.dz:80/handle/123456789/1029

Harmer, J. (2001). The practice of English language teaching (3rd ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Harrat, S., Meftouh, K., Abbas, M., Hidouci, W.-K., & Smaïli, K. (2016). An Algerian dialect:Study and resources. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications (IJACSA)*, *7*(3), 384–396. https://doi.org/10.14569/IJACSA.2016.070353

Hinkel, E. (Ed.). (2011). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (Vol. 2). Routledge.

Hoadjli, A. C., & Manseur, R. (2016). Can Shadowing Enhance EFL Learners' Oral

Performance?:, A Case Study. *مجلة العلوم الانسانية, 16*(1), 99–109

Huthaily, K. (2003). *Contrastive phonological analysis of Arabic and English* (Master's

thesis). University of Montana. https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/8110

Javed. F (2013, August). *Arabic and English Phonetics: A Comparative Study*. The

Criterion: An International Journal in English – Bi-Monthly, Peer-reviewed and

Indexed Open Access eJournal ISSN: 0976-8165.

https://www.the-criterion.com/V4/n4/Javed.pdf

Jones, D. (1922). *An outline of English phonetics*. G. E. Stechert & Co.

Kabir, S. M. S. (2016). Methods of data collection. In *Basic Guidelines for Research: An

Introductory Approach for All Disciplines* (Chapter 9). Curtin University. Retrieved

from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325846997_METHODS_OF_DATA_COL

LECTION

Katamba, F. (1989). An introduction to phonology. Longman Publishing Group.

Kenworthy, J. (1987). *Teaching English pronunciation*. Longman.

Khan, T. A. (2019). A descriptive study: Factors affecting the pronunciation of English

language (L2). *Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends, 1*(2), 1–16.

https://doi.org/10.32350/jcct.12.01

Knapp, K., & Seidlhofer, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of foreign language communication

and learning*. Mouton de Gruyter. https://lib.unnes.ac.id/17220/1/2201409097.pdf

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age

International.http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/79439/5/Research%20M

ethodology%20-%20Methods%20and%20Techniques%202004.pdf

Kráľová, Z., Nemčoková, K., & Datko, J. (2021). *Foreign language pronunciation, from theory to practice*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-5275-7371-0-sample.pdf

Ladefoged, P., & Johnson, K. (2010). *A course in phonetics* (6th ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Lasi, F. (2020). A study on the ability of supra-segmental and segmental aspects in English pronunciation. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature, 7*(2), 426–437. https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.222

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *19*(1), 37–66. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263197001034

Musk, N. (2010). *The vowels & consonants of English* [Lecture notes]. Department of Culture and Communication, Institution for Culture and Communication (IKK), English.

Mustikareni, D. (2013). *Error analysis on English diphthongs pronounced by the students of SMA Negeri 1 Comal and SMA Negeri 1 Banjarnegara in English debate on "Relax" TV program of TVRI* (Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Negeri Semarang). UNNES Institutional Repository. http://lib.unnes.ac.id/17220/1/2201409097.pdf

Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking. Routledge.

Nicolas, A. (2024, August 19). *Qualitative research questionnaire – Types, examples & template*. ResearchProspect. https://www.researchprospect.com/qualitative-research-questionnaire

Omogho, E. M. (2021). Mother tongue disability and socio-cultural development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, *7*(4), 255–262. https://doi.org/10.21744/ijllc.v7n4.1785

Pandey, P., & Pandey, M. M. (2015). *Research methodology: Tools and techniques*. Bridge Center. https://www.euacademic.org/BookUpload/9.pdf

Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P., & Chinnathambi, V. (2013**).** *Research methodology* [Preprint]. arXiv. https://arxiv.org/abs/physics/0601009v3

Remeiche, S. (2022). *An Investigation into The Effects of Algerian EFL Learners' Native Dialects on The Pronunciation of English Language* [Master's thesis]. http://archives.univ-biskra.dz/handle/123456789/21258

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2002). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.

