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An Investigation into the Factors Affecting Degree of Foreign Accent in Algerian EFL Students 'Speech

**The case of second-year Students of English Department of Mohamed Kheider Biskra
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Declaration

I, Latifa Kherchouche, do hereby declare that this present research which is titled” An Investigation into the Factors Affecting Degree of Foreign Accent in Algeria EFL students’ speech” is the result of my original work. It was certified and completed at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Algeria.

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Dedication

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL

This modest work is dedicated:

*To my dearest mother who made me strong and ambitious to make my dreams
come true*

To my beloved father who has raised me to be the person I am today

To my brothers and sister who offered me encouragement and love

*To my dear cousin **Mina** who has always been always by my side*

*To my best friends: **Ahlem, Wahiba, Aridj** who shared the university life with me*

*To the person who believed in me and encouraged me, thank you for being a
part of my life*

Thank you all

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Abstract

This study explores the factors affecting degree of foreign accent in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speech. It also aims at showing the importance of pronunciation, and highlighting the necessity to develop it in the target language. The main issue is that the majority of English as Second Language (ESL) learners have difficulties in pronunciation. Hence, in this study, we posed the following questions; what are the factors affecting the degree of EFL learners' foreign accent? and how can foreign accent problem be reduced?. We hypothesized that the students do not practice the language outside the class, and they are influenced by their native language. Furthermore, in order to reduce foreign accent it is necessary to give much consideration to practices in terms of speaking and listening. This study targeted second year students at Biskra University to be as a sample. We opted that the qualitative approach is the most suitable for this study. Following this investigation, two data collection methods are selected; a questionnaire for students and a teachers' questionnaire. After the interpretation and the analysis of the obtained data, the results showed that the factors influencing the degree of foreign accent are; the influence of both mother tongue and French language, lack of practice, lack of motivation, negative transfer, and lack of exposure to target language. Moreover, to reduce foreign accent students have to surround themselves as much as possible to the target language.

Key words

EFL, pronunciation, foreign accent.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as Second Language

H: Hypotheses

i.e.: This means

LMD: Licence-Master-Doctorat

RQ: Research Question

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General Introduction

Introduction

Learning languages at the present time is one of the most important skills that opens new horizons. Among the languages that most people seek to learn is the English language, as it is the most spoken language in the world. Learning it in general may be easier than other languages, such as Chinese or Japanese. Furthermore, there is no one standard that fits all in terms of the duration of learning, but the amount of time it takes for the learner to reach his language goal will vary greatly depending on the reason for learning and the goal the learner wants to achieve. It is also significant to take into account the extent of the foreign language's similarity or difference with the mother tongue, how it is learned, as well as the difficulties that the learner faces.

Learning how to pronounce correctly and close to native speakers may be one of the most difficult parts of learning the English language. Moreover, when it comes to English as a foreign language, foreign accent can be a common failure in the students' speech. Foreign accent is one of the issues that is faced by second language learners which refers to the influence of the native language in the target language, and it is often a characteristic of non-native speakers. As it is known, foreign language learners are primarily evaluated and judged based on their pronunciation, and the accent they employ. Regarding the latter, we are going to spotlight on the foreign accent in learners' speech.

Foreign accent may have an impact on communication particularly when there is mispronunciation which hinders the effective and successful communication as well as it impacts the delivery of the messages. The present work aims to conduct a study in order to investigate the factors influencing the degree of foreign accent in EFL learners' speech, and to suggest solutions and strategies to reduce it.

1. Statement of the Problem

Pronunciation is the process by which sounds are formed that necessitates practice to be mastered; pronunciation is an essential part and component of speaking skill, and it is even part of communicative competence. Therefore, and due to the continuously increasing importance of this skill, teachers try to develop it through teaching some subjects, such as phonetics. However, a noticeable number of EFL learners at Biskra University have a problem concerning pronunciation which is foreign accent. The occurrence of the foreign accent appears in the appearance of mother tongue when speaking, and this is an evidence of its influence on the target language. That is why students seem to be unprofessional and unintelligible. The latter means that they do not have clarity in pronunciation. Therefore, it entered the circle of interest of trainers, teachers and scholars to find a solution to the problem that is related to phonology, communication, intelligibility and comprehensibility. Moreover, the foreign accent may cause a problem in communication, which often leads to a lack of understanding. One big part of pronunciation is having a good accent. The foreign accent negatively affects students to be good at pronouncing. That's why, in the recent years there has been an increasing interest in pronunciation and causes affecting the students' foreign accent. In this respect the present study suggests the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent of second year students of English language from Biskra University and how to minimize it.

2. The Significance of the Study

The present study helps to establish an effective solution to the obstacles that students face when it comes to foreign accent problems, and conducting this research is important for all students of English language because it draws attention to the factors influencing students' pronunciation.

3. Aims of the Study

To investigate the factors affecting degree of EFL learners' foreign accent.

To find out the strategies used to minimize foreign accent problems.

4. Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions (RQs):

RQ1: What are the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent?

RQ2: What strategies can be used to reduce foreign accent?

5. Research Hypothesis

Based on the above research questions, the following research hypotheses (H) are proposed:

H1: The factors affecting degree of foreign accent are: the lack of practice especially outside the classroom, and lack of motivation.

H2: To reduce foreign accent, students should practice the language as much as possible, and they need to be exposed to native speakers, and to imitate them.

6. The Research Methodology for the Study

6.1 The Research Approach

This research will be carried out through a qualitative approach by using a descriptive method. The rationality of adopting this method is to set a fuller understanding of the study with the use of qualitative data gathering tools including two questionnaires for both students and teachers to which are held under the investigation of “an investigation of the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent in Algerian EFL students’ speech”.

6.2 Data Collection Methods

In order to conduct this study, a students' questionnaire and a teachers' questionnaire are chosen for the sake of collecting information such as opinions, views, about the students' accent, and the factors affecting of the degree foreign accent among second year English students.

7. Population and Sampling Technique

Second year English students are chosen for this study because they were exposed before to the English language for a whole year at the university, as well as they started studying the module of phonetics, and it is likely that they have some information about pronunciation and the rules related to it.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

The present dissertation consists of three main chapters. Chapter one and two are the theoretical part, and the last chapter is practical part.

Chapter one: It consists of theoretical concepts. It is divided into two sections; the first section dealt with "Speaking skills" and the second section highlighted the "Listening skill".

Chapter two: It dealt with the concept of "Pronunciation".

Chapter three: The practical chapter highlighted the factors affecting degree of foreign accent through the analysis of the data obtained from the tools used.

Chapter One: Speaking Skills and Listening Skills

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Introduction

This chapter has two major sections, the section give a detailed review of speaking skill; it involves various definitions of speaking, its importance, components, aspects, activities, approaches in teaching it, factors affecting it. Besides, this section will include strategies to improve speaking skill and reduce its difficulties.

The second section deals with general issues of listening skill, and aspects related to it. It provides general definitions of listening, its significance, components, types, strategies, problems, activities, characteristics of a good listener. Then, it will include ways to enhance listening and overcome its challenges.

Section One: Speaking Skill

1.1 Definition of Speaking Skill

Speaking is one the four language skills that language learners are supposed to master in order to communicate well. According to Cora and Knight (2000), speaking is the act of producing and generating spoken language in order to deliver a message in a variety of situations and contexts. (p. 261). So, speaking is considered as a production of a language for the sake of transferring information in different situations.

The speaking skill is centered on the concept of productivity and interaction between the participants; in which ideas, opinions, feelings and information are exchanged, which are expressed in words. Furthermore, its stages consist of speech production and reception where the process of communication and information arrangement takes place in order to deliver the message. (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

According to Bouzar (2019), "speaking as a skill constitutes a real hurdle to overcome by both the teacher and the learner. In other words, the teacher has to find appropriate procedures

to help the learner with while the latter has to find a way to master the language". In other words, Speaking is one of the most difficult language skills that learners face for several reasons, including the inability to speak for psychological reasons, for example, anxiety, tension and embarrassment. Therefore, the teacher must know these reasons to find out the appropriate solution to them in a cooperative way with the student.

The definition of speaking skill has multiple perspectives. For instance, it has been seen not just a means of communication, but it is more than that; it contributes to the formation and creation of relations between individuals in a social context because it reflects the reality of society and its characteristics.(Nazara, 2011). Additionally, Rao (2019) argues that "Among the four key language skills, speaking is seemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language". (P. 08). This is because it is the most used skill, and it has a priority in being as a medium of linguistic communication between humans.

1.2 The Importance of Speaking

The speaking skill in teaching English as a foreign language is one of the most important skills that the learner seeks to master. Speaking the second language fluently means mastering it and its rules, but this is not an easy matter, and according to its difficulty, learners give a priority and an Importance to it over the other skills.

The importance of speaking for learners of the English language lies in enhancing their confidence by highlighting their skills and clarifying clearly their ideas, as it is the reason for their obtaining better ranks in terms of jobs and participation in forums that focus on public speaking. What is already mentioned requires the student to be a good speaker of the language in terms of fluency and accuracy. On the other hand, it determines the extent of the ability of the learners to act positively and gain respect for others (Rao, 2019). In this sense, Akher et al., (2020) add that "it makes people equipped to take part in debate, discussion, and speech competitions". (p.6025). In other words, The speaking skill allows the learner to develop his

intellectual skills, increase the effectiveness of communication. Moreover, it permits him practice many linguistic activities such as expressing his ideas in a clear and logical manner through interaction that depends on constructive competition, intellectual compatibility, sharing knowledge, etc.

According to Ahmadi (2017), Speaking skills help students develop vocabulary by which language is formed through communication with others, as well as grammar that includes the structure of sentences. Furthermore, Guebba (2021) claims that Speaking contributes to facilitating the role of the teacher in knowing the level of the learners in order to provide advice or find a solution to the problems facing them. She also indicates that speaking is the best way to know the proficiency of learners in using the language with regard to their ability to communicate.

1.3 The Components of Speaking

According to Brown (2004), speaking includes five components and they are grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

1.3.1 Grammar

Kusumawardani & Mardiyani (2018) defines grammar as “a science of rules that's governed the order of sentences phrases and words to show some meaning”. (P.725). It means that grammar is a linguistic system; it is an essential element whether in writing or speaking, and it is a structure that includes words, letters, and sentences that make up the language. In addition, grammar contributes to building sentences that have a clear meaning and makes the language work with flexibility. Therefore, it is one of the most important elements that make sense of the language. (Mart, 2012).

1.3.2 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way in which words and language in particular are pronounced. Or it is the production of sounds that contributes to the development of the level of communication of learners. Furthermore, it is a significant element in communicative competence. (Gilakjani, 2016). Additionally, pronunciation affects the communication process, even if the learners have enough vocabulary to communicate, but their pronunciation is not correct because this leads to a lack of understanding. (Nurullayevna, 2020).

1.3.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is considered as the core of communicative competence especially in learning a second language or a foreign language. In addition, the more vocabulary learners acquire, the more fluent and accurate the communication will be. Susanto (2017). Nation (2013) in Kiliç (2019) adds that vocabulary has three components. The meaning which is the message that is supposed to be understood. The use that is related to grammar, whether in writing or speaking. And the form which is related to the parts of the words.

1.3.4 Fluency

Fillmore (1979) states that "fluency is the ability to fill time with talk" (p.93). Based on the definition above, it is concluded that fluency is the ability to express ideas and speak easily, remember as many words as possible, deliver information quickly and without having problems such as stuttering and stopping. Moreover, Fluency is only gained through practice and constant exposure to the language.

1.3.5 Comprehensibility

Comprehensibility can appear through the response of the listener to what the speaker says, and this is evidence of successful communication. (Buton & Bugis,2015).

1.4 Aspects of Speaking Skill

According to Bygate (1987), speaking skills contains of to main for more aspects which are productions skills and interactions skills.

1.4.1 Production Skills

When producing any language, it should be associated with what is called “processing conditions”. In this sense, Bygate mentioned “time pressure”. The latter affects the speaker. In addition, the spoken language differs from the written one because in the case of speaking, the speaker is limited in terms of time, and this makes him avoid unimportant and complex elements, realize the listener is paying attention to him or not, and use abbreviations and devices in order to facilitate language production process. Production skills focus on two elements. The first is facilitation where the speaker uses ellipsis, formulaic expressions, and simple structures to achieve it. The second is compensation, in which other forms such as repetition, hesitation, and self-correction are used. Finally, both of them contribute to facilitating language production to seem more natural.

1.4.2 Interaction Skills

It requires the speaker and the listener to understand each other well and to be good speakers in order to interact effectively. Interaction skills contain routine skills and negotiation skills. Routine skills concerned with the daily conversation, and delivering information is its main goal whereas negotiation skills is the way participants convince each other, and come up with an agreement is its objective to interact well.

1.5 Approaches in Teaching Speaking

Conversation is a significant activity in learning languages, and it takes place in different forms determined by the teacher in the classroom case area in order to exchange knowledge, increase linguistic competence, and be more fluent and accurate. The most important thing that distinguishes it is turn taking, where the listener and the speaker exchange parts of the conversation in a form of turns. Teaching of speaking has two approaches which are indirect and direct.

1.5.1 Indirect Approach

Richards (1990) defines this approach “as an approach in which conversational competence is seen as the product of engaging learners in conversational interaction”(p.75-76). It means that the learner must be placed in the real life situation in terms of communication. Furthermore, programs should not be specified in conversation in order to make competent learners. In this sense, Bouzar (2019) adds that this approach does not depend on a clear program but rather focuses on the language form.

1.5.2 Direct Approach

This kind of approach focuses on enhancing speaking through a clear model or program including different communication activities such as turn taking, focusing on pronunciation and fluency. In other words, the aspects of the conversation should be targeted. For example, learning how to apologize, advise, etc. (Richards, 1990). in various contexts and develops their fluency. On the other hand, formal presentations enhance their intellectual culture through reading. (Simona, 2015).

1.6 The Purpose of Teaching English Speaking

Language skills play a major role in achieving interaction and linguistic communication. The latter is one of the activities that people practice continuously in their daily life; it has

importance in human life, especially in the teaching and learning process of languages such as English, which is taught as a foreign language or as a second language through different methods and approaches. (Rao, 2019)

The purpose of teaching speaking is to develop their linguistic competence because of their need to use it in many cases. For example, when learners are supposed to learn English they need to use it in discussing, introducing themselves, building self-confidence, getting better opportunities for jobs, and being able to express their thoughts, needs and opinions. Moreover, there is no doubt that the learner of the language cannot be proficient in it unless they are able to speak it fluently, in order to communicate effectively. The role of the teacher is very important in assisting students in enhancing their speaking skills through encouraging them to interact and give them the opportunity to participate in discussions and debates. (Rao, 2019).

1.7 Speaking Skills Activities

To develop speaking skills, teachers use famous activities that are used in the classroom which are:

1.7.1 Discussion

The most important point that should be clear is that the discussion must be as a request from the teacher to avoid students discussing irrelevant topics. Instead, the students can participate in agree and disagree discussion and share their ideas and views. Furthermore, Organizing groups for discussion and expressing opinions, and the groups must change every time so that the students can work with various groups. The aim is to enhance self-confidence, critical thinking, and vocabulary. All students must participate and the topics must be known, interesting and debatable.(Kayi, 2006).

1.7.2 Role Play

One of the fun activities in which students entertain themselves, especially those who like to play different roles and imitate personalities. However, some teachers believe that this type of activity is not appropriate because it creates chaos within the classroom. (Kuśnierek, 2015). Nevertheless, Kawalska (1991) believes that the role play develops the students' imaginations as if they are in real life situations in which they are able to acquire the appropriate use of language.

1.7.3 Communicative Tasks

Students in any English classroom are required to communicate because they need to speak and understand English. Moreover, communicative activity is any task that encourages students to interact within the classroom, and this concerns both the teacher and the students. For example, interviews, opinion sharing, information gap, etc. (Thornbury, 2005)

1.7.4 Formal Presentations

Formal presentations are done in an academic nature where the teacher focuses on communicative needs, and asks the students to choose a topic to be presented individually, in pairs, or in a group. This kind of tasks motivates students to speak English in various contexts and develops their fluency. On the other hand, formal presentations enhance their intellectual culture through reading. (Simona, 2015).

1.8 Factors Affecting Speaking Skills

Speaking fluently is one of the objectives that every foreign language learner seeks to achieve, but it is no secret to you that it is one of the most difficult challenges that they may face because there are barriers that discourage the progress of developing this skill which are:

1.8.1 The Limited Exposure to Target Language

Being exposed to the language is being in contact with it in all its aspects; for example, speaking it within the classroom or even on social media with natives and non-natives, and this is what makes him familiar with it in which it facilitates the process of learning and speaking. Because those who are more exposed to the language gain more chances of achieving better results. Furthermore, there are levels of exposure to the language, exposure at home with family and exposure in a classroom atmosphere with classmates and teachers. (Palermo et al, 2014).

1.8.2 Lack of Motivation

Lack of motivation prevents the learner from communicating effectively. There are two types of motivation: Instrumental and integrative. The former is what results from practices source represented in obtaining a job, raising wages, or passing an exam. Its aim is to achieve goals and objectives. The latter is the desire of the learner to immerse himself and be a part in the culture of a speech community. To conclude, motivation is associated with psychological factors such as anxiety, stress, lack of confidence. (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

1.8.3 Ineffective Teaching Pedagogy

It is considered one of the most important factors affecting oral proficiency. For instance, teaching using traditional methods, and this means focusing on memorizing, writing and grammar without understanding the meaning and neglecting speaking skill.

1.8.4 Use of Mother Tongue

The use of the mother tongue whether by the teacher who relies on it as a pedagogical practice in explication of lessons, or by the student leaves a lack of motivation to speak in English, which reduces exposure to it. (Richard & Rodregers, 2014). Alharbi (2015) adds that

students who study a foreign language using their mother tongue do not see a clear reason for learning English when they can meet their needs using their first language.

1.9 Enhancing Speaking Skills

To develop the skill of speaking in classrooms, the teacher should adopt modern methods of teaching, and get rid of the old ways, make extensive use of language activities, and motivate the student to speak it without forcing them, expose him to the language through the use of interesting topics so that he has the ability to express his opinion and ideas in a clearer way, show good results, and provide flexibility in expressing themselves.(Akhter et al, 2020; Rao, 2018).

Relying on communicative activities to enhance the interaction between the teacher and the student. The activities should be related to real life situations (Yanza &Rodríguez, 2021). Furthermore, games have an effective role in developing speaking skill as it is a fun and entertaining process because it teaches them how to communicate in real situations, and ensures that they remain motivated to learn. (Mahmoud &Tanni, 2014).

According to Bygate (1987), in order to achieve communicative language, the learner should focus on two aspects, which are the language knowledge, and the skill in using this knowledge in various contexts and situations. He divides skills into two types:

1.9.1 Production Skills

It is the ability to use appropriate words in speech and change them whenever necessary in order to facilitate delivering the message to the listener.

1.9.2 Interaction Skills

It is the ability to negotiate and exchange ideas between participants.

1.10 Points to Consider in Speaking Skills

Language mastery depends primarily on speaking, and to achieve this goal, every learner should take these 3 concepts into consideration (Vilímec, 2006).

1.10.1 Clarity

Speaking in a clear and understandable manner to make it easier for the listener to understand your words so that he can interact with you.

1.10.2 Variety

The language learner has take into account the varieties in the English language, or any foreign language related to speaking skill. For instance, volumes, emphasis, pauses. The latter examples should be used appropriately.

1.10.3 Audience and Tone

Tone differs according to the audience, and it is considered as the way to communicate with the listener in which you convey your message. It may be formal or informal.

Section Two: Listening Skill

1.11 Definition of Listening

According to Purdy (1997) "Listening is the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting , remembering , and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs , concerns , and information offered by other human beings".(P.08).

In other words, listening is the process where the listener is supposed to give his attention to the speaker not only by listening to the words, but by realizing the message through analyzing it. Additionally, listening is a complex process and not a simple one due to the need

to implement the mind in acquisition, understanding, analyzing, and interpreting the information.

Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002) states that "Listening involves making sense of spoken language, normally accompanied by other sounds and visual input, with the help of our relevant prior knowledge, and the context in which we are listening." (P. 180). It means that prior knowledge has an effect on understanding the real meaning of the message. Thus, the listener needs to have a prior knowledge about the topic being discussed in order to use it in linking the new information with the prior information he has.

Listening is a process in which the listener analyzes the speech of the speaker. This is done only by having linguistic knowledge. The latter is related to sounds, syntax, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, etc. and non-linguistic knowledge, which, as mentioned before, is the prior knowledge on the topic. (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

The concept of listening is defined by Kasim and Luwiti (2020) as "a component of language consists of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Just as the other three skills of English, listening skill also plays a very significant role in the process of language learning indeed and has, therefore, to be mastered by its learners". In other words, listening is an important element in learning a foreign or a second language. Through listening the learner can acquire vocabulary and language rules which are the basics of a language. (P. 01).

1.11.1 Hearing and Listening

Kline (As mentioned in Yildirim & Ylidirim, 2016, p.7) claims that there is a difference between hearing and listening. The former is considered as a passive process in which the sounds are received. However, the latter is an active process that links meaning to the sounds using full attention. According to Schnell (1995), hearing is a psychological process, that is, being aware of what is happening, or hearing sounds that everyone can hear, but does not

need to be interpreted. As for listening, it is deeper than that and complex; it is an interpretive process, meaning that listening to sounds with the interpretation of their source and the intended meaning of them. In addition, we all can hear sounds, but when it comes to listening to each one understands them in a different way.

1.12 The Importance of Listening

Rost (1994) mentions that "listening is a vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner" (Cited in Nunan, 1997, p.1). The quote emphasizes the significance role of listening in exposing the learner to the target language by receiving information and resources that help in learning a foreign language. Additionally, practicing listening in classroom assists learners in gaining knowledge concerning vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation which are the components of language. (Rost, 1994).

Mendelson (1994) claims that " the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50 %; speaking 25-30 %; reading 11-16 %; and writing about 9 %" (p.9). In mendelson's quotation there is a clear emphasis on the importance of listening in learning foreign languages, and even mother languages. It is worth mentioning that listening provides a better understanding and comprehension takes time to be achieved more than in the other skills.

Listening has the advantage that it allows learners to interact, which is the best way to do so. Moreover, Interaction is the secret of understanding, and the key to effective communication. (Yildirim & Yildirim, 2016). Nevertheless, it is mentioned that listening has a significant role in acquisition in which it develops language ability and makes a clear sense of the beauty of language in terms of communication. Also, it helps learners to gain confidence. (Renukadevi, 2014).

1.13 The Components of Listening

According to James (1984), listening has six components Which are: the actual physical hearing of language, the segmental form, the musical pitch and rhythm, the lexical phrasing, the purpose of the message intended by the speaker, and the actualization of the message in the listener.

1.13.1 The Actual Physical Hearing of Language

It is known as the sonic aspect of listening; it is the ability to recognize language as a human characteristic in order to understand spoken phonetic symbols, and to distinguish all sounds, as each sound carries a segmental form. It concerns the phonemic awareness. In this sense, a good listener has the ability to divide the word into small units, and understand each individual phoneme in listening to the second language.

1.13.2 The Musical Pitch and Rhythm

Determining sound differences via musical pitch and rhythm. Through the speakers' handling of the conversation, the speaker's impression of his way of speaking will be shown; he may be mocking, enjoying, joking, etc. Thus, the listener has to get the point.

1.13.3 The Lexical Phrasing

The listener needs to realize that the language has lexical phrases, meaning that sentences have many alternatives to use in a specific order. So, in listening the speaker may include it, and the learner or listen should be aware of it for better comprehension.

1.13.4 The Purpose of the Message Intended By the Speaker

One of the components of listening is the interpretation and analysis of speech by identifying the speaker's purpose for his speech, and realizing the overall meaning of his message.

The actualization of the message in the speaker:

The listeners' perception of the message requires a reaction for a response based on the intention of the speaker.

1.14 Types of Listening

According to Brown and Yule (1983), listening has two main types: one-way listening and two-way listening; these are:

1.14.1 One-way Listening

In this type, the student listens to the teacher explaining the lesson in which he needs to take notes, listening to radios, watching, movies, etc. Furthermore, there is no interaction, but merely receiving information; it focuses on the content.

1.14.2 Two-way Listening

It is also called a reciprocal listening; It is the opposite of the first type because. Moreover, it is based on the interaction of the listener with the speaker, meaning that he is not just a receiver of information, but a person who can negotiate. It focuses on people not on the content in order to build an interactive environment in a communicative situation.

It is worth mentioning that intensive and extensive listening are the two types of less than according to Harmer (1991). (Cited in Kasim & Luwiti, 2020).

The extensive listening it kind of amusement for students because they can choose what they want to hear for the sake of improving their language level in general. Moreover, it focuses on understanding the general idea only, and not the details of grammar or the small and accurate units of the language. In the contrary, the intensive listening is a type that requires an understanding of the language elements, language units, and the grammar, and without it language will be difficult to learn.

1.15 The Strategies of Listening

Strategies of listening can be classified into Top-down and Bottom-up strategies.(Peterson, 2001).

In Top-down strategies listener, the listener focuses on understanding the general idea of what he hears, based on prior information, or background knowledge related to the topic or the listening text. However, Bottom-up strategies focus on the structure of language, words and sounds to understand them accurately.

According to O'Malley and Charmot(1990), listening has three strategies which are: Cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and Socio-affective strategies. First, cognitive strategies focuses on managing incoming information, or what is called input in both short and long memories. Second, metacognitive strategies are techniques that the learner uses to control learning via arranging, planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. Third, socio-affective strategies are based on interaction to create a communicative atmosphere in order to check their comprehension. In this case should be confident and motivated to cooperate with others.

1.16 Characteristics of a Good Listener

In Wilson's work (2008), he mentions some qualities of a good listener; these are:

a-The more motivated a learner is, the more he is a good listener. Therefore, there are many different topics, and each student has a topic that motivates him, and this motivation impacts positively listening.

b-The interactive learner is considered a good listener. Thus, he asks, answers, shares his information, collaborates and cooperates with others.

c-A good student is one who evaluates his learning, and what he has achieved.

d-A good student is one who has enthusiasm and curiosity to learn by asking questions.

e-A good student is one who carefully chooses his own and appropriate listening strategies.

f- A good student is one who pays attention, and focus to what he hears; being concentrated is evidence that the learner is desirable to learn and understand.

1.17 Problems of listening

According to Celik et al (2014), learners of English as a second language face numerous listening challenges. (As cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

First the low quality of recorded materials is one of the major problems; when the quality is not high it negatively influences the listening and realization of the language. Second, the cultural difference may affect the comprehension of the listeners. Moreover, students need to have a prior knowledge of the culture to facilitate their listening ability. Third, my accents affect the process of learning because there are students who are not familiar with the different English accent. For instance, an Indian English is one of the difficult accents that learners may face during their listening. Forth, another problem is when learners are not familiar with the vocabulary they are listening to. Fifth, listening will be challenging if the speaker is speaking too fast and even if the listener is fully paying attention, he will not understand the message clearly.

Renukadevi (2014) adds that learners do not make efforts to understand the speech well and focus with the words, and this is what makes them assume that listening is difficult, but it is just a matter of laziness. Additionally, there are learners who have a weak ability to listen, and they may need to repeat what they listen to many times. Also, the environment in which they learn and listen plays an important role. Thus, the quieter it is, the more students can listen well.

Hamouda (2013) states that the problem of listening belongs to the teachers who do not pay much attention to listening, but rather to reading and writing, Furthermore, they claim that listening will be developed naturally without the need for practices, lessons and exercises on it. Thus, teachers should teach their learners all the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) without ignoring any of them.

1.18 Activities of Listening

Listening is a skill that is taught in English language classrooms, and the preferable way to teach it is to follow the following activities: pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening.

1.18.1 Pre-listening

According to Ehsanjou and Khodareza (2014), “Pre-listening activities are some introductory activities that familiarize students with the topic and activate their background knowledge on the content” (p.1). It means that pre-listening includes pre-topic questions, information gathering, and pre-teaching vocabulary to facilitate learning and comprehension. The teacher has to follow some steps to make the learners ready to listen. (Jiang,2009).

-Provide them with prior knowledge at the same time, activating their background information, which may benefit from.

- Informing them about the type of text that they will be exposed to, and what is the purpose of it, and their role towards it.

-Teach them the rules of grammar and items related to the material

- Translate difficult vocabulary

- Give them hints about what they will listen to.

- Then the learners predict the topic and the concepts they will learn from the material, and then give their opinion about it.

Underwood (1990) suggested some pre- activities that builds good listener and enhances listening ability:

-Brainstorming: Learners work in a group or individually; it focuses on collecting information about the topics of listening, everyone should participate. Therefore, the ideas should be evaluated at the end; this activity helps to enhance the power of listening.

-Anticipating the topic of the text through its title and with the help of pictures and graphics

- Exposure to a topic similar to the spoken text

- Gaining sufficient information of grammar, vocabulary, and background knowledge concerning the topic.

1.18.2 During-listening

These activities aim to make learners understand the spoken text by using listening strategies. In addition, they need to guess the meaning of words, vocabulary and speech in general. Moreover, using the prior information that they took from pre-listening activities and linking it to the current information during listening is important to form a clear idea. (Nunan, 1999).

The teacher should encourage his students to take notes. The latter is about writing brief, clear, organized and important information in the form of words or short phrases, symbols of abbreviations etc. Thus, note taking has an important role in enhancing the learners' listening skills.(Katayama, 1997).

Learners during their listening need to check their understanding through:

- Ensuring that their predictions about comprehension are correct.

- Creating new predictions and not relying on the initial predictions.
- Focusing on what is most important and ignoring the unimportant. (Jiang, 2009, p 95).

During-listening activities focus on a specific goal, and a specific level for students to help them develop their listening skills (Saha & Talukdar, 2008, p.6). To reach this objective, the following points should be considered:

- The spoken text should be repeated several times to allow students to concentrate on the speech, and make sure of the words they are listening to.
- Helping students to get a general idea of the topic; for example, by preparing a summary for them that focuses on the content.
- The professor should ask many questions to the students, relying on maps, pictures, graphs in order to enhance their comprehension.
- Finally, giving them feedback to make sure that they understand the topic and evaluate them by using exercises and tasks.

1.18.3 Post-listening Activities

Schwartz (1998) maintains that the objective of post-listening activities is to refresh the students' memory, and at the same time create new information based on what they have learned through listening. Furthermore, the learnt knowledge should be exchanged by the teacher and the learners; everyone's participation is important at this stage. Additionally, the teacher may rely on a set of exercises such as true and false statements, questions and answers, synonyms and antonyms, writing a brief composition, etc.

Underwood (1990) adds some activities that can be adopted after listening; these are:

- Writing a summary of what have been learnt.

- Expressing points of view about what they learnt.
- Creating sentences and phrases using the vocabulary they learned
- Pronouncing the difficult word mentioned in the spoken text.

1.19 Enhancing Listening Skill

There are some suggestions that help students in overcoming listening problems, and their listening skills; these are:

1- Ear training to practice the language regularly by listening to the radio, watching television programs, and YouTube videos in English.

2-Listening to the correct pronunciation of words by native speakers frequently; the more the student listens, the more his skills increase.

3-Listening and reading at the same time is one of the significant ways to enhance listening skills. Furthermore, no matter if the learner does pronounce the words in a wrong way. However, he can verify the meaning of the word and the way it is pronounced.

4-The listener should pay attention to the speaker and his tone of voice, and focus well on everything that is said and how it is pronounced.

5-Authentic materials are better to be adopted in the listening activities.

6-Students' interests are very important in choosing listening tasks, and this increases their motivation to learn.

7-Familiarizing students with accent, vocabulary, and pronunciation is important in enhancing their learning. Moreover, using body language is significant as well.

Conclusion

To sum up, both speaking and listening are among the most significant skills in enhancing language learning. Moreover, Students seek to acquire them to communicate using the target language, but they are not easy to be achieved. Furthermore, speaking and listening are two complementary skills. Therefore, listening leads to good speaking, and the latter leads to raising communicative competence.

Chapter two:

Pronunciation Skills

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Introduction

This chapter will give detailed information about pronunciation; it includes different definitions, the importance of pronunciation, its features and components. Besides, it will tackle the relationship between pronunciation and the four skills. Furthermore, it involves some strategies used in teaching pronunciation and learning it; factors influencing pronunciation and the assessment of it will be included as well. Finally, this chapter will suggest some solutions to avoid pronunciation problems

2.1 Definition of Pronunciation

According to Somantri et al (2021), "Pronunciation is one of the important aspects in English, especially in oral communication. Every sound, stress pattern, and intonation may convey meaning" (p.265). This means that all the elements that are used in pronunciation carry connotations by which understanding is achieved. Therefore, every word in resulting accent, intonation, stress and sounds have a special meaning.

Otowski (1998) states that pronunciation is the method in which sounds are produced with the help of the muscles of the mouth that lead to meanings. In addition, good pronunciation requires sound pronunciation free from errors or mistakes in order to convey the message to the listener, and to achieve effective communication. Thus, intelligibility is more important than having like a native accent or pronunciation.

In addition, Aufa (2017) defines Pronunciation as "the act or manner of pronouncing words; utterance of speech, a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally

understood, and a graphic representation of the way a word spoken, using phonetic symbols".(p.8). In other words, pronunciation is an act in which it is produced by the

individual with the aim of communicating with others. Besides, it is the basic unit of the speaking process, and the most important thing that distinguishes it is the phonetic symbols.

Gilakjani (2016) maintains that pronunciation is one of the most difficult skills that English language learners seek to learn and acquire. At the beginning of learning, they face many difficulties in pronouncing words, especially those whose letters do not exist in their mother tongue. In the same sense, Cook (1996) adds that the pronunciation mistakes in the foreign language are caused by the mother tongue, but with regular practice those mistakes will be reduced.

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) defines pronunciation as "a cognitive skill for which some people may have more natural aptitude and / or interest and motivation than others, but which everyone can learn to a certain degree if given appropriate opportunities". (p.74). This means that it is a skill that depends on mental experiences and performance which the speaker possesses, such as fluency in language, freedom from errors or mistakes, and good pronunciation; it also depends on motivation and desire in which the learner can learn to pronounce to sound like native speakers.

2.2 The Importance of Pronunciation

In Yates and Zielinski's book (2008), it is stated that there are many teachers who neglect teaching pronunciation in classrooms, and their claim is that teaching it is a waste of time because what matters is communication only, and not good pronunciation. Therefore, many students also ignore it, so they find it difficult to pronounce and at the same time it is difficult for the one who communicates with them to understand them.

Burns and Claire (2003) adds that pronunciation is of great importance in communication. Nevertheless, if the speaker has a good linguistic increase or a large linguistic outcome in terms of grammar and vocabulary; however, his pronunciation is bad, then this will affect the

communication process negatively. Thus, he will not be understood in the conversation or speech. In this context, Hewings (2004) says about the importance of pronunciation that many students fail to deliver their message because they do not acquire good pronunciation, and this is what makes them difficult to be comprehended.

Pronunciation is essential in determining identity. A good pronunciation is an evidence of the learner's diligence to obtain a native accent or pronunciation, and this increases the value of his furthermore, pronunciation contributes a lot to improving speaking skill in the English language Besides, it makes the conversation sequential and fluent. This means that the good speaker has the ability to hear and distinguish sounds accurately, which positively affects his fluency. Therefore Mastering pronunciation is often the key of success in achieving an effective communication. (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994).

Intelligible pronunciation plays a significant role in comprehension, especially for the listener in understanding speech because it is one of the components of effective speech and communicative competence. Therefore, It should be adopted in foreign language teaching to receive and produce native-like pronunciation. Moreover, when pronunciation is not intelligible communication will be disrupted, misunderstanding, feeling of dissatisfaction with both the listener and the speaker,...etc. Thus, to achieve intelligibility, stress, intonation, vowels, and consonants should be used appropriately. (Morley, 1991).

2.3 Features of Pronunciation

Pronunciation in English has two major features; these are, segmental and Suprasegmental. (Burns & Claire, 2003).

2.3.1 Segmental Features

Segments consist of what is called phonemes which are the small units in spoken language. These phoneme involve consonant sounds (voiced and unvoiced), and vowel sounds (single

and diphthongs). Segments are spoken through the speech segmentation process. Thus, these sounds are related the micro level.

2.3.2 Suprasegmental

Suprasegmentals are used in speech that include or make up rhythm, stress, intonation in words and sentences. In which it makes the speech easy to be said, and understood. Therefore, these suprasegmental sounds are related to the macro level.

2.4 Components of Pronunciation

Djiwandono (2008) states that pronunciation has four major components:

2.4.1 Intelligibility

It is a term that means clarity in speech in which it allows the listener to understand the message of the speaker without the need for repetition. In other words, it allows non-native speakers to communicate effectively and successfully. In this case, words should be pronounced clearly not resulting misunderstanding. (Derwing&Munro, 2005). Intelligibility is defined as “actual understanding” (Derwing, 2010, p.29). In other words, the message of the speaker should be understood by the listener, and measuring his understanding and comprehension of the message is by asking him questions.

2.4.2 Fluency

It is the smoothness that connects sounds, words and pronunciation. Furthermore, it is the ability to produce them in a way that suits the situation. Taking into account the correct way of speaking measured by length of runs, pauses and repetitions.(Schmidt, 1992).

2.4.3 Accuracy

The extent in which the words are correct, accurate and exact. Moreover, it has a significance in assisting learners to develop their level in the English language, and to achieve effective communication; it refers to the degree of freedom from errors during speaking or pronouncing. (Hammerly, 1991).

2.4.4 Native-like Accent

It refers to the speaking like native, or at least the speaker carries characteristics like the natives in language by imitating them in the correct pronunciation. However, it is difficult to obtain this level in the language, especially since there are not enough exposures to the target language. (Levis, 2018).

2.5 Pronunciation in Relation to the Four Skills

Pronunciation is significant in relation to the other language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). (Henderson et al, 2012).

2.5.1 Pronunciation and Listening

Any influence that negatively affects hearing may lead to failure in pronunciation, and vice versa. Additionally, pronunciation affects listening comprehension, not only affecting the acquisition of sounds. Furthermore, listening has an effective role in developing pronunciation through continuous and regular practices. Therefore, words are correctly recognized as they are pronounced in isolation because pronunciation is not only related to the mouth but also to the ear. (DeOrio, 2016).

2.5.2 Pronunciation and Speaking

Speaking skills and pronunciation have a close relationship because both of them participate in producing sounds, words or sentences. Besides, poor pronunciation negatively

affects the fluency of speaking, which hinders the communication process, and it is likely that the message will not be understood by the listener, and vice versa. Moreover, if the pronunciation is good, this will improve the level of speaking, and communication will be successful and effective. Likewise, when the pronunciation is good, small errors in grammar or vocabulary are not as important as the pronunciation. Therefore, the listeners will be impressed and will not mock the speaker during the conversation.(Jenkins, 1998).

2.5.3 Pronunciation and Reading

Correct pronunciation leads to easier reading for the learner, as it raises his reading abilities. Additionally, reading, in turn, affects pronunciation abilities through reading aloud, and this motivates the learner to practice pronunciation, and develops fluency with the help of other skills. Thus, spelling has a positive effect on pronunciation as well. (Parmawati, 2018).

2.5.4 Pronunciation and Writing

Good and correct pronunciation assists in writing correctly; in the English language pronunciation differs from spelling. Both of them are considered as strangers because of their differences. Therefore, there are several letters that are written and not pronounced. In this context, students face many problems and difficulties in writing. For example, in the word “know”, the letter k is written and not pronounced. Thus, spelling is one of the most important concepts in English due to the errors learners make. (Khansir & Tajeri, 2015).

2.6 Strategies for Learning Pronunciation

Teaching pronunciation should be applied in schools and universities, due to its importance and difficulty at the same time. Besides, pronunciation is no less important than the other four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) because the first thing what students are judged on is their way of pronouncing. Thus, there are some strategies for learning pronunciation (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

2.6.1 Conversation

Among the useful methods or strategies for developing pronunciation is the conversation. The latter occurs between students or between teachers and students, in which knowledge is exchanged, imitation of others, listening to the other, discovering mistakes and correcting them. Furthermore, taking the advice and guidance of the teacher, who is an expert, is very important.

2.6.2 Drilling

It is a method used to develop pronunciation, until mastery is achieved, based on students repeating of words, or oral structures and their pronunciation. In addition, it is an effective strategy in learning especially the new words or the difficult ones.

2.6.3 Expert Guidance

It is better to look for advice from experts such as teachers, or native speakers to learn the correct pronunciation, and prepare an appropriate plan for learning based on their previous experiences. Nevertheless, students may find it difficult to pronounce some words, and it is advisable to seek the assistance of teachers who have good pronunciation in various dialects because it is known that students in Algeria there are those who prefer British or and others prefer American accent.

2.6.4 Critical Listening

Critical listening does not stop at understanding, analysis, interpretation, and individual practice, but rather depends on the comparison between the learner and his classmates, or the learner and his teachers. Furthermore, learners should attempt to imitate a good speaker to absorb to get correct pronunciation, and developing this skill only comes with practice.

2.7 Teaching Pronunciation.

Pennington (2021) declares that teaching pronunciation in the past was influenced by some factors; these are:

- Learning to pronounce is not only limited to childhood, but also adolescents can acquire pronunciation.
- There are social and psychological factors that affect pronunciation positively or negatively.
- Focusing on intelligibility in speech and communication because it is more important than correctness and accuracy. Thus, it is the factor that contributes to delivering the message to the listener.
- Choosing specific contexts to teach pronunciation, and the aim is to expose the student to real life situations.
- Pay attention to those who need to learn pronunciation for various reasons. For example, working.
- The continuous development of technology and applications for teaching pronunciation.

2.7.1 The Role of the Teacher in Teaching Pronunciation

Learning pronunciation in the classrooms is with the participation of both the learner and the teacher. The latter has an active role in learning pronunciation. Additionally, he gives information and instructions; however, the learning responsibility remains on the learner.

In Kenworthy's works (1987), he mentions some tasks that should be prepared and adopted by the teacher. The latter has to:

- Give feedback and correct his students' mistakes in pronouncing them clearly by re-pronouncing the words that the learner pronounces wrongly, so that he can re-pronounce correctly the words.
- Assist his students improve their level of hearing and understanding of sounds, especially sounds that do not exist in their language, or that they have never heard before.
- Help his students about the sounds that they should listen to, or that are important to them and appropriate to their level because there are some students who do not realize what they need to hear.
- Determine the appropriate exercises for students based on their needs, so the more exploration of sounds and vocabulary is always the best. In this case, the teacher should be sufficiently informed and educated about how to create appropriate exercises, and strategies for teaching pronunciation.

2.7.2 The Role of the Learner in Learning Pronunciation

The learner has an active role in the course of his learning process more than the role of the teacher. Moreover, each student has to listen to the advice of his teacher, and be responsible for his learning by doing his best in learning, and not relying entirely on the teacher and the information he provides. Therefore, if the teacher has a duty in teaching, then the learner also has duties and tasks in teaching himself. In addition, the learner should be able to decide what he wants to learn based on his needs, and this is what generates self-confidence, a sense of achievement and competence. (Kenworthy, 1987).

2.8 Methods in Teaching Pronunciation

Celce-Murcia et al (1996) states that there are a number of methods that are used in teaching pronunciation; these are:

2.8.1 Direct Method

It is a traditional method that is affiliated with behaviourism school in psychology. It is used in teaching, in which it focuses on repetition and expectation without relying on the mother tongue, that is, it is a natural method used in teaching pronunciation using the target language only. Furthermore, it gives priority to listening over speaking.

According to Elizabeth (2004), direct method has some characteristics which are:

- Using the target language only and dispensing with the mother tongue.
- It requires students to be exposed to a specific set of vocabulary, according to their needs, through teaching vocabulary and daily sentences.
- Focusing on grammar and memorization over comprehension.
- Prioritize speaking through practice over question-and-answer exchanges among students.
- The language is presented in vivid and realistic situations.
- Direct communication between the student and the teacher, which allows the teacher to assess the student's understanding.
- The teacher should speak the language as fluently as native speakers.
Teaching is based on dialogue.
- Extensive use of images to illustrate meaning.(p.4).

2.8.2 Audiolingualism

It is a method based on the behaviourism; it relies on repetition and pays great attention to teaching grammar, vocabulary structures and phonics. Furthermore, the language occurs in a natural context in which the mother tongue is not used, in order to ensure that the target language is learned. Thus, It aims to make students learn accurate pronunciation by focusing on the words.(Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Celce-Murcia (2001) summarises the principles of Audiolingualism method as follows:

- Teaching is based on dialogue, mimicry, and memorisation.
- The assumption to make language as a habit formation.
- Teaching grammar is sequential, and in an inductive way.
- Determine special vocabulary to be used according to the level and need.
- Seeking to prevent students from making errors.
- The teacher should be proficient in order to be able to control the exercises. Moreover, it is required to be educated enough in terms of vocabulary.
- Introducing the speaking form over the written form in terms.
- Teaching the cultural aspect of the target language.(p.4).

2.8.3 The Reform Movement

The emphasis of the method was on phonetic alphabet and articulation description; it avoids teachers who use the mother tongue by focusing only on those who use the target language in order to consolidate it in the learner's mind. (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996).

Howat (1984) summarises some principles of the Reform Movement; these are:

- Spoken language takes precedence over written language.
- Focusing on teaching oral language and phonetics to master accurate pronunciation.
- The teacher should understand how to produce sounds because they are required to set an example for students in terms of performance.

2.9 Assessment of Pronunciation

Assessment in pronunciation is an act of issuing judgments, or it is a method, or tool by which the student's performance, the extent of the development of his knowledge, behaviour, achievements, and weaknesses in the educational aspect are evaluated in order to improve performance.

Evaluation is of great importance in learning. It addresses students' problems and improves the methods used during learning. In addition, It takes into account individual differences and explains students' different skills and abilities. Besides, It helps the teacher to provide knowledge that suits the abilities of his students. Thus, it assists in determining what the learner needs to focus on by changing or improving the previously used plans. (Isaacs, 2008).

2.9.1 Assessing Intelligibility

There are many ways to measure pronunciation, either objectively or subjectively, and they are:

- Make the listener write everything he listens to make sure that the message reaches him and that the speaker has successfully done his job in delivering it. (Derwing & Munro, 1995).
- Another way in measuring intelligibility is reading written sentences aloud by non-native speakers or learners, then to be evaluated by native speakers. Thus, their mistakes should be corrected. (Gass & Varonis, 1984).
- Using a cloze test and calculating the points that the learners were able to fill in blanks. (Smith, 1992).

- Measuring intelligibility by asking the listener about the difficulty or ease of the speaker's speech and the clarity of the pronunciation. (Derwing & Munro, 1995).

2.10 Factors Affecting Pronunciation.

In pronunciation learning there are several causes lead learners to fail in pronounce words correctly. In this sense, Levis and LeVelle (2011) quote:

Indeed, the amount of variation in pronunciation attainment among adult learners, from largely unintelligible to native-like, suggests that age cannot be the only influence on attainment. Instead, other causes such as exposure to the target language and social influences may be central to ultimate attainment (p.1).

In other words, there are other factors, not just age that affect the pronunciation process.

Among them we mention the following:

2.10.1 Psychological Factors

2.10.1.1 Shyness

Shyness is defined as "a temperamental trait characterized by a fear of novel social situations and self-consciousness in situations of perceived social evaluation."(Doey, Coplan & Kingsbury, 2014, p.1).

This means that it is a psychological feeling of confusion and discomfort, fearing that people will be criticized or judged, and therefore withdrawal is their choice. This situation affects even adults and language students such as English. Moreover, many of them may have a good linguistic stock, but they do not speak and prefer being silent because of the barrier of shyness. Thus, this problem greatly affects the pronunciation because it will not improve unless the learner.

2.10.1.2 Fear

Fear of making mistakes is as a ghost that haunts students of the English language; therefore, many of them prefer to remain silent, even in speaking sessions. Besides, this is what negatively affects their learning process, because the goal of through teaching speaking and pronunciation is to improve both levels. However, the improvement will not be achieved as long as fear controls them. (McCrocklin & Link, 2016)

The feeling of insecurity, especially of those who have a weak personality, may be affected by a small comment made by a teacher or colleague if he speaks or makes a mistake in furthermore, fear reduces the ability of the mind to work properly because of excessive thinking about negative. Things (McCrocklin & Link, 2016).

2.10.1.3 Anxiety

Anxiety is a psychological state that comes from the fear of receiving a negative response; it is the feeling of discomfort especially for non-native speakers or foreign language learners. This is what we find among English language learners. When they speak, they feel anxious for fear of making mistakes.

In addition, anxiety affects the language performance, especially in speaking or pronunciation. Moreover, anxiety often affects those who do not have confidence in their abilities or capabilities as well as those who compare their pronunciation to the pronunciation of others. However, whoever chooses to remain silent and not communicate will not develop his language level, and neither he nor his teachers will be able to evaluate his competence. Thus, they will face a communication deficit. (Price, 1991).

2.10.1.4 The Amount of Exposure

Exposure is one of the important methods in learning a foreign language, and this is done by realizing what is being heard, then imitating. Thus, learning is done successfully.

Nevertheless, not giving enough time to be exposed to a language may delay the learning process, and this is one of the reasons for failure and the difficulty of mastering a foreign language.(Al Zoubi, 2018).

The necessity of exposure to the English language is a self-evident truth and there is no doubt about it; however, how can learning be done without hearing native speakers speak the language, or without reading a book in a foreign language to know it is written. Therefore, continuous exposure to the language makes the learner able to master the rules of the language in both levels pronunciation and writing. (Al Zoubi, 2018).

2.10.2 Biological Factors

Biological factors such as age and gender influence learning pronunciation.

2.10.2.1 Gender

It is known that females are more inclined to learn, and acquire a foreign language especially learning to pronounce like native speakers. As for males, they are less inclined, and this is what psychologists and linguists states. Additionally, there are many reasons for female superiority over males because they are persistent and make a great effort to prove themselves, unlike males.(Hariri, 2012).

Girls are more enthusiastic and efficient with regard to learning, and this ensures the improvement of their foreign language and its pronunciation. Thus, many of them tend to brag. However, males do not pay much attention to what their teachers and colleagues say. (Hariri, 2012).

2.10.2.2 Age

Learning a foreign language requires individual preparation, due to the differences that exist between people; among these differences that affect the process of acquiring a new

language, we find age. The latter has been subjected to a lot of research to verify that the younger one acquires language, and pronunciation better and faster than the older one.

Exposure to the language at an early stage of life enables learners to master the pronunciation. They can speak it like native speakers especially for immigrant children. However, there is a great disregard for the importance of age in the educational stages of languages, which negatively affects pronunciation.(Lenneberg, 1967).

2.11 Problems in Pronunciation

Many foreign language students seek to acquire good pronunciation like natives. However, reaching this goal is difficult because it is one of the most difficult challenges they face in learning the target language. Thus, we find them committing mistakes intentionally or unintentionally. (Figuigui &Benyagoub, 2020).

Learners, especially Arabs, face problems in pronouncing the English language especially the difference between the two letters or sounds “p” and “b”. This is the result of the effect of the mother tongue on the target language. Thus, pronouncing the letter “p” is difficult for students because it is not existed in their mother tongue. Therefore, the difference in sounds between the first and second languages is among the reasons that make English pronunciation difficult to acquire. (Alkhuli, 1983).

According to Kelly (2004), “A learner who mispronounces a range of phonemes can be extremely difficult for a speaker from another language to understand. This can be very frustrating for the learner who may have a good command of grammar and lexis but have difficulty in Understanding and being understood by a native speaker”. (p.11). In other words, lack of good pronunciation may constitute difficulty on the part of the listener. Furthermore, the message may not be delivered and communication may not be completed successfully. Also, bad pronunciation may lead to avoidance of communication, due to the presence of gaps

in communication. Additionally, “The inaccurate use of suprasegmental elements such as stress or intonation can also cause problems”. (Kelly, 2000, P.11). This means that pronunciation is the key factor of communication. Correct pronunciation has an important role in effective communication. However, learning the pronunciation is difficult due to the difference in intonations in the target language from their mother tongue. Besides, many syllables are not present in the first language, and this is what leads to pronouncing those sounds incorrectly. In addition to that the stress should be put appropriately. For example, there are words written with the same letters, but the position of the different, and this results in changing the meaning. Therefore, the wrong pronunciation in the use of intonation and stress may hinder the communication process and the delivery of the message to be sent.

2.12 Accent and Pronunciation

The accent is considered as an essential part of the language where several accents come together in one language. For example, the accents known in English are British and American. Nevertheless, the pronunciation differs from the accent; the latter is what explains the difference between the regions in the same language. However, the former is the way of pronouncing the word and the letters in a particular language. Besides, there are words that are pronounced in different forms, and this is due to the difference in the accent. (Rashid, 2011).

The goal of learning pronunciation is to pronounce the words correctly, and it does not matter which accent the learner learns. Moreover, the most important thing is the correct pronunciation that is free of errors to be understood by the listener. On the other hand, the goal of learning the a specific accent is to acquire a accent like the native speakers. Therefore, it is defined as an identity to reveal the people and the region to which they belong. (Rashid, 2011).

2.13 Foreign Accent

“foreign accent is considered as an obstacle in acquiring native-like accent because only very young children who exposed to the native accent can acquire it. However, adults can only acquire a foreign accent which is different from the accent that is spoken by native speakers.” (Bettache, Boulfous & Guemide, 2015, 48). This means that the foreign accent is a problem that foreign language learners suffer from, especially those who aspire to acquire an accent like native speakers. Additionally, it is possible for those who started learning at an early age to acquire the accent like native speakers; however, for adults, this is difficult and they may not succeed in reaching this goal.

2.13.1 Factors Affecting Foreign Accent

There are several factors that affect the foreign accent in learning a second language which are:

2.13.1.1 Age of L2 Learning

According to Piske et al (2001), Age plays a decisive role in learning a second language, so the more learners start learning the language at an early age, the more they reduce the foreign accent, and vice versa. They quote “However, no study has as yet provided convincing evidence for the claim that L2 speech will automatically be accent-free if it is learned before the age of about 6 years and that it will definitely be foreign-accented if learned after puberty.” (Piske, MacKay & Flege, 2001, p. 197). The previous quotation indicates that there is no definitive evidence that early learners of the language acquire the skill of pronunciation, especially the reduction of the foreign accent better than the older ones.

2.13.1.2 Gender

Flege et al (1995) indicate that gender is an indicator of knowing the degree of a foreign accent. They add that the majority of females in language learning get higher scores compared

to males, and this is what many researchers mention during their studies of the impact of gender on the foreign accent.

2.13.1.3 Formal instruction

Formal instruction plays an important role in influencing the foreign accent if pronunciation gains attention in the teaching classrooms (Moyer, 1999). Piske, MacKay & Flege (2001) quote “ if classroom teaching carried on in the L2 involves special training in the perception and the production of L2 sounds, it may well have a larger effect on L2 production accuracy”(p.201). In other words, formal instruction affects the degree of foreign accent acquisition if the production of sounds in the second language finds great demand and training by teachers, and vice versa.

2.13.1.4 Motivation

According to Piske, MacKay & Flege (2001), “factors like Professional motivation, integrative motivation or strength of concern for L2 pronunciation accuracy do not automatically lead to accent-free L2 speech. Apparently, they are rarely so strong that late learners will still be able to attain a native-like pronunciation of The L2.”(p.202). In this sense, scholars and researchers differed on the issue of motivation. There are those who say that it has an effect on the foreign accent, so whenever the learner is motivated, he can acquire an accent like native speakers, and there are those who see that it has no effect on the foreign accent.

2.14 What Learners Need to Enhance Pronunciation

Teaching pronunciation is needed by learners; it is of equal importance with the rest of the language skills(listening, reading, speaking, and writing) because the first thing that draws the attention of the listeners and makes them take an overview of the learners' level is the

pronunciation and the way they pronounce words. (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). There are some suggestions that learners need to improve their pronunciation ability which are:

2.14.1 Interaction

What can help the learners in this regard is the practice of real conversation under the supervision of teachers and specialists in this field to correct their mistakes, and teach them appropriate strategies for conversation. For example, how to start and end a conversation. Thus, encouraging learners to practice conversations has tremendous positive effects for effective communication with native and non-native speakers. (Burns & Joyce, 1997).

2.14.2 Repetition

The use of drilling should be based on real life situations, and this helps learners to practice in real life what they need especially outside the classroom. Besides, among the practices of drilling are minimal pairs and tongue twisters. (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

2.14.3 Experts' Advice

To develop pronunciation, learners need to get rid of thinking about using the mother tongue and replace it with the target language. Furthermore, they should be evaluated by expert teachers to lead to them better pronunciation in English. Therefore, teachers are required to have experience especially in the field of phonetics. (Burns & Joyce, 1997).

Conclusion

To sum up, pronunciation is important in learning English because it is the first impression that the listener takes and notices. Moreover, it does not matter that the learner has an accent like the native speakers. However, what matters is the good and correct pronunciation of the words. Thus, delivering the message and the ability to communicate is what the learner should seek to reach.

Chapter three: Fieldwork and Data Analysis

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Introduction

In the previous two chapters, we have presented a review of learning skills which are speaking skill, listening skill and pronunciation. Meanwhile, the current chapter deals with the analysis of the findings. The main objective of this dissertation is to investigate perceptions of both teachers and students about the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent in EFL speech. We have used semi-structured questionnaires that were administrated to teacher of oral and phonetics modules, and second year students of English at Mohamed Kheider, Biskra University.

3.1 Research Approach

The current study aims to establish the common factors that influence the degree of foreign accent in EFL. According to the nature of the study, the researcher opted for a descriptive method. Therefore, a qualitative approach is employed to gather the needed data.

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

The current study deals with a sample of second year LMD students, and teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. 45 students responded to the questionnaire. As for teachers, eight teachers were asked to answer a questionnaire based on being teachers of oral and phonetics modules.

3.3 Data Gathering Tools

To conduct this study, two questionnaires are used to gather qualitative data for both teachers and students.

3.4 Students' Questionnaire

3.4.1 Description of the Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is composed of sixteen items that contains close ended questions, i.e. dichotomous questions (yes / no). Additionally, it involves open ended questions which attempt to gather the perceptions of students and suggestions about foreign accent and the factors affecting it.

3.4.2 Administration of the Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed to second year LMD students of English at Biskra University, in a form of printed version. Forty five students responded to the questionnaire. The selection of this sample is because of the nature of the study which is descriptive. The latter does not require a large number of students. In addition, choosing second year students is due to fact that they started learning phonetics module and learnt at least the basics of pronunciation. Furthermore, they were exposed before to the English language for a whole year at University.

3.4.3 Validating the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent to the supervisor after designing the first draft of it. Then, it was corrected and modified according to the supervisor's instructions that have been taken into consideration.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Item one: Specifying Gender

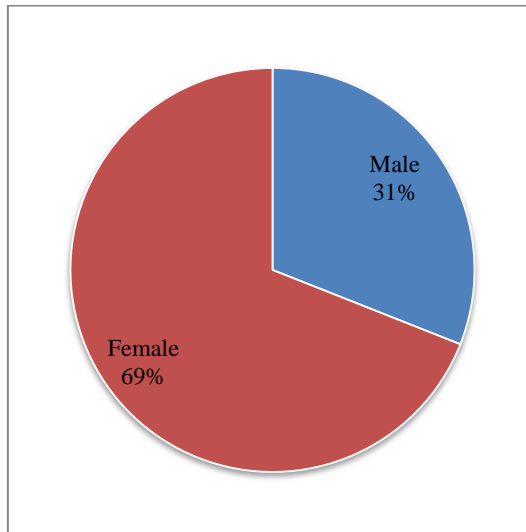


Figure 1: Students' Gender

From the table above, it is noticeable that the number of females is more than males. Out of 45 participants, 31 students (69%) are females and 14 students (31%) are males. This result shows that difference between the number of both males and females is (38%) which means that the dominant gender of the students of English is female, and studying English at University is a female-targeted branch.

Item two: The Choice of Studying English

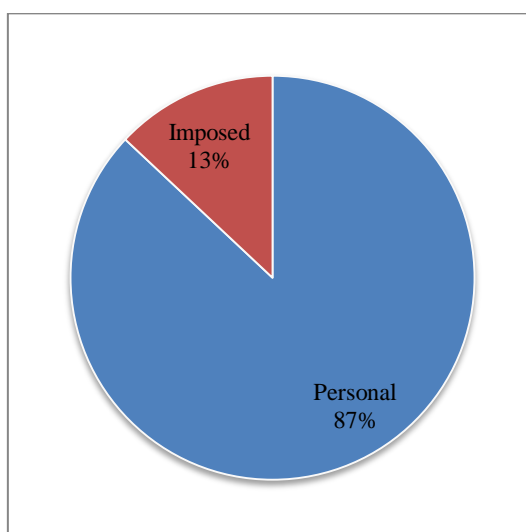


Figure 2: The Students' Choice of English

The figure above shows that the majority of the students (87%) chose to study English personally which means they likely have a genuine interest in learning the language. On the other hand, the minority's (13%) choice of studying English was imposed which means they were required to do it by external factors such as family. Furthermore, there will be a difference in motivation between the two groups.

Item three: Level of English

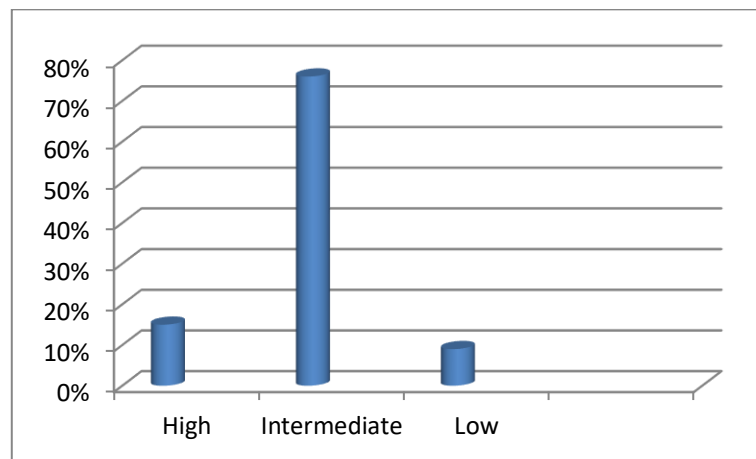


Figure 3: The Students' Level of English

Based on the data above, 45 students responded to the questionnaire. Out of these, 7 students (15%) claimed to have a high level in English, 34 students (76%) reported having an intermediate level, and 4 students (9%) stated having a low level. In other words, the majority of students have an intermediate level of English, while the minority of students possesses either a high or low level.

Section Two: Pronunciation Skill

Item four: The Importance of Pronunciation

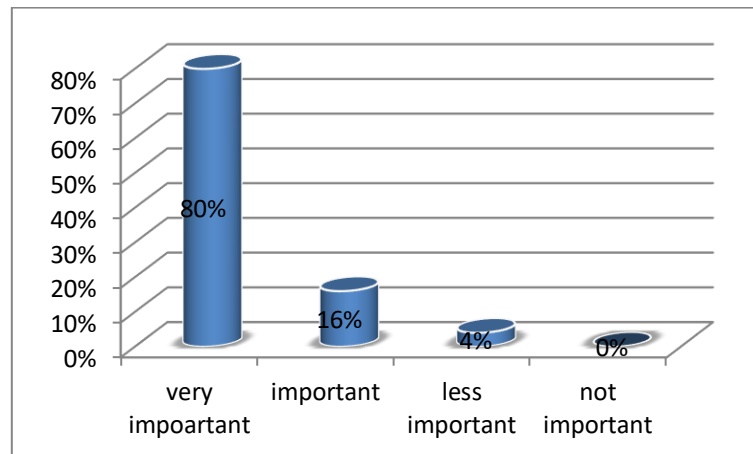


Figure 4: The Students' Evaluation about the Importance of Pronunciation

Based on the figure above, it can be concluded that the majority of 36 students (80%) expressed that pronunciation is very important, and recognized the high importance of pronunciation. Additionally, seven students (16%) mentioned that pronunciation is important; only two (4%) students indicated that pronunciation is less important while none of the students (0%) mentioned that pronunciation is not important. From these responses, it is evident that pronunciation holds significant importance.

Item five: Level of English Accent

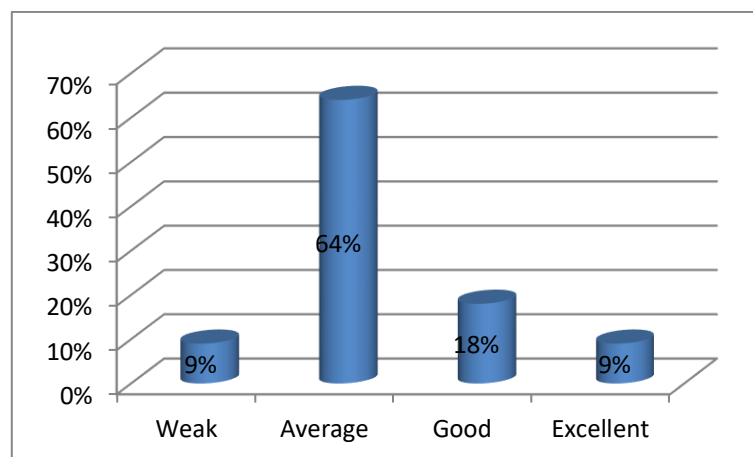


Figure 5: The Atudents' Evaluation about their Level of English Accent

The figure above indicates that the majority of students (64%) reported having an average level concerning their English accent; (18%) of students reported a good level while a smaller percentage (9%) indicated both weak and excellent levels. It is concluded that the majority of students has a satisfactory level of accent considering it to be average. However, a small number of students feel that their accent is not good.

Item six: How do you find acquiring English accent?

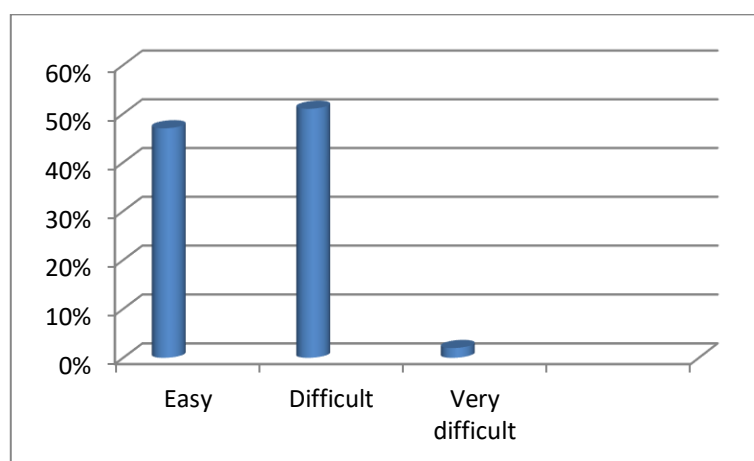


Figure 6: The Students’ Evaluation of the Difficulty of Acquiring English Accent

From the table above, it can be observed that 23 students (51%) said that acquiring English accent is difficult while 21 students (47%) claimed that it is easy, and only one student (2%) found it very difficult. To put it simply, the majority of students encountered challenges in acquiring English accent. However, a significant number of students expressed that acquiring English accent is manageable and uncomplicated. The fact that only one student sees that English accent is very challenging indicates that it is relatively uncommon among the participants. Furthermore, it highlights the presence of the individual differences in language learning abilities.

Item seven: If you faced a difficulty in pronouncing a word what do you do?

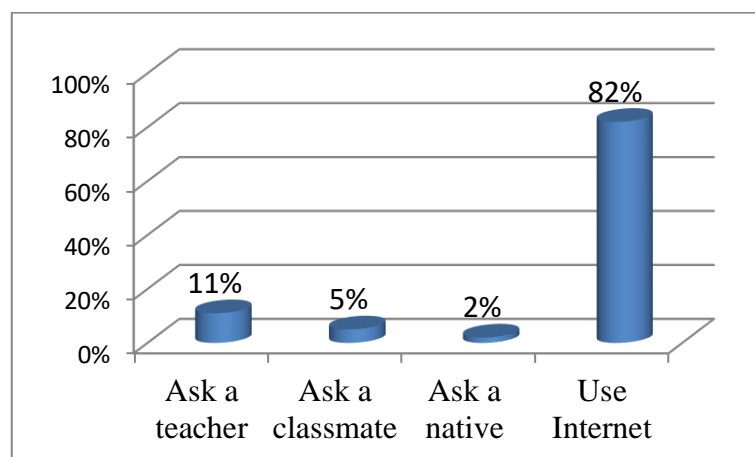


Figure 7: The Students' Evaluation about their Attitudes When Finding a Difficult word

As depicted in the figure above, it can be observed that the majority of students (82%) reported using the internet when they face difficulties in pronouncing words which means that they face internet as a useful, a popular, and an accessible resource. Moreover, a small number of students (2%) prefer seeking help from natives, and (5%) of students rely on their classmates. However, (11%) choose consulting their teachers for assistance.

Item eight: What do you do in developing your accent?

This question was directed to students with the aim of eliciting diverse perspectives regarding the ways they use to develop their accent; they stated:

- Talking to native speakers and colleagues both within and outside the classroom.
- Watching movies and listening to podcast and music.
- Listening to audio books.
- Using dictionary when finding a difficult word and repeat pronouncing it many times.
- Using language learning applications to practice the language.

Item nine: Do you practice English outside classroom?

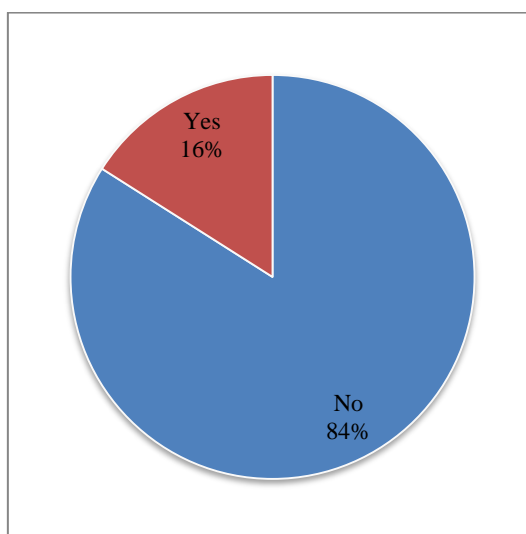


Figure 8: Students' Language Practice Outside Classroom

This question aimed to know if students use English outside classroom or not. The figure above illustrates that the minority of students (7) answered “yes” for using English outside classroom, and they represent (16%). However, (38) students who think the opposite and they represent the majority (84%).

Justifications

This sub-question aimed at identifying the reasons for the students' choices regarding the use of English outside classroom. Students who said “yes” justified their answers by several arguments such as using English only in classroom is not enough to give all we need to reach a very good level; practicing it is the appropriate way to have a good level in pronunciation. Additionally, students who responded negatively provided justifications for their answers through various arguments, including not having time to practice English outside; they claim that they do not have many opportunities to use English outside classroom which represents the lack of exposure; avoiding using English is because of the lack of confidence and

proficiency. Finally, what can be concluded is that most of students do not try to develop their level of English by practicing it outside classroom.

Item ten: Do you use what you learnt in phonetics?

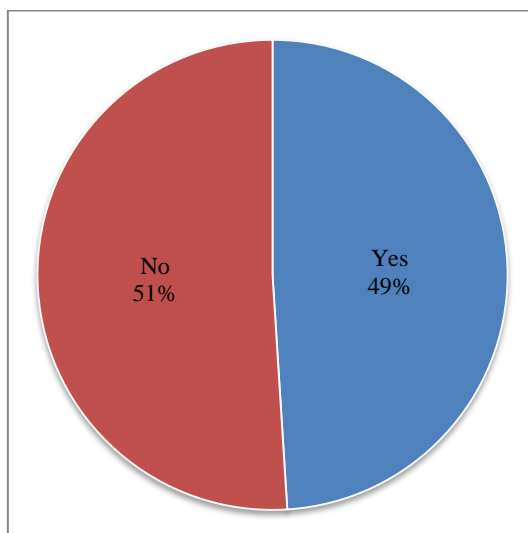


Figure 9: Students' Use of What They Learnt in Phonetics

This question sought to determine if students use what they learnt in Phonetics module or not. An analysis of the results shown above reveals that the majority of respondents 23 with the percentage 51% claimed that they do not use what they learnt in phonetic. However, 22 students (49%) shows the opposite which mean they do you use what they learnt.

If no, justify your answer, please.

Respondents were asked to justify their choices; they stated that what we learnt is not helpful, and not important to use it outside classroom; the subject is too hard and the teacher could not deliver the message. Therefore, most of the justifications were that phonetics module is the most difficult module, which is why they do not use what they learnt.

Item eleven: What factors affect your foreign accent?

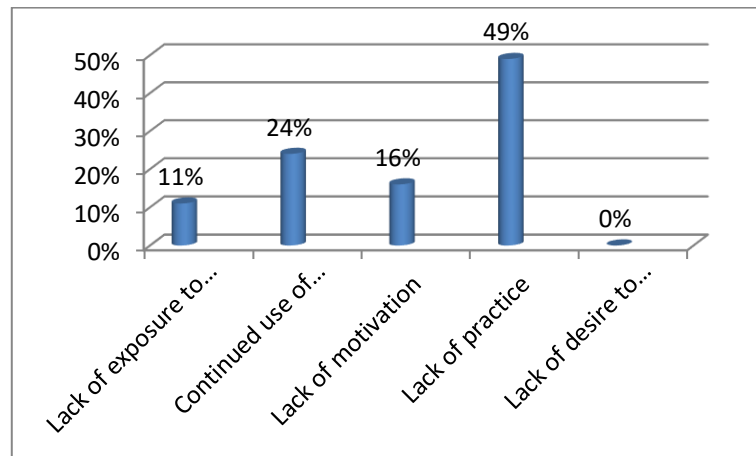


Figure 10: Factors Affecting Students' Foreign Accent

Based on the above results, it can be observed that the most prevalent factor identified by the majority of students (22) is the lack of practice, which was mentioned by 49% of the participants. The second most commonly factor is the continued use of first language, and it was mentioned by (24%) of 11 students. This means that the first language interference might be influential in accent. Approximately, 16% of students believe that the lack of motivation has a negative effect on developing the accent. A small percentage of students (11%) mentioned the lack of exposure as a factor that affecting foreign accent. Furthermore, no one of the participants mentioned the lack of desire to reach a native-like accent as a factor.

Item twelve: Do you use your mother tongue to discuss with your teachers and classmates?

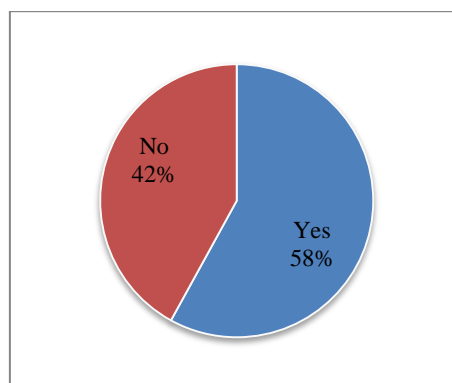


Figure 11: The Students' Evaluation about their Usage of their Mother Tongue

Based on the responses in the figure above, out of the total respondents, 58% of students (26) reported that they do use their mother tongue when engaging in discussions with their teachers and classmates. On the other hand, 42% of students (19) indicated that they do not use their mother tongue, and they rely on English during these interactions to practice and improve their English language skill.

If yes, justify your answer, please.

The participants were asked to justify their answers, and they stated that they use their mother tongue to avoid potential misunderstandings. In addition, they claim that the use of mother tongue is due to the lack of confidence in their English abilities; when they face challenges in finding the exact words or expressions in English, they tend to use Arabic.

Item thirteen: Level of Accent the Students Can Acquire

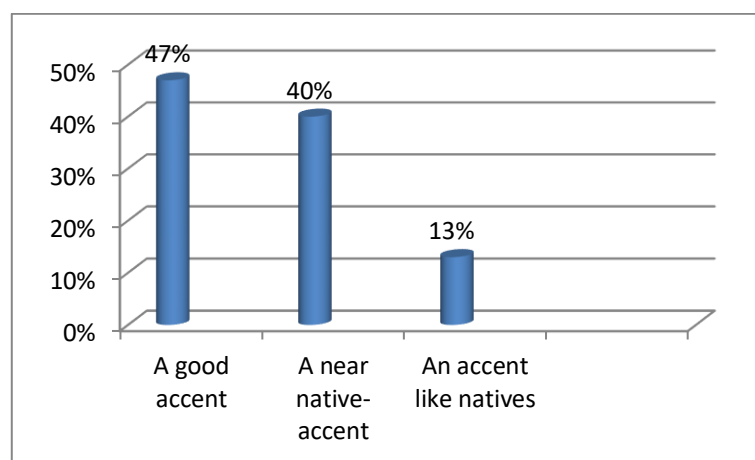


Figure 12: Level of Accent Students Can Acquire

The results shown above indicate that the majority of students (21) with the percentage (47%) believed that they can acquire a good accent; around 13% of students (6) expressed confidence in acquiring an accent similar to that of native speakers while 40% of participants believed that they could attain a near- native accent. It can be concluded that there are various

beliefs and expectations regarding language learning abilities among learners which may stem from various factors such as language learning aptitude, individual motivation.

Item fourteen: The Language that Students Use in Arranging their Thoughts

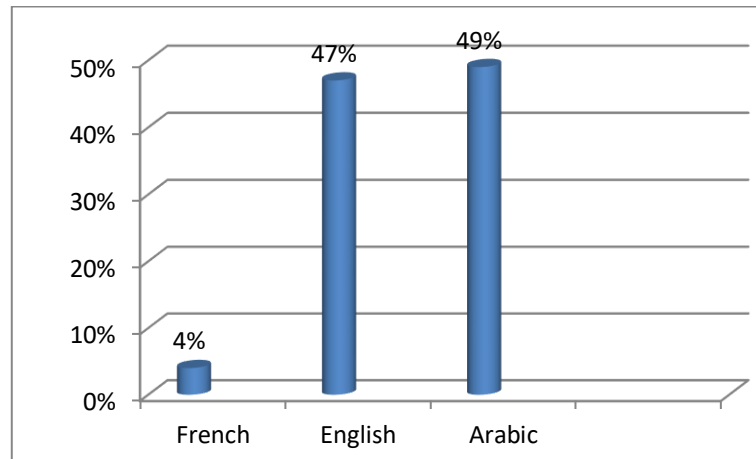


Figure 13: The Language used by Students in Arranging their Thoughts

The figure above shows that the majority of the students (22) with the percentage (49%) prefer to arrange their thoughts in Arabic before expressing them in English. Around 21 students reported using English directly which was mentioned by 47% of the students, and a small number of students prefer using French as their language of choice for organizing their thoughts. Therefore, it is generally encouraged to gradually minimize the reliance on arranging thoughts using another language for students of English, and aiming for more direct thinking using English language.

Item fifteen: The Aspect Students Focus On During Learning

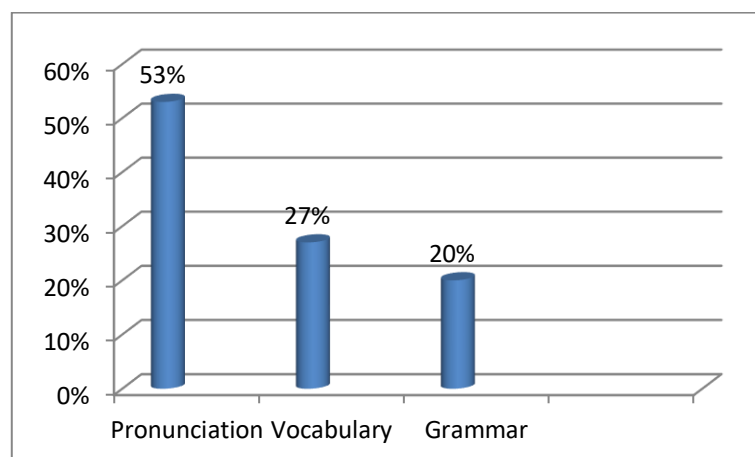


Figure 14: The Aspects Students Focus on During Learning

Based on the results shown above, it can be observed that the majority of students (24) with the percentage (53%) prioritize pronunciation as their main focus during learning. This suggests that they focus on developing correct pronunciation skills which is important for effective communication in any language. Furthermore, 27% of the students (12) focus on vocabulary which indicates that they prioritize expanding their vocabulary knowledge to understand and express ideas accurately. Lastly, 20% of the students (9) focus on grammar, and this suggests they emphasize learning and mastering the rules and structures of the language.

Item sixteen: The Students' Evaluation on the Ways to Eliminate Foreign Accent.

As a conclusion, this open-ended question designed to gather the students' perspectives about the strategies and ways to reduce foreign accent; they stated:

- Focusing on pronunciation practices especially sounds and phonetic patterns of the target language.
- Listening to native speakers and imitating their pronunciation.

- It is beneficial to immerse oneself in the target language as much as possible. This may include watching movies, listening to music, and engaging in conversations with native speakers.
- It is recommended to engage in speaking practice with partners or tutors who can provide feedback on pronunciation.

3.1 Discussion and Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire

The sample of this questionnaire consists of 45 participants of second year LMD in English at Biskra University. This sample is comprised of 69% of females while 31% represent males. This means that English language appeals more to females than males. The conclusion of the study is based on the participants' answers of the questionnaire.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the influential factors that affect the degree of foreign accent among EFL learners. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore strategies to reduce and eliminate foreign accent. First of all, it is obtained from this questionnaire that students place greater emphasis on pronunciation more than the other aspects related to learning languages such as grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, they encounter difficulties in acquiring English accents. Furthermore, the results showed that most of the students (87%) chose to study English personally while (13%) were imposed to study it. Additionally, the majority of students do not practice English outside classroom that is the reason of having difficulties in acquiring English accent. Therefore, they evaluate their level of their accent as average. In case they face difficulties in pronouncing a word they rely on the internet since it is the most appropriate and available source of information; they develop their accent using audio books, dictionaries, applications, and listening to native speakers. Another notable finding derived from this study is that the factors affecting the degree foreign accent can be enumerated as follows: lack of practice (49%), continued use of

first language (14%), lack of motivation (16%), and lack of exposure to target language (11%).

Similarly important, based on the answers provided by the students regarding the elimination of foreign accent, their feedback highlighted several techniques for accent reduction including focusing on pronunciation especially sounds and phonetic patterns, listening to native speakers and imitating them, immersing oneself in the target language, and engaging in speaking practices with partners and tutors who can provide feedback.

It is concluded that the students demonstrate positive attitudes related to pronunciation especially that they unanimously agree that it is the most critical element in learning the English language.

3.2 Teachers' Questionnaire

3.7.1 Description of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first section contains of three items as general information, and the second sections concerns the factors affecting foreign accent; it includes seven items. The teachers' questionnaire involves both open and close ended questions which attempt to gather their perspectives concerning the factors affecting foreign accent.

3.7.2 Administration of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire was designed to teachers of phonetics and oral modules of English at Biskra University, in a form of printed version. Eight teachers responded to the questionnaire. Oral and phonetic teachers were chosen because their expertise can provide valuable insights about pronunciation which is an essential area to understand foreign accent, and to enhance the overall comprehensiveness of our research.

3.7.3 Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: General information

Item one: Teaching Qualification

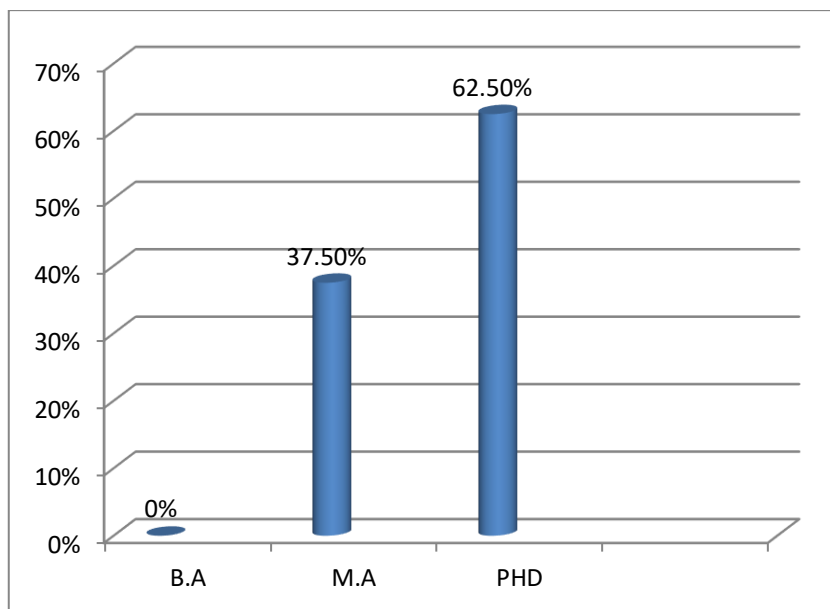


Figure 15: Teachers' Levels of Education

The figure above shows that none of the teachers have a B.A degree, while 37.5% have an M.A degree, and 62.5% have a PHD degree. This means that the majority of teachers have a PHD degree which indicates a significant number of highly qualified and experienced individuals in this sample.

Item two: How many years have you been teaching English at University?

This question deals with years of experience in teaching English at University. The responses of teachers varied which ranges from 2 years to 15 years. One teacher has been teaching for 2 years, while two teachers had 8 years of experience. Another teacher had 7 years of experience. However, two teachers reported that they have been teaching English for

5 years and 15 years. This mix of experience levels can bring different perspectives concerning the factors affecting foreign accent.

Section two: Factors affecting foreign accent

Item three: The Importance of Accent

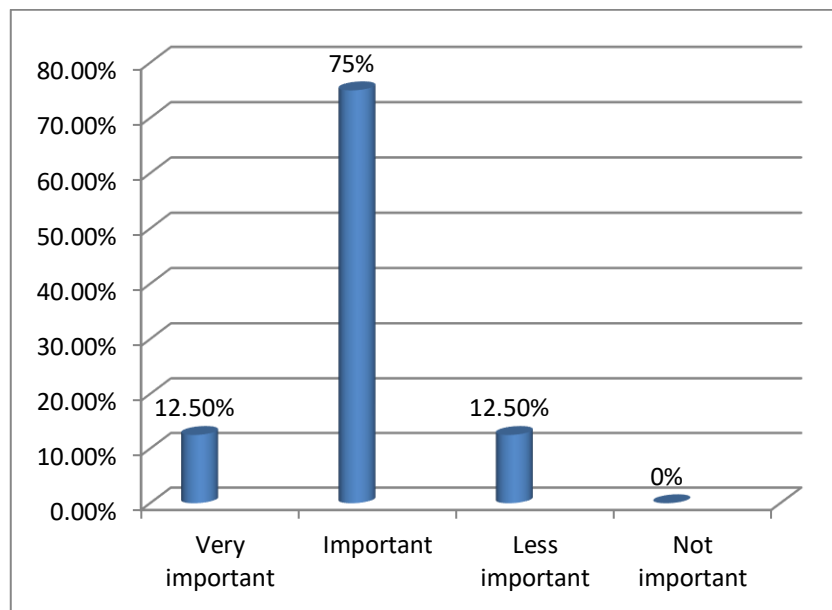


Figure 16: The Teachers' Evaluations Regarding the Importance of Accent

The results above show that the majority of teachers (75%) consider accent to be important. Additionally, 12.5% believe that it is very important, while another 12.5% perceive it as less important. Furthermore, no one of the respondents stated that accent is not important. This indicates that accent is significant for an effective communication.

Item four: How do you evaluate your students' general foreign accent?

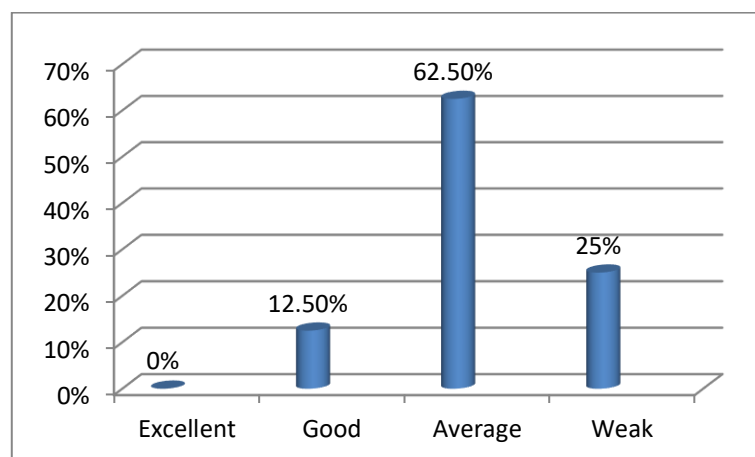


Figure 17: The Teachers' Evaluations of their Students' Foreign Accent Level

The data above illustrates that none of the teachers rated the students' accent as excellent, while 12.5% of the teachers consider their students' accent to be good. Around 25% of teachers claim that their students' accent is weak. However, the majority (62.5%) rated the accent as average which means that most students possess an acceptable foreign accent.

Item five: Do you think that it is necessary to have a good foreign accent, justify?

This question was posed to gather the viewpoints of teachers regarding the necessity of students having a good accent or not; they stated:

- Yes, it is. Each language has got its own accent. The latter is necessary for communication.
- It is good to have a good accent, but the most important thing is to pronounce words clearly and appropriately
- Yes, better to have a good accent, but the most important thing is to speak an accurate English
- Yes, it is necessary because we are judged via our accent

- It is important to have a good accent to help students communicate properly especially if abroad.
- It is important to have a good accent to assure a better and correct comprehension.
- I do not think so, what is important is having other skills such as sufficient linguistic knowledge (vocabulary, grammar rules, cohesion, coherence, pragmatics), so that we can easily and clearly convey our messages.
- Not necessary, I would like my students to speak correct English (accented or not).

It is observed that the majority of the teachers agreed on the necessity of have a good accent among students.

Item six: Do you have difficulties in understanding your students' accent? Why?

Teachers were asked about any challenges they encounter when it comes to comprehending the accent of their students. Here is how they responded:

- Sometimes yes, students use both American and British accent, and they often imitate native speakers, and use informal language.
- I often find difficulty understanding my students because of the mispronunciation of words, lack of knowledge of grammar rules.
- I do not have a problem with my students' accent because usually they use a very simple language.
- No, it is very simple and understandable.
- No, at all.
- No, I understand all of them.
- Sometimes yes, when they do not pronounce the words correctly.
- Yes, because they confuse with different accents.

It is concluded that half of the teachers experience difficulties in understanding their students' accent, while the other half do not find it challenging.

Item seven: In your opinion, what are the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent?

In response to this question, teachers expressed their opinions on the factors influencing the degree of foreign accent. Here are the key points they mentioned: lack of exposure to the target language, and mispronunciation. Another factor highlighted is the stress placed on syllables. Additionally, the teachers mentioned the long vowels pronunciation as a factor influencing foreign accent. Mother tongue influence has been cited as a factor too. French language influence and lack of practice (pronunciation) impact the students' accent. Finally, negative transfer which refers to the interference of native language pronunciation patterns on the target language can influence the degree of foreign accent among language learners.

Item eight: Do you encourage your students to develop their accent? Why? and How?

Teachers were questioned regarding their stance on encouraging students to develop their accent, and their responses were as follows:

- Yes, I do it implicitly. Students need to be well understood through their correct pronunciation. The more your English is well pronounced, the more your interlocutors understand you.
- I do. This is because intelligibility is key speaking, but also because understanding natives is important for learning. I do this through several listening activities (to podcasts, movies, and talk shows).

- I highly encourage them to develop their accent, and I invite them to choose one accent in order to facilitate their learning and develop their accent clarity.
- Yes, by listening more to podcasts, and practicing outside the class.
- Yes, of course. I encourage them via listening to BBC News, then imitating journalists in front of the mirror.
- Yes, because it adds to their language proficiency. I encourage them via listening more to English.
- Yes, a good accent clarifies the intended communicative message.
- Yes, by intensive listening to native speakers.

Item nine: What are your suggestions as a teacher of English in enhancing students' accent and eliminating foreign accent?

- Exposure to authentic materials
- Listen to how native speakers pronounce words and imitate them.
- Learn phonetic transcription
- Practice makes perfect. Students are required to speak as much as they can with peers, teachers, friends, and family.
- I suggest giving too much consideration to teaching modules like phonetics and oral expressions.
- Raise their awareness of all kinds of negative transfer, and how first language can influence their speech, but also empower them by increasing their self-confidence when expressing themselves.
- Avoiding direct and immediate correction

3.3 Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

To begin with, the sample of this questionnaire consists of eight phonetics and oral expression teachers of English at Biskra University. Five teachers (62.5%) achieved PHD degree, while three of them (37.5%) have a M.A degree. As for the experience of teaching, it ranges from 2 to 15 years which reveals that the participants of this sample are qualified and experienced in the field.

In addition, most of teachers (75%) view that accent is important in acquiring a language because learners are judged through their accent. Furthermore, the teachers evaluate their students' general foreign accent as average, and they agreed on the necessity of having a good accent among learners. Moreover, teachers of phonetics and oral expression clarified having difficulties in understanding their students' accent because of the mispronunciation of words.

Another point derived from this study is that there are several factors that influence the degree of foreign accent which are: French language influence, lack of practice, negative transfer, mother tongue influence, lack of exposure to target language. Besides, 100% of the teachers encourage their students to develop their accent. Therefore, the more English is well pronounced, the more interlocutors will get the message. Finally, there are some suggestions that mentioned by teachers to reduce foreign accent which are: giving much consideration to teaching modules like phonetics and oral expression, raising the students' awareness of all kinds of negative transfer, and how first language can influence their speech, avoiding direct and immediate correction, listening to native speakers and imitating them.

3.4 Summary of the Findings

To sum up, the research findings were accomplished through an analysis of questionnaires completed by both teachers and students. The insights gathered from the respondents contributed in reaching the highlighted research aims, and were beneficial. Furthermore, the

findings highlighted the significance of pronunciation and accent in particular. This research aimed to investigate teachers and students' viewpoints concerning foreign accent and the factors affecting the degree of it. Besides, it detected their opinions about how to reduce the problem of foreign accent. Moreover, the results attained that the students' level of pronunciation is considered as an average level that needs improvement. Henceforth, the results validated, and proved our suggested hypothesis.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the fieldwork of the current study. At first a theoretical background of the research methodology was discussed. Additionally, this chapter aimed to describe the results that were gathered through the two questionnaires of both students and teachers. The researcher had analyzed the data which attempts to investigate the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent, and ways to reduce it. The results of this research confirmed our suggested hypothesis and fulfilled the objectives of this study.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

This study was carried out to investigate the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent in EFL learners' speech. The hypothesis of this study is that the factors influencing foreign accent are: mother tongue influence, lack of practice, and to reduce this issue of foreign accent, students need to practice their accent and pronunciation as much as possible.

In order to conduct this study, the research has relied on two questionnaires for both teachers and students. The questionnaire of students was given to second year LMD students at the section of English at Biskra University. On the other hand, the teachers' questionnaire was given to phonetics and oral expression teachers. The finding indicated that both students and teachers acknowledge the significance of pronunciation, highlighting the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent including lack of practice, lack of motivation, and the influence of mother tongue and French language use.

Moreover, suggestions and solutions have been provided to minimize and reduce foreign accent including, active listening to native speakers, imitating their pronunciation, and immersive exposure to the target language. Therefore, the results of the study support the hypothesis that has been mentioned previously.

Recommendation

Based on the analysis of the data and the findings of the study, some pedagogical recommendations can be proposed for teachers and students:

- ✓ It is better to provide special attention to pronunciation. This can be achieved through offering targeted activities that focus on specific phonetic elements, and problem areas commonly faced by learners.
- ✓ Incorporating authentic materials such as videos, podcasts, and songs. This can the learning process more engaging and motivating.

- ✓ Utilizing technology tools and resources such as pronunciation apps can offer opportunities to practice their accent.
- ✓ Addressing individual needs is beneficial especially for students who require additional support or have specific gaps in their pronunciation skills. Therefore, teachers can provide feedback and guidance.

Limitation of the Study

During the research process, it is common to encounter various obstacles. In our study, we encountered specific challenges. One of these obstacles was the need to change the data collection tool. Initially, we intended to utilize a classroom observation, but due to time constraints, we were unable to implement it to obtain reliable and credible data. Additionally, we had initially considered conducting an interview with the teachers instead of using a questionnaire. However, due to time limitations, we could not use it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix one: Students' questionnaire

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Department of Foreign Languages

Section of English

Questionnaire for students

Dear students,

The following questionnaire is an essential part in our research work that concerns the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent in EFL speech. It aims to collect information regarding English pronunciation. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer and give real responses to the questions by ticking the appropriate boxes below or to make a full statement whenever required.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

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Section one: General information

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Was it your choice to study English? Yes No

3. Your level of English is:

High Intermediate Low

Section two: Pronunciation skill

4. Do you think that pronunciation is:

Very important Important Less important Not important

5. Do you consider your accent as:

Weak Average Good Excellent

6. How you find acquiring English accent?

Easy Difficult Very difficult

7. If you faced a difficulty in pronouncing a word what do you do?

Ask your teacher Ask your classmates Ask a native speaker

Use Internet Others

Specify.....

8. What do you do in developing your foreign accent?

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.....
.....

9. Do you practice English outside classroom?

Yes No

Justify.....
.....

10. Do you use what you learned in phonetics module? If No, justify your answer.

Yes No

Justify.....
.....

Section Three: Factors influencing foreign accent

11. What factors affect your foreign accent?

Continued first language use Lack of motivation towards English language

Lack of practice Lack of exposure to target language

Lack of desire to reach Native-like accent Others

Specify.....

12. Do you use your mother tongue while discussing with your teachers and classmates?

Yes No

Why?.....
.....

13. Do you think that you can acquire:

A good accent Near native-like accent An accent like natives

14. Which language do you use in arranging thoughts before saying them in order to communicate in an English classroom?

Arabic French English Others

Mention.....

15. When you learn, do you focus on:

Pronunciation Vocabulary Grammar Others

Mention.....

16. In your opinion, which way is better to eliminate foreign accent?

.....
.....

Thank You for Your Collaboration

Appendix two: teachers' questionnaire

Questionnaire for teachers

Dear teachers,

The following questionnaire is an essential part in our research work that concerns the factors affecting the degree of foreign accent in EFL speech. It aims to collect information regarding English pronunciation. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer and give real responses to the questions by ticking the appropriate boxes below or to make a full statement whenever required.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section one: General information

1. Teaching qualification

a)- B.A b)- M.A c)- PHD

2. How many years have you been teaching English at University?

.....

Section two: Foreign accent

3. Do you think that accent is:

Very important Important Less important Not important

4. How do you evaluate your students' general foreign accent?

Excellent Good Average weak

5. Do you think that it is necessary to have a good foreign accent, justify?

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.....

6. Do you have difficulties in understanding your students' accent? Why?

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.....8.

7. In your opinion, what are the factors that affect the degree of foreign accent? (Mention as much as possible factors, please)

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.....

8. Do you encourage your students to develop their accent ? why? and how?

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9. What are your suggestions as a teacher of English in enhancing students' accent, and eliminating foreign accent?

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.....

Thank You for Your Time

الملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة العوامل التي تؤثر على درجة اللكنة الأجنبية في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في خطاب المتعلمين، كما تهدف إلى إظهار أهمية النطق وإبراز ضرورة تطويره في اللغة المستهدفة. القضية الرئيسية هي أن غالبية طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية يواجهون صعوبات في النطق. لذلك طرحنا في هذه الدراسة الأسئلة التالية؛ ما هي العوامل التي تؤثر في درجة تعلم اللغة الانكليزية الانكليزية؟ وكيف يمكن تخفيف مشكلة اللهجة الأجنبية؟ افترضنا أن الطلاب لا يمارسون اللغة خارج الفصل الدراسي وأنهم متأثرون بلغتهم الأم. وعلاوة على ذلك، من الضروري، بغية الحد من اللهجة الأجنبية، إيلاء اهتمام كبير للممارسات المتعلقة بالكلام والاستماع. استهدفت هذه الدراسة طلاب السنة الثانية في جامعة بسكرة ليكونوا كعينة. وقد اعتقدنا أن النهج النوعي هو الأنسب لهذه الدراسة. بعد هذا التحقيق، يتم اختيار طريقتين لجمع البيانات: استبيان للطلاب واستبيان للمعلمين. بعد تفسير وتحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها، أظهرت النتائج أن العوامل التي تؤثر على درجة اللكنة الأجنبية هي: تأثير كل من اللغة الأم واللغة الفرنسية، وعدم الممارسة، وعدم وجود الدافع، وعدم التعرض للغة الهدف. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، للحد من اللهجة الأجنبية، يجب على الطلاب إحاطة أنفسهم قدر الإمكان باللغة المستهدفة.