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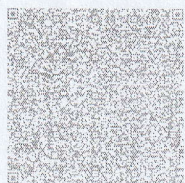
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Department of English Language and Literature



Investigating Pronunciation
Challenges Faced by EFL Students:
Case Study of First Year LMD
Students at the University of Bouira

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature - University of Bouira – in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of Master's Degree in

Didactics and Applied Languages

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Dedication

With deepest gratitude and love, I dedicate this work to:

My amazing parents, for their endless support, prayers, and sacrifices that have carried me through every challenge.

My wonderful sisters including my lovely Kenza and brother, whose encouragement and belief in me never wavered.

My husband, for the dreams we share and the journey ahead.

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And to my dedicated supervisor, whose guidance, patience, and wisdom have been instrumental in the completion of this work.

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First of all, I thank the Almighty Allah for granting me the strength to complete this dissertation.

I dedicate this humble work to

My dearest mother, the sunshine which lights my life.

My sisters, thank you for your unconditioned love