Riska, F. (2023). *PRONUNCIATION ERRORS OF ENGLISH TRIPHTHONG SOUNDS PRODUCED BY EFL STUDENTS* (Doctoral dissertation, IKIP PGRI PONTIANAK).

Roach, P. (2009). English phonetics and phonology paperback with audio CDs (2): A practical course. Cambridge University Press.

Saad, W. (2020). *The effect of mother language use on EFL students' speaking abilities: The case of first year LMD students of English at Biskra University* [Master's thesis]. http://archives.univ-biskra.dz/handle/123456789/16137

Sajadi, S. S. (2002). Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. Pearson Education Inc.

Shariq, M. (2015). Arabic and English Consonants: A Phonetic and Phonological Investigation. Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 6(6). https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.6n.6p.146

Sharma, L. R. (2021). *Significance of teaching the pronunciation of segmental and suprasegmental features of English*. *Interdisciplinary Research in Education, 6*(2), 63–78. https://doi.org/10.3126/ire.v6i2.43539

Skandera, P., & Burleigh, P. (2005). A manual of English phonetics and phonology: Twelve lessons with an integrated course in phonetic transcription (1st ed.). Gunter Narr Verlag.

Sugiarto, R., Prihantoro, P., & Edy, S. (2020). The impact of shadowing technique on tertiary students' English pronunciation. *Linguists: Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching, 6*(1), 114–125.

Suwanaroa, S., Polerk, S., & Tabula, R. V. (2020). *An investigation of factors causing English mispronunciation of students in English for international communication*. International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, 3(11), 194–205. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.11.19

Taherdoost, H. (2021). Data collection methods and tools for research: A step-by-step guide to choose data collection technique for academic and business research projects. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)*, *10*(1), 10–38. https://hal.science/hal-03741847

Thornbury, S. (2006). An A - Z of ELT: A Dictionary of Terms and Concepts Used in English Language Teaching. Germany: Macmillan https://books.google.dz/books?id=q7ChGQAACAAJ&dq=Thornbury+2006+p+185+pdf&hl=en&newbks=1&newbks_redir=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjS4YWE25WKAxXJif0HHa5AJTEQ6AF6BAgJEAM

Underhill, A. (2005). *Sound foundations: Learning and teaching pronunciation*. Macmillan Education.

Wang, Y., & Wen, X. (2023, February 13). *Nativeness versus intelligibility as goal of English pronunciation teaching in China: Changing attitudes in national syllabi and curriculum standards*. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-023-00189-2

Yadav, M. K. (2014). *Role of mother tongue in second language learning*. *International Journal of Research*, *1*(11), 572–582.

Yates, L., Zielinski, B., & Adult Migrant English Program (Australia. (2009). *Give it a go: teaching pronunciation to adults*. Adult Migrant English Program (Amep) Research Centre, Macquarie University.

Zhang, Q., M. (2009). Affecting Factors of Native-Like Pronunciation: A Literature Review (pp. 33–52). http://cau.ac.kr/~edusol/see/list/Vol27-2/CAKE027-002-4.pdf

Appendix (1)

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is designed as a data collection tool for the present study which is about "the impact of the mother tongue on EFL students' pronunciation." This questionnaire aims to gain more information about your opinions, reaction, and perceptions towards the influence of the mother tongue on the students' articulation.

For that, you are kindly asked to participate in this questionnaire. Your collaboration would be so helpful for achieving our goal.

Thank you,

NB: you are kindly required to tick (√) when necessary.

Section one: Personal Information

1. Gender:

   a. Female ☐

   b. Male ☐

2. What degree do you hold?

   a. Master degree ☐

   b. Magister degree ☐

   c. Doctorate ☐

3. How long have you been teaching English?

   a. From 1 to 3 years ☐

   b. From 4 to 6 years ☐

   c. More than 10 years ☐

Section two: The Impact of the Mother Tongue on Students' Pronunciation

4. In your opinion, how important is pronunciation for EFL students?

    a. Very important ☐

    b. Somehow important ☐

    c. Not very important ☐

5. To what extent do you think students' mother tongue impacts their pronunciation?

    a. Not at all ☐

    b. slightly ☐

    c. moderately ☐

    d. significantly ☐

6. Do you think the differences between Arabic and English phonetics create a challenge in students' pronunciation? Why?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Section three: Specific Pronunciation Challenges

7. Which English specific sounds you noticed your students struggle with because of the impact of Arabic? Please provide examples.

    _____

    _____

    _____

8. How often do your students replace certain English sounds due to their mother tongue's phonetic system?

    a. Always ☐

    b. Often ☐

    c. Sometimes ☐

    d. Rarely ☐

9. How do your students react when they struggle with pronunciation? (e.g., frustration, motivation to improve, avoidance, etc.)

_____

_____

Section three: Teachers' Recommendations

10. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges in teaching pronunciation to EFL students?

_____

_____

_____

11. Have you found any particular teaching methods or resources effective in improving students' pronunciation? If yes, please describe them.

_____

_____

_____

12. In your opinion what possible solutions you may suggest for this problem?

_____

_____

Classroom Observation Form

Observer Name: Belkhadem Selsabil

Date of Observation:

Class Level:

Teacher's Name:

Number of Students: 25-3

Sections	Questions	Answers
Influence of mother tongue on students' pronunciation	In what way does the students' first language affect their English pronunciation?	In any case provide examples;
	To what extent does mother tongue interference impact speech comprehension by the listener?	Explain:
Students' attitudes	Are students aware of these mistakes?	Yes no
	How do students react when they make these mistakes?	Explain:
	Do students hesitate to speak in English due to fear of making mistakes?	In any case provide explanation,
	How do students react to classmates' pronunciation mistakes?	In any case provide examples,
Teachers' reactions	How does the teacher react to this influence?	Explain:
	Does the teacher correct or provide the students with feedback?	In any case justify;

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف تأثير اللغة الأم، العربية، على نطق الطلاب الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية. تركز هذه الدراسة بشكل خاص على الفروقات الصوتية بين اللغتين لتوضيح كيف يمكن ان تؤدي هذه الاختلافات الى صعوبات في النطق عند هؤلاء الطلاب .الى جانب ذلك تسعى هذه الدراسة الى فهم مواقف و اراء المعلمين نحو كيفية تأثير اللغة العربية على اللغة الإنجليزية .الغرض الرئيسي الأخر هو معرفة ما إذا كان هذا التأثير يعود بالسلب على نطق الطلاب .من أجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف، اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على منهج نوعي، و جمعت البيانات باستخدام اداتين مختلفتين، من بينهما استبيان تم توزيعه على خمسة مدرسين علم الاصوات في السنة الأولى للحصول على آرائهم ومفهومهم و مقترحاتهم تجاه هذه الظاهرة، اما الأداة الاخرة فكانت ملاحظة الصف الدراسي، والتي تم اجراؤها ضمن مجموعتين من فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في السنة الاولى .حيث أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية في جامعة بسكرة يميلون الى استبدال بعض اصوات اللغة الإنجليزية بأصوات من لغتهم العربية مثل: /p/ مع //b، //t مع /ط/، /v/ مع //f، //tʃ مع //ʃ، /ð/ مع /d/، كما انهم يواجهون صعوبة في التمييز بين الاصوات المتحركة و الثنائيات الصوتية، بالإضافة الى ذلك عدم قدرتهم على الضغط بشكل الصحيح في المكان المناسب. اما النتيجة الملحوظة الاخرى فكانت ردة فعل المعلمين تجاه هذه الاخطاء حيث لوحظ انهم لا يقدمون اي تعليقات حول هذا الموضوع.