



**Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages
English Language and literature
Sciences of the Language**

MASTER DISSERTATION

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**Exploring the Challenges Faced by EFL Students and Teachers
in the Integrated course of Phonetics-Linguistics.**

**A Case Study of First-Year Students
at Mohamed Kheider University –Biskra.**

**Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master in Science of Language**

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June 2024

Declaration

I, **Guerfa Amel**, declare that this dissertation is my original work. It represents my own research and effort and has not been previously submitted for a degree at any academic institution or university. The study was conducted and completed at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Algeria.

Certified

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Date: 27/06/2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amel Guerfa', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Dedication

This work is especially dedicated to:

My dearest Mom, your precious advice and constant support mean the world to me.

Thank you for always being there, in my moments of sorrow and joy.

To my amazing siblings, your love and encouragement keep me going.

And to all my wonderful family members, your presence enriches my life.

To my dear friends, Tita and Nadjat your friendship is a true treasure.

Finally, to everyone who has been there for me, thank you for your love and support.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude. First and foremost, I am incredibly thankful to Allah (SWT) for granting me the strength and ability to complete this research project. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, **Dr. Saihi Hanane**, for her invaluable guidance, advice, and encouragement throughout this journey. My thanks also go to the esteemed jury members, **Dr. Bendahmane Messaouda and Dr. Messaoudi Fatima**, for dedicating their time and consideration to evaluating my work. Finally, I am grateful to the first-year students and their teachers who participated in this research by so cooperatively completing the questionnaires. Their contribution was essential to this project's success.

Abstract

This study investigated the challenges faced by first-year EFL students and teachers after the integration of linguistics and phonetics into a one single course. A descriptive research method was employed to identify the major linguistic and phonetic difficulties encountered by foreign language learners following this curriculum change. Simple random sampling selected 60 students and four teachers to participate in the study. Data collection occurred through questionnaires administered to both students and teachers. The findings revealed that while students found the combined course interesting, many struggled with some concepts and information recall during exams. EFL teachers, on the other hand, generally found the program manageable with collaborative lesson planning. However, some challenges emerged, including class size limitations, program version variations, and the need for additional support in specific areas. Despite these obstacles, teachers successfully prepared for exams and balanced assessments for both subjects. In conclusion, these results suggest that while the combined course offers potential benefits, further improvements are necessary to address student comprehension and teacher support, ultimately leading to a more effective learning experience for all involved.

Keywords: Challenges, EFL learners, Integration, Linguistics, Phonetics, Student Struggles, Teacher Management.

List of tables

Table 01: Branches of Linguistics	- 10 -
Table 02: student's attitude toward the clarity of the lessons	- 21 -
Table 03: course informatively	- 22 -
Table 04: difficulties in understanding linguistic Concepts	- 22 -
Table 05: Clear phonetic concepts	- 23 -
Table 06: the teacher's teaching Style.....	- 23 -
Table 07: module being taught by the same teacher	- 24 -
Table 08: switching between two modules in the same course	- 25 -
Table 09: understanding and memorizing this course during the exam	- 25 -
Table 10: understanding of the course material during the 1st semester exam	- 26 -
Table 11: first semester exam score/mark for phonetics and linguistics	- 27 -
Table 12: EFL teaching experience	- 30 -
Table 13: the level of experience in phonetics and linguistics	- 31 -
Table 14: how to teach EFL classes	- 32 -
Table 15: difficulty of present both subjects together	- 32 -
Table 16: collaboration of the lessons preparation.....	- 33 -
Table 17: the level of program difficulties	- 33 -
Table 18: difficulty of preparing for the exam.....	- 34 -
Table 19: balance the two subjects in the exam.....	- 34 -
Table 20: the use of materials in phonetic practice	- 34 -
Table 21: the first semester program	- 35 -
Table 22: teacher's suggestions.....	- 35 -

List of figures

Figure 1: first semester exam score/mark for phonetics and linguistics.....	- 27 -
Figure 2: EFL class size.....	- 31 -

Table of content

Declaration	II
Dedication	III
Acknowledgement.....	IV
Abstract.....	V
List of tables.....	VI
List of figures	VII
Table of content.....	X
General introduction.....	- 1 -
1.Statement of the problem	- 1 -
2.Research questions	- 2 -
3.Aims of the study.....	- 2 -
4.Significance of the study.....	- 3 -
5.Research methodology.....	- 3 -
a.Research approach.....	- 3 -
b.Population and sample	- 3 -
6.Data collection tools	- 4 -
7.Data analysis procedures.....	- 4 -
8.Structure of the dissertation	- 4 -
 CHAPTER ONE.....	 - 6 -
I.Introduction.....	- 7 -
I.1.Definition of linguistics	- 7 -
I.2.Areas of linguistics	- 8 -
I.3.The importance of teaching linguistics.....	- 10 -

I.4. Definition of pronunciation	- 11 -
I.4.1. Phonetics and phonology	- 11 -
I.5. The importance of teaching pronunciation	- 12 -
I.6. The interrelationship between linguistics and phonetics	- 12 -
I.7. Teaching Linguistics and phonetics	- 13 -
I.7.1. Teaching Linguistics	- 13 -
I.7.1.1. Methods used in teaching linguistics	- 13 -
I.7.1.2. Methods used in teaching linguistics in Algeria	- 14 -
I.7.2. Teaching pronunciation	- 14 -
I.7.2.1. Methods used in teaching pronunciation	- 14 -
I.7.2.2. Methods used in teaching pronunciation in Algeria	- 15 -
I.8. Classification of the first year students in the Algerian university	- 16 -
Conclusion	- 18 -
CHAPTER TWO	- 19 -
II. Introduction	- 20 -
II.1. Description and analysis of student's questionnaire	- 20 -
II.1.1. Description and structure of the questionnaire	- 20 -
II.1.2. The analysis of the student's questionnaire	- 21 -
II.1.3. Discussion of the result of the student's questionnaire	- 28 -
II.2. Description and structure of the teacher's questionnaire	- 30 -
II.2.1. The analysis of the teacher's questionnaire	- 30 -
II.2.2. Discussion of the result of the teacher's questionnaire	- 37 -
General conclusion	- 39 -
Recommendations	- 41 -
References	- 43 -

المخلص - 52 -

General introduction

General introduction

Language is a captivating tool, allowing us to connect and share ideas. But the seemingly simple sounds we produce transform into complex sentences with meaning – a fascinating process fueled by phonetics and linguistics. However, in regions with growing English language instruction, these fields pose challenges for learners. EFL students face hurdles in understanding and staying motivated due to intricate phonetic symbols, complex linguistic concepts, and diverse learning styles. Despite these challenges, the benefits extend far beyond the students. By incorporating phonetics and linguistics into teaching, educators gain powerful tools. They can explain pronunciation tones with greater clarity and help student's master grammar's intricacies. This empowers students and allows teachers to create a more effective and rewarding learning experience.

Phonetics and linguistics are not obstacles, but the secret weapons of language learning. They lay the foundation for clear communication and empower both students and teachers for a more successful and enriching journey.

1. Statement of the problem

As the need for English language tutoring grows in countries where English is not the first language, there has been a sharp increase in the number of EFL students and teachers. However, the abstract nature of phonetics and linguistics, the great number of phonetic symbols and linguistic rules, and the diverse backgrounds and learning styles of EFL students pose significant challenges for both learners and teachers in these courses. We will try to explore the challenges

that English learners and educators face in phonetic and linguistics course. These challenges can make it difficult for students to understand the material, stay motivated, and progress, while also making it challenging for EFL teachers to make a balance between theoretical explanations and practical applications. Therefore this study aims to identify the difficulties first-year students and their teachers at Biskra University have in these courses.

2. Research questions

These research questions can help to explore the challenges faced by both EFL students and teachers in phonetic and linguistics courses, providing insights into how to improve the teaching and learning of these subjects in EFL contexts.

2.1. How do first-year EFL students at Biskra University grapple with understanding and applying phonetic and linguistic concepts?

2.2. What challenges do teachers face in balancing theoretical explanations with practical applications to effectively engage students and promote their learning in this combined course?

3. Aims of the study

This study focuses on the specific difficulties faced by first-year EFL students and their teachers at Biskra University when taking a combined phonetics and linguistics course. Because phonetics and linguistics are abstract and involve a lot of symbols and rules, students can find it hard to understand the material and stay motivated. Teachers also face challenges in balancing teaching the theory with giving students practical activities to help them learn. By exploring these

difficulties, this research aims to identify areas where the course can be improved, making it a more effective learning experience for both students and teachers.

4. Significance of the study

The increasing number of people learning English has created a vast and growing population of both students and teachers. But learning English phonetics and linguistics can be tricky, especially for students who do not have a rich background about it. The researcher want to help by figuring out the exact problems students and teachers face after the integration of these courses. By understanding these challenges, the research can suggest better ways to teach and learn, so everyone can improve their English learning process.

5. Research methodology

a. Research approach

Based on the nature of this study the qualitative approach is used, this study aimed to explore EFL first-year teachers' and EFL first-year LMD students' difficulties in teaching and learning the phonetic- linguistic course methods.

b. Population and sample

I specifically chose to work with first-year LMD students and teachers of the course. First-year LMD students are at a crucial stage in their English language development. They are more aware of their language limitations compared to complete beginners, but still lack the advanced skills and knowledge necessary to fully grasp abstract concepts and master phonetics. This makes them an ideal group to study the challenges faced in phonetics and linguistics courses, as their

experiences can provide valuable insights into improving teaching and learning strategies for this specific student population .for the teachers to show us how this integration affect them and how they managed to balance abstract concepts with the application of the phonetics rules in the classroom.

6. Data collection tools

A questionnaire is used for comprehensive understanding of the both teacher and the student perspective on the challenges and the impact of it due to the interrogation of phonetic- Linguistic course.

7. Data analysis procedures

While SPSS provided descriptive statistics for the quantitative data (numerical data) in the student and teachers questionnaires, a qualitative approach was necessary to analyze the open-ended responses. Thematic analysis was chosen to identify recurring themes and patterns within these responses, allowing for a deeper understanding of student and teacher experiences.

8. Structure of the dissertation

Our study divided into two parts: theoretical part and practical one.

The theoretical part included one chapter which include entailed an overview of the abstract nature of phonetics and linguistics. we mentioned areas of linguistics and phonetics and phonology the important of teaching both. Also we provide a the interrelationship between them, the methods used in teaching linguistics and phonetics in general and in Algeria and the classification of the first year students in the Algerian university .

Chapter two will deal with data analysis, results and discussion .In this chapter we analyzed the data that we gathered from the questionnaire of the teachers and the students and sum up with a conclusion about the whole research.

Chapter one

Literature review

Introduction

Language is a fascinating puzzle that holds the key to human connection. There are two main areas of study that help us understand it better: linguistics and phonetics. Linguistics focuses on the structure and function of language. It looks at how sounds come together to create words and sentences, and how meaning is conveyed through them. Phonetics, on the other hand, delves into the physical aspects of these sounds. It explores how they are produced by our vocal organs and perceived by our ears. By studying these related areas helps us understand how sound is created and used in human communication.

I.1. Definition of linguistics

Many scholars in the field of linguistics define it as the systematic investigation of human language, employing scientific methods to uncover its underlying principles.

This discipline aims to comprehend the fundamental mechanisms that govern language, how it serves as a tool for communication, and how it undergoes transformation across time periods (Fromkin & Rodman, 2008). Furthermore, the crucial role language plays within social contexts has been highlighted by de Saussure (1916). Building on prior research; William Labov (1972) emphasized the concept of dynamic communication. This concept highlights the importance of language use in social settings, and how these interactions both influence and reflect the social structures around us. As Labov himself stated, Linguistics is the study of how people use language in social contexts and how their use of language shapes and reflects social structures.

This statement challenges the traditional view of language as a fixed system. Labov proposes a more dynamic understanding, emphasizing the interplay between language and social context. Here, Labov argues that language is not merely a tool for communication but an active participant in shaping social structures. He highlights a two-way process: language use can influence social structures, and social structures can influence language use. For example, Labov might point to the use of slang within a particular social group.

This specific vocabulary can both foster a sense of belonging among members and distinguish them from outsiders. This exemplifies how language use can shape group identity. Conversely, social structures can also dictate language use. Formal settings, like academic environments or workplaces, often necessitate adherence to specific vocabulary and grammatical structures. Informal interactions, on the other hand, might allow for greater flexibility and the use of colloquialisms. Labov's emphasis on the social context of language use underscores the importance of studying language in real-world situations. By acknowledging this reciprocal relationship, we gain a deeper understanding of how language both shapes and reflects the social structures within which it functions.

I.2. Areas of linguistics

The study of language underpinning human communication can take many forms. Here we examine ten key areas of linguistics, each offering a specific perspective for understanding this complex system.

Branch	Description
Phonetics	Provides a basis for understanding spoken language by examining the physical properties of sounds (Crystal, 2004; Mahdi, 2023).
Phonology	Concerned with the sound structure of language, examining how sounds are used to distinguish between words and revealing patterns governing word formation (Fromkin & Rodman, 2008).
Morphology	The study of how words are formed from morphemes, the smaller units of meaning (McMahon, 2002).
Syntax	Studies how words are combined to form phrases and sentences, focusing on principles governing word order and its effects on sentence structure and meaning (Radford, 2004).
Semantics	Analyzes the meaning conveyed by words and phrases, considering concepts like context and mood (Cruz, 2004).
Sociolinguistics	Examines how social factors like gender, dialect, and ethnicity influence language use, and how language reflects social identity and communication (Wardhaugh, 2006).
Psycholinguistics	Investigates the cognitive processes underlying language use in humans, including learning, comprehension, and

	production (Carreiras & Montez, 2008).
Historical linguistics	Studies language change, examining factors influencing development, language interactions, and historical trends in meaning and sound changes (Hock & Joseph, 2003).
Applied linguistics	Applies linguistic focuses on the application of linguistic theory and research to solve real-world problems related to language. It encompasses a wide range of areas, including language teaching, second language acquisition, forensic linguistics, language policy, and speech-language pathology (Carruthers, 2016).
Pragmatics	Focuses on how meaning is conveyed through language in context, looking beyond literal meaning to understand communication considering speaker's perspective, listener interpretation, and social context (Levinson, 1983).

Table 01: Branches of Linguistics

I.3. The importance of teaching linguistics

The field of linguistics provides a strong foundation for anyone learning a new language. This is especially true for educators. By understanding the intricate workings of languages, from the way sounds are produced (phonetics) to how grammar functions and how language is used in different social contexts to create meaning, teachers can design more effective learning experiences for their students. This knowledge equips them to explain complex grammar rules in a clear and straightforward way, cater to different learning styles within the classroom, and anticipate the challenges students might encounter. As Richards and Schmidt

(2002) point out, "a teacher with a strong grounding in linguistics is better equipped to make informed decisions about what, how, and why to teach." By integrating linguistic principles into their teaching methods, educators can empower first-year Algerian students, regardless of their background or preferred learning style, to achieve their language learning goals.

I.4. Definition of pronunciation

Pronunciation goes beyond just making individual sounds in English. As Harmer (2005) explains, it includes these sounds (segments) put together using things like stress, rhythm, and how we connect words (suprasegmentals). It also involves how we project our voice. In simpler terms, pronunciation is not just about the sounds themselves, but also how we use gestures and facial expressions that go hand-in-hand with speaking English. This includes things like how we say words clearly, how we deliver them, and the commonly accepted ways of pronouncing them. Phonetic symbols are a special system for writing down these pronunciations (Boucetta, 2019).

I.4.1. Phonetics and phonology

Linguists employ two fundamental approaches to analyze spoken language: phonetics and phonology. Phonetics, the broader discipline, centers on the physical characteristics of sound production and transmission (articulation and acoustics). It investigates, for instance, the intricate movements of the mouth and vocal tract that create different speech sounds, independent of any specific language (Rogers, 2000).

Phonology, however, delves deeper, and point out on how these sounds purpose within a particular language. It examines the systematic organization and

patterns of sounds, including vowels, consonants, stress, and rhythm .For example, in English phonology, our primary concern is with the spoken realization of vowels and consonants, not the letters used in written English However, phonology's reach extends beyond single languages. Phonologists also explore methods for comparing sound structures and their interpretations across different languages (Rogers, 2000 & Boucetta, 2019).

I.5. The importance of teaching pronunciation

Pronunciation, the way we produce and articulate spoken words, encompasses both native speaker pronunciation and its representation through phonetic symbols found in dictionaries. Traditionally, pronunciation instruction has received less emphasis compared to grammar and vocabulary acquisition (Scrivener). This disparity might be attributed to educators feeling less confident in their pronunciation knowledge relative to grammar. However, research emphasizes the critical importance of acquiring good pronunciation habits. Incorrect pronunciation can significantly hinder communication and understanding. This can be particularly frustrating for learners with strong grammar and vocabulary who struggle to be understood by native speakers (Kelly, 2000 &Boucetta, 2019).

I.6. The interrelationship between linguistics and phonetics

Linguistics and phonetics are two interwoven sciences that provide a complete picture of human language. Phonetics provides the underlying building pieces, whereas linguistics investigates how those stones are joined to generate meaning.

These two areas of study work together closely. Phonetics provides the basic ingredients – the sounds themselves. Linguistics then explores how these

sounds are set to form a complex system of communication, like the grammar rules that show how words fit together in sentences. Phoneticians use the ideas from linguistics to understand how we hear and produce sounds in a way that makes sense (Fromkin & Rodman, 2008). Likewise, linguists can use what they learn from phonetics to focus on specific features of sound that are important for understanding how language works (Pierrehumbert, 2002).

By studying phonetics and linguistics together, we get a deeper gratitude for the remarkable ability of humans to create and share meaning through spoken language. This combined approach allows us to explore the fascinating interplay between the physical properties of sound, the rules of grammar, and the cognitive processes underlying meaning-making.

I.7. Teaching Linguistics and phonetics

I.7.1. Teaching Linguistics

I.7.1.1. Methods used in teaching linguistics

Teaching linguistics effectively involves making the subject engaging and helping students develop a strong understanding of how language works.

There are many different methods teachers can use to achieve this. One approach is the data-driven method, which encourages students to think seriously by analyzing real-life language samples like conversations or written texts. This allows them to identify key features of language, such as how sounds are produced, how words are built, how sentences are formed, and how meaning is conveyed. Linguistics is also about problem-solving, so teachers can present puzzles or ambiguities related to language for students to analyze and solve. Additionally, by comparing different languages, students can appreciate what makes each language

unique and discover features that are common to all human languages. Historical linguistics offers a fascinating glimpse into how languages change and evolve over time.

Finally, the task-based approach emphasizes learning by doing. Students might be given tasks like analyzing the language used in advertising, exploring how dialects differ, or even creating a simple grammar guide. Technology can also be a valuable tool in learning linguistics. There are apps that help analyze speech sounds, software that visually represents language structures, and online databases with real-world examples of language usage.

I.7.1.2. Methods used in teaching linguistics in Algeria

Teaching methods in Algerian universities is still developing. Some universities might be using a method where students learn language rules and terminology by memorizing them and then practice by translate sentences from one language to another (Boubaker, 2012). This method can be a good starting point, but some researchers argue it does not focus enough on actually speaking and understanding the language in real situations. There might be a move towards a different method that emphasizes using the language for real purposes, like having conversations or completing tasks. This newer method is more similar to approaches called "task-based learning" and using technology in class.

I.7.2. Teaching pronunciation

I.7.2.1. Methods used in teaching pronunciation

In order to master the sounds of a language (phonetics), effective teaching methods are crucial. Developing a sharp ear for these sounds is essential. Teachers

can use sets of words that differ only by one sound (minimal pairs) or recordings of people speaking with different accents to train students to recognize these subtle differences. Furthermore, understanding how we produce sounds with our mouths (vocal apparatus) is equally important.

Teachers can utilize diagrams, mirrors, or even demonstrate themselves how the tongue, lips, and other parts work together to create different consonant and vowel sounds. Learning to write down speech sounds accurately (transcription) is another valuable skill. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a system of symbols used for this purpose. Teachers can provide recordings and written versions (transcripts) of speech, starting with simpler examples and gradually increasing difficulty, to help students develop their transcription skills. Technology can also play a significant role. Apps that show how sounds are produced (articulation), software that analyzes sound waves and online pronunciation resources can make learning phonetics more interactive and engaging.

Finally, it's important to move beyond analyzing sounds to actually producing them ourselves. Through guided exercises focusing on specific sounds, students can gradually build their ability to speak words and sentences fluently (connected speech).

I.7.2.2. Methods used in teaching pronunciation in Algeria

In Algerian universities, the way pronunciation is taught (phonetics teaching) seems to be changing. In the past, teachers might have focused more on how to sound like either British or American English speakers. Now, there's a growing interest in understanding how sounds are actually made and heard (sound production and perception). This means going deeper into the science of sounds in

language (phonetics principles) instead of just learning one way to pronounce things.

I.8. Classification of the first year students in the Algerian university

Classifying first-year Algerian language learners is not straightforward. Factors like the language itself (French being more established than English), their prior learning experience (including quality of instruction and years spent learning), and individual learning styles all influence their current abilities. Motivation also plays a role, with students driven by genuine interest likely approaching the language differently than those focused on passing exams. Age, educational background, and even preferred learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) can add further layers of complexity.

Studies provide some insights into Algerian first-year university students' language proficiency. Research at M'hamed Bougara University revealed a varied range of English skills, with a sizable portion (27%) at a pre-intermediate level, but others reaching intermediate (46.6%) or even advanced stages (29.3%). This highlights a diverse student body. However, some studies suggest a potential emphasis on exams over practical communication in Algerian language education. This focus might explain why some students with years of English instruction struggle with spoken language or real-world application.

In conclusion, understanding the diverse range of factors influencing first-year Algerian language learners, alongside the potential gap between exam preparation and practical skills, equips educators to tailor their approach. By acknowledging these complexities and incorporating research findings, Algerian universities can

develop programs that effectively meet the individual needs and learning styles of their students, fostering a more successful language learning experience.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the connection between linguistics and phonetics, emphasizing their roles in understanding human language. Linguistics focuses on how language works, while phonetics delves into how sounds are produced and understood.

Learning both linguistics and phonetics is crucial for effective language teaching. Understanding the mechanics of language equips educators to design better learning experiences for students. Pronunciation, a vital part of communication, is often overlooked compared to grammar and vocabulary. However, good pronunciation skills are essential for clear and successful communication. It emphasizes using effective teaching methods for both linguistics and phonetics. Engaging activities, technology integration, and a focus on real-world application are all key for student success. The specific context of Algerian universities is explored, acknowledging the evolving approaches to pronunciation instruction and the diverse range of student abilities.

By recognizing these complexities and incorporating research findings, Algerian universities can develop programs that address individual needs and learning styles. This will ultimately lead to a more successful language learning experience for their students.

Chapter two

Data analysis and discussion

Introduction

The purpose of the present study is exploring and describing the relationship between students perceives the difficulties encountered by first-year LMD students in grasping phonetic-linguistics courses. More specifically, this study aims to reach an insightful understanding of the difficulties first-year students and their teachers at Biskra University have in these courses. The current chapter represents the practical part of this research; it describes the research methodology, population and sampling, and data gathering tools and procedures. It displays, analyzes, summarizes, interprets, and discusses the results obtained the data collected.

II.1. Description and analysis of student's questionnaire

Qualitative approach was used in this research due to the nature of the study, which is intended to explore and describe EFL teachers' and students' attitudes and perceptions on this recent change. We started by gathering information through a student questionnaire. This instrument seemed appropriate for our research since it allowed us to investigate the specific issues students have in phonetics-linguistics courses, as well as the potential causes of those difficulties. The research design adopted is a case study, which included EFL first-year students and their teachers at Biskra University.

II.1.1. Description and structure of the student's questionnaire

We presented a questionnaire to 60 first-year students. To guarantee clear understanding, we asked simple yes/no questions. The questionnaire included two sections. To understand the impact of merging phonetics and linguistics into a single course, the study looked at student experiences from two angles. The first section (07 questions) focused on students' overall experience during the first

semester. Here, we wanted to see if students found the combined lessons clear and informative for both subjects. We also explored any difficulties they faced in understanding linguistic and phonetic concepts, the teacher's teaching style, or switching between the two subjects within the same course. The second section (03 questions) specifically examined student preparation for exams. We asked if they encountered difficulties remembering information during exams and how confident they felt about their understanding of the combined course material. Additionally, we offered students the opportunity to share their first-semester exam scores for phonetics and linguistics.

II.1.2. The analysis of the student's questionnaire

Section one: Challenges and Experiences

Question one: Are the lessons clear for both modules that have been taught in the same course?

Responses	Participants	Percent
No	36	60%
Yes	24	40%

Table 02: student's attitude toward the clarity of the lessons

In this question, majority of participants stated that the lessons were unclear for both modules provided in the same course. Less than the half of them considered the lessons understandable. This shows that a significant percentage of the students found the course structure difficult, maybe due to trouble following instructions for two modules within the same course.

Question two: Do you find phonetics and Linguistics informative?

Responses	Participants	Percent
No	5	8.3%
Yes	55	91.7%

Table 03: course informativity

The fact that the vast majority of students found phonetics and linguistics useful is a positive sign. This suggests the course content was engaging and relevant to their interests, potentially sparking curiosity and helping them develop valuable language skills. However, a small percentage of students did not find the subject informative. It is important to investigate why this might be. The curriculum might not be catering to different learning styles, or there could be specific topics that need to be presented differently. Overall, the findings indicate the course is likely effective, but there is room for improvement to ensure all students benefit from the material.

Question three: Do you find difficulties in understanding linguistic Concepts?

Responses	participants	Percent
No	29	48.3%
Yes	31	51.7%

Table 04: difficulties in understanding linguistic Concepts

The study results present somewhat mixed findings regarding student comprehension of linguistic concepts. While the majority of students did not report difficulties, more than half did. This suggests two possibilities. On the positive side, it indicates that the course content might be well-suited for a significant portion of the class. They're likely grasping the material and progressing well. However, the high percentage of students who did struggle highlights a potential

issue. The course difficulty or presentation style might not be working for all learners. It is important to investigate further to understand the specific challenges faced by these students.

Question four: Do you find the phonetic Concepts clear?

Responses	Participants	Percent
No	25	41.7%
Yes	35	58.3%

Table 05: Clear phonetic concepts

The results suggest that regarding phonetics comprehension reveal a need for potential improvement in the course materials. While a significant portion of students found the phonetic concepts understandable, a substantial number did not. This suggests that the current teaching methods or materials might not be universally effective. There could be a gap between how the information is presented and how some students learn best. To ensure clarity for all, it might be beneficial to explore alternative teaching methods or supplementary materials that cater to different learning styles. This could involve incorporating visual aids, interactive activities, or differentiated instruction to address the needs of students who are currently struggling.

Question five: Do you find difficulties with the teacher's teaching Style?

Responses	Participants	Percent
No	39	65%
Yes	21	35%

Table 06: the teacher's teaching Style

This question aimed to understand student perceptions of the teacher's teaching style. While a positive outcome is evident, with over two-thirds of

students finding the approach effective, a significant minority faced difficulties. This suggests the teaching style, while generally well-received, might not be universally successful. To improve overall learning, it would be beneficial to delve deeper and explore the reasons behind these challenges faced by a portion of the class. This could involve further student feedback or observing classroom interactions to identify areas where the teaching method could be adapted to cater to a wider range of learning styles.

Question six: Do you find any difficulties in being taught to module by the same teacher?

Responses	participants	Percent
No	40	66.7%
Yes	20	33.3%

Table 07: module being taught by the same teacher

The table suggests that most participants preferred having the same teacher for both phonetics and linguistics modules. This might indicate a sense of familiarity and continuity that benefits learning. However, it is important to acknowledge the remaining who might have found having different teachers beneficial. Other factors likely influence a participant's experience, such as the teacher's individual teaching style, the inherent difficulty of the modules themselves, and how a student's preferred learning style aligns with the teaching approach.

Question seven: Do you find any difficulties in switching between two modules in the same course?

Responses	participants	Percent
No	37	61.7%
Yes	23	38.3%

Table 08: switching between two modules in the same course

The results indicate a mixed experience regarding switching between the two modules within the linguistics course. While a clear majority reported no difficulty transitioning, a significant minority did find it challenging. This suggests that factors like the similarity between modules, the time allotted for transition, and individual learning styles might play a role in the ease of switching between the two topics. Understanding these factors can help improve the program's structure and support students who might face difficulties transitioning between modules.

Section two: Preparing for Exams

Question one: Did you find any difficulties in understanding and memorizing this course during the exam?

Responses	participants	Percent
No	28	46.7%
Yes	32	53.3%

Table 09: understanding and memorizing this course during the exam

During the exam, more than half of the participants reported having trouble comprehending and recalling the course material. While this shows hardships for many, nearly half did not face such issues. It is critical to evaluate factors other than this questionnaire that may have impacted performance. These may include

the clarity of the course materials, the overall difficulty of the topic, a student's past knowledge, study habits, and even test anxiety during the exam.

Question two: Did you feel confident about your understanding of the course material during the first semester exam?

Responses	Participants	Percent
No	6	10%
Yes	12	20%
Somehow	42	70%

Table 10: understanding of the course material during the 1st semester exam

According to the results, more than seventy percent of participants (70%) were somewhat confident in their grasp of the course material throughout the first-semester exam. Only 20% of the student reported feeling confident, while 10% did not. It is crucial to note that a variety of conditions might impact a student's confidence in their knowledge of the content. These factors may include the clarity and organization of the course material, the difficulty level of the course content, the student's prior understanding of the topic, the student's study habits and test preparation strategies, and even test anxiety or stress during the exam.

Given these circumstances, it is not unexpected that the majority of students felt somehow confident in their knowledge of the content. This shows that the course topic was difficult for some students and that they may have benefitted from additional studying or exam preparation methods.

Question three: Would you be willing to share your first semester exam score/mark for phonetics and linguistics?

Answers	Participants	Percent
No	25	41.7%
Yes	35	58.3%

Table 11: first semester exam score/mark for phonetics and linguistics

The results indicate that the willingness of respondents to share examination results for phonetics and linguistics is divided with slightly more than half responding that they would be delighted to share their scores. However, a sizable proportion of participants choose not to reveal their results.

For those who answered yes to sharing their makes of the first semester exam:

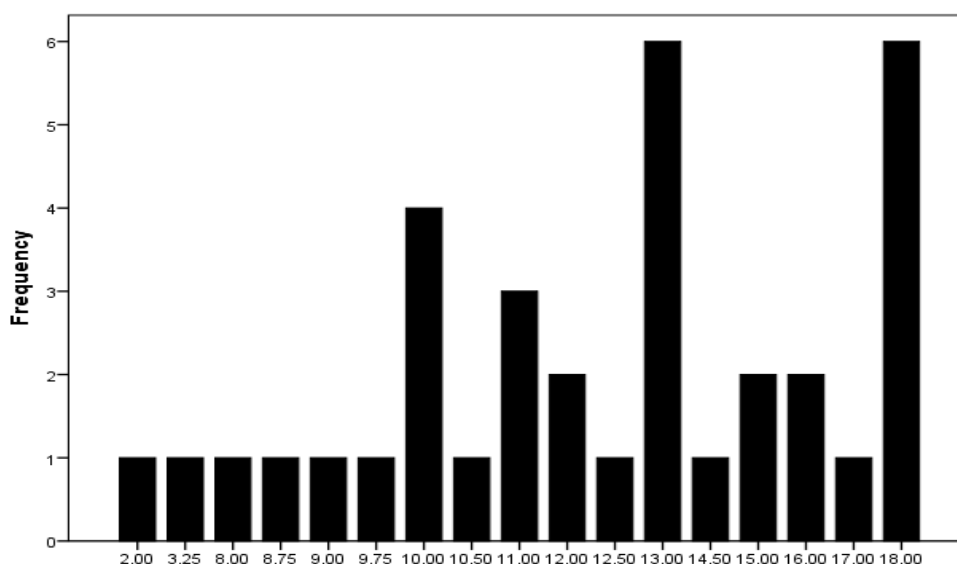


Figure 1: first semester exam score/mark for phonetics and linguistics

The phonetics and linguistics exam scores varied between 2.00 to 18.00. Six students (10.0%) achieved the maximum grade of 18.00, while one student (1.7%) received the lowest point of 2.00. The highest common score was 10.00, which four students (6.7%) achieved. Twenty-five (41.7%) pupils did not respond to the inquiry concerning their grades.

II.1.3. Discussion of the result of the student's questionnaire

A questionnaire distributed to first-year LMD students revealed mixed results for the phonetics and linguistics course. While the vast majority (91.7%) considered the subject interesting, a significant number (51.7%) expressed difficulties understanding linguistic concepts. Interestingly, phonetics ended up being clearer, with (58.3%) thought it was comprehensible. The teacher's approach proved to work well for the majority of students, with (65%) having no problems with the teaching style and (66.7%) feeling comfortable having the same teacher for both modules. Similarly, moving between modules was not a difficulty for the majority (61.7%).

Exam performance added another level of complication. Over half (53.3%) of the participants struggled to grasp and recall the information throughout the exam, even though the majority (70%) felt reasonably secure in their overall knowledge. Only (20%) had strong confidence, while (10%) lacked it completely. The results varied from 2.00 to 18.00, with (10%) of students receiving the highest point and 10.00 (6.7%) being the most frequent score. It is crucial to note that 25 students (41.7%) did not respond to the question concerning their grades.

The student questionnaire on the integration of the phonetics and linguistics course revealed positive aspects alongside areas for improvement. While a large majority found the subject interesting, many struggled with some linguistic concepts. Phonetics, however, seemed clearer for most students. The teacher's approach was well-received, with most comfortable having the same instructor for both modules and finding transitions between them manageable. However, exam performance presented a challenge.

Despite feeling generally confident, over half the students struggled with retaining information during exams. There was a wide range in grades, with a significant number not responding to the grade question. This suggests a need to address difficulties with retaining information and consider potential factors affecting exam performance.

II.2. Description and structure of the teacher’s questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks to better understand the experiences of EFL teachers who teach an integrated phonetics and linguistics course in the first semester. It was sent to four first-year LMD teachers. It consists of 12 questions, both open-ended and closed-ended, and includes space for their unique recommendations. The first component gathers background information on the instructor's levels of experience in both EFL teaching and phonetics/linguistics expertise, as well as the course's normal class size.

Section two delves deeper into the challenges and experiences of combining these subjects. It explores how teachers structure the course (separate modules vs. combined), the difficulty of managing both areas, and collaboration with other instructors. The questionnaire also investigates the perceived workload and challenges during the first semester, including exam preparation and balancing the two subjects. Finally, questions about the use of practice materials and the course program (old vs new) provide insights into potential resource limitations.

II.2.1. The analysis of the teacher’s questionnaire

Section 1: Background

Question one: How many years have you been teaching EFL?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Less than 2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	More than 10 years

Table 12: EFL teaching experience

The table reveals a variety of EFL teaching experience among the four instructors. This spread, ranging from less than 2 years to over 10 years, suggests a mix of both new and seasoned teachers in the program. This diversity of experience could have both advantages and disadvantages.

On the positive side, it allows for experienced teachers to mentor newer ones and share their expertise. However, it might also highlight the need for professional development opportunities to ensure all instructors have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach English as a foreign language.

Question two: What is your level of experience in phonetics and linguistics?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Intermediate	Advanced	Expert	Expert

Table 13: the level of experience in phonetics and linguistics

The teacher's answers reveals that they are qualified enough to teach phonetics and linguistics.

Question three: What is the average class size for your phonetics and linguistics course?

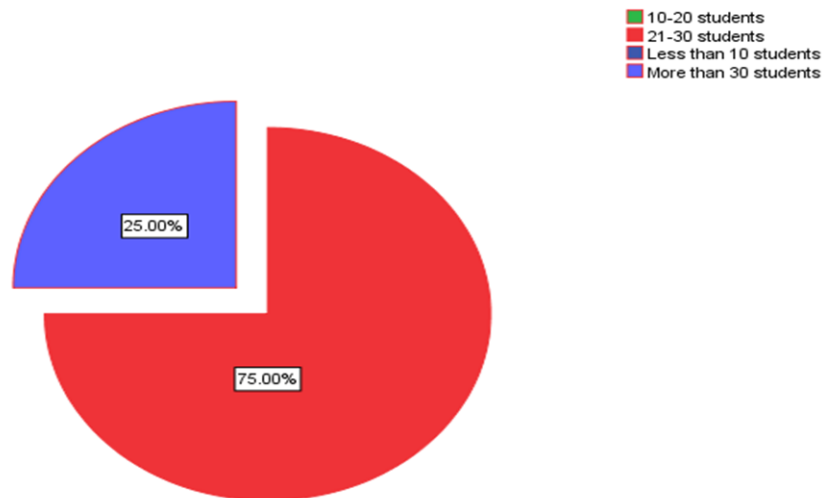


Figure 2: EFL class size

This information suggests that class sizes for the phonetics and linguistics course might be larger than ideal. One teacher mentioned having over 30 students, while the others reported class sizes ranging from 21 to 30. Subjects like phonetics and linguistics often require significant practice and personalized feedback for

effective learning. Large class sizes can make it difficult for teachers to provide enough individual attention to each student, potentially hindering their progress in these challenging areas.

Section2: Challenges and experience.

Question four: How do you teach: do you teach each module alone or two modules in one course?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
One module in one course.	One module in one course.	One module in one course.	One module in one course.

Table 14: how to teach EFL classes

The teachers answered that one module in one course; this indicates that this time cannot serve the program.

Question five: Do you find it hard work to present both of the courses at the same time?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
No	Yes	no	no

Table 15: difficulty of present both subjects together

A majority (75%) of the teachers found it manageable to present both subjects together. This suggests the combined course structure might be working well for some teachers. However, one teacher did find it difficult, which highlights the need to consider this challenge and explore ways to support teachers in this situation.

Question six: Do you collaborate with other teachers in preparing the lessons?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Yes	yes	yes	No

Table 16: collaboration of the lessons preparation

This data shows all four teachers responded with "yes" when asked if they collaborate with other teachers in preparing lessons. This suggests a strong background of collaboration among these teachers. Collaboration can also be a source of professional progress for teachers, allowing them to learn from each other's experiences and expertise.

Question seven: Do you find the program hard in the first semester?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Yes	No	no	No

Table 17: the level of program difficulties

The results regarding program difficulty paint a somewhat mixed picture. While three out of the four teachers (75%) reported finding the program manageable in the first semester, one teacher did find it challenging. This suggests that the current program structure might work well for most instructors. However, it's important to consider the experiences of the teacher who faced difficulties and investigate what aspects of the program they found challenging. This can help identify areas for improvement to ensure a more positive and effective experience for all instructors.

Question eight: Did you find difficulties that you experienced in preparing for the subject of the exam?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Yes	No	no	No

Table 18: difficulty of preparing for the exam

Based on the data in the table, one teacher reported difficulty preparing for the exam, while the other three teachers did not report any difficulty. This suggests a need to investigate the specific challenges faced by this particular teacher. Understanding these difficulties could reveal areas where the program might require adjustments to better support all instructors in preparing for assessments. It could be a matter of needing additional resources, clearer guidelines, or tailored professional development opportunities to ensure all teachers feel confident in preparing students for exams

Question nine: Did you manage to balance between the two subjects in the exam?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Yes	Yes	yes	Yes

Table 19: balance the two subjects in the exam

All four teachers stated that they were able to balance the two subjects in the exam. This suggests that the curriculum and assessment may be effective in ensuring that students are tested on both phonetics and linguistics in a fair and balanced manner.

Question ten: Do you use any materials in the classroom as a practice for phonetics?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
No	Yes	yes	Yes

Table 20: the use of materials in phonetic practice

Three out of the four teachers indicated that they use materials in the classroom to practice phonetics, while one teacher does not. This suggests that the majority of teachers (75%) find materials helpful for phonetics practice. For the teacher who does not use materials in the classroom to practice phonetics, this suggests that materials are a common tool used for teaching phonetics. However, we cannot determine if the teacher who doesn't use materials lacks them or prefers alternative methods.

Question eleven: Do you use an old program or there is a new program that covers all the lessons in the first semester?

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Old program	Old program	New program	New program

Table 21: the first semester program

This data suggests a potential program update for the phonetics and linguistics course. Half of the teachers are using a new program, while the other half continues with the old program.

Question twelve:

The teacher's suggestion for better teaching, and testing phonetics-linguistics course.

Teacher 01	Teacher 02	Teacher 03	Teacher 04
Smaller student groups, more tools to use in teaching Phonetics.	Focusing more on the practice, and using ICTs to help students better understand and dimity linguistic notions.	Just one remark, I sometimes uses kind of a mixture between the old and new program.	Did not suggest anything.

Table 22: teacher's suggestions

I. The analysis of the suggestion by the teachers

1. Improved Learning Environment

1.1. Smaller student groups

This suggests a desire for a more personalized learning experience where teachers can provide more focused attention to each student. Smaller groups might also facilitate increased interaction and participation.

1.2. More tools to use in teaching Phonetics

This indicates a need for additional resources to enhance phonetics instruction. These tools could include technological aids or visual aids.

2. Technology Integration and Active Learning

This phrase emphasizes the importance of practical application and utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the classroom. ICTs could encompass various tools like interactive exercises, audio/video resources, or online platforms to promote active learning and a deeper understanding of complex linguistic concepts.

3. Program Flexibility

This optional phrase highlights a potential benefit of program flexibility. It suggests that some teachers might find value in adapting elements from both the old and new programs to suit their individual teaching styles or student needs.

4. the fourth teacher did not suggest anything

II. Summary of the results

These phrases suggest a desire for improvements in teaching phonetics and linguistics. The focus lies on creating a more supportive learning environment with smaller class sizes and additional resources. Additionally, there's a strong emphasis on incorporating technology and active learning strategies to enhance student engagement and understanding. Finally, the optional phrase hints at a potential benefit of having some flexibility in the prescribed program to allow for teacher adaptation

II.2.2. Discussion of the result of the teacher's questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to four EFL teachers delivering an integrated phonetics and linguistics course in the first semester. The teachers have varying experience levels in both areas and manage class sizes of 21-30 students, which some find challenging. While all teachers collaborate in lesson preparation, one teacher found difficulty teaching both subjects together, suggesting a need for potential support in this area.

The current program structure with separate modules seems to work well for most teachers, with three finding the program manageable in the first semester. There were also no widespread difficulties reported in exam preparation or balancing the two subjects in the assessment. The use of teaching materials was common for phonetics practice, but the program usage is split between old and new versions.

Teacher suggestions focused on improving the learning environment through smaller class sizes and more resources for phonetics training. Additionally, there was a strong emphasis on incorporating technology and active learning strategies to enhance student engagement and understanding. One teacher also

mentioned using elements from both program versions, hinting at a potential benefit of program flexibility.

These findings suggest that the program is generally manageable but could be improved by addressing class size limitations, resource availability, and potentially incorporating more technology and active learning approaches. Investigating program flexibility to allow for teacher adaptation might also be beneficial. By considering these points, the program can be further optimized to create a more effective learning experience for both teachers and students.

General conclusion

This research explored the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating linguistics and phonetics into EFL education. Ideally, a strong understanding of both the mechanics of language (linguistics) and the science of sound production (phonetics) empowers teachers to design effective learning experiences that address these crucial areas simultaneously. By combining these disciplines, teachers can equip students with a deeper understanding of how language functions and how to produce sounds accurately. This, in turn, can lead to improved pronunciation, fluency, and overall language proficiency.

The analysis of the student questionnaires revealed a mixed picture. While a significant portion of students found the combined course engaging and interesting, many reported struggling with some concepts, particularly in linguistics. This suggests a potential disconnect between the way the course is structured and the specific needs of the students. However, the feedback also indicated that the teacher's approach and the course structure with separate modules for each subject seemed to work well for the majority. This highlights the importance of clear organization within the combined course.

Exam performance, however, revealed a need for further investigation. Despite feeling generally confident in their understanding during the course, many students had difficulty recalling information during exams. This suggests a potential gap between student comprehension and their ability to apply knowledge in a testing situation. Here, teachers can explore incorporating more retrieval practice activities and exam preparation strategies within the course.

The analysis of the questionnaire with EFL teachers delivering the combined course highlighted the program's manageability. Collaboration between colleagues and clear module separation were identified as key strengths, allowing for efficient delivery of the material. However, challenges included limitations in class size, resource availability, and the need for additional support in specific areas. These challenges can hold back effective teaching and create an uneven learning experience for students. Addressing these issues through providing additional resources, exploring technological integration, and potentially introducing some flexibility within the program structure could significantly benefit both teachers and students. Teachers also emphasized the importance of incorporating active learning strategies, such as group discussions and role-playing activities, to enhance student engagement and cater to diverse learning styles.

In conclusion, integrating linguistics and phonetics holds significant promise for effective EFL teaching. This approach can provide students with a deeper understanding of language and improve their overall proficiency. However, addressing student comprehension challenges, particularly in linguistics, providing sufficient support for teachers through resources and professional development, and refining program structure and resource availability are crucial for optimizing the learning experience for both students and teachers. By overcoming these challenges, EFL teachers can create a more comprehensive and engaging learning environment that fosters successful language acquisition

Recommendations

The integration of linguistics and phonetics holds significant promise for a well-rounded EFL education. By understanding both the mechanics of language and the science of sound production, teachers can provide learners with the tools to master not only grammar and vocabulary, but also pronunciation - a vital component of successful communication. However, as explored in this chapter, successfully integrating these disciplines requires addressing student comprehension challenges and providing adequate support for both students and teachers.

While a majority of students found the combined course interesting, many struggled with some linguistic concepts. This highlights a need for targeted support to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Offering supplementary materials, additional practice exercises, or individual/small group tutoring can provide focused help in areas where students encounter difficulties. Exam performance also emerged as a concern.

Despite feeling generally confident, many students had trouble recalling information during exams. Equipping students with effective exam preparation strategies, such as study skills workshops or memory improvement techniques, can empower them to retain information and translate their knowledge into exam success.

The teacher perspective from a separate study provides valuable insights for program improvement. While the program's structure with separate modules and collaborative lesson planning received positive feedback, challenges emerged in areas such as class size limitations and resource availability. Additionally, one teacher expressed a need for additional support in teaching both subjects.

Professional development opportunities for teachers can address these needs. Workshops focusing on specific linguistic concepts, integrating technology and active learning strategies, or tackling student comprehension challenges can enhance teacher's skills and confidence in delivering the combined course.

Furthermore, exploring program flexibility holds potential benefits. Allowing teachers to choose between program versions or adapt the curriculum to their specific class demographics can empower them to cater to diverse learning styles and address student needs more effectively. Investing in additional resources, particularly those tailored for phonetics training, is another key recommendation. This could include audio materials, pronunciation practice software, or activities that encourage real-world application of phonetic knowledge.

Finally, reducing class size, if possible, would create a more supportive learning environment. With smaller classes, teachers can provide more individualized attention and facilitate active learning strategies that require student interaction.

By implementing these recommendations, the EFL program can bridge the gap between student difficulties and program effectiveness. A focus on targeted support for students, professional development for teachers, program flexibility, resource development, and potentially smaller class sizes will lead to a more optimized learning experience. This will ultimately promote a deeper understanding of language, stronger communication skills, and a more rewarding learning journey for both students and teachers.

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Questionnaire for EFL Students

Dear students: we are conducting research to understand the challenges and experiences of EFL students in phonetic-linguistic course. You are kindly invited to answer these questions.

section1: Challenges and Experiences

1. Are the lessons clear for both models that have been taught in the same course?
 - yes
 - no
2. Do you find phonetics and Linguistics informative?
 - yes
 - no
3. Do you find difficulties in understanding linguistic Concepts?
 - yes
 - no
4. Do you find the phonetic Concepts clear?
 - yes
 - no
5. Do you find difficulties with the teacher's teaching Style?
 - yes
 - no
6. Do you find any difficulties in being taught to module by the same teacher?
 - yes
 - no

7. Do you find any difficulties in switching between two modules in the same course?

- yes
- no

section2: Preparing for Exams:

1. Did you find any difficulties in understanding and memorizing this course during the exam?

- yes
- no

2. Did you feel confident about your understanding of the course material during the first semester exam?

- Yes
- No
- Somehow

3. Would you be willing to share your first semester exam score/mark for phonetics and linguistics?

- Yes, I'd be happy to share. (...../20)
- No, I prefer not to share.

Thank you for your collaboration

Questionnaire for EFL Teachers

Dear EFL teacher:

We are conducting research to understand the challenges and experiences of teaching phonetics- linguistics course to EFL students. Your feedback will help us improve teaching methods and resources for both students and educators. We appreciate your help.

Section 1: Background

- How many years have you been teaching EFL?
 1. Less than 2 years
 2. 2-5 years
 3. 6-10 years
 4. More than 10 years

- What is your level of expertise in phonetics and linguistics?
 1. Beginner
 2. Intermediate
 3. Advanced
 4. Expert

- What is the average class size for your phonetics and linguistics course?
 1. Less than 10 students
 2. 10-20 students
 3. 21-30 students
 4. More than 30 students

section2: Challenges and experience.

How do you teach: do you teach each module alone or two modules in one course?

- One module in one course.
- Two modules in one course.

Do you find it hard work to present both of the courses at the same time?

- yes
- no

Do you collaborate with other teachers in preparing the lessons?

- yes
- no

Do you find the program hard in the first semester?

- yes
- no

Did you find difficulties that you experienced in preparing for the subject of the exam?

- yes
- no

Did you manage to balance between the two subjects in the exam?

- yes
- no

Do you use any materials in the classroom as a practice for phonetics?

- yes
- no

If not clarify:

1. large plus size
2. lack of materials
3. time constraints

Do you use an old program or there is a new program that covers all the lessons in the first semester?

- Old program.
- New program.

Your suggestion for better teaching, and testing phonetics-linguistics course.

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

Thank you for your collaboration

الملخص

تقوم هذه الدراسة المتواضعة في البحث في الصعوبات والتحديات التي قد يواجهها الطلاب واساتذہ اللغة الانجليزية كلغه اجنبيه في السنه الاولى (EFL) , وذلك بعد دمج مقياسي كل من علوم الغويات و علم الاصوات في مقرر واحد. وقد استخدم لهذا الغرض منهج البحث الوصفي لتحديد الصعوبات اللغويه والصوتيه التي قد يواجهها متعلمو اللغة الاجنبيه بعد هذا التغيير في المنهج الدراسي , و لذلك تم على ارض الواقع اختيار 60 طالب بصوره عشوائيه واربعه اساتذہ للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة من خلال استبيانات تم توزيعها على الطلاب وكذلك الاساتذہ, ثم جمع البيانات التي لبناء نتائج. ان العديد من الطلاب واجهه صعوبه في فهم بعض المفاهيم واسترجاع المعلومات اثناء الامتحانات في حين القليل منهم وجد ان دمج المقياس مثير للاهتمام. اما الاساتذہ فوجدوا ان اللغة الانجليزية كلغه اجنبيه برنامجها قابل للاداره بشكل عام من خلال التخطيط التعاوني ومع ذلك ظهرت بعض المشاكل كاختصاص الفصل الدراسي واختلافات إصدارات البرنامج.

كلمات مفتاحية: دمج التحديات، صعوبات ، الصوتيات، اللغويات، اللغة الإنجليزية، مقياس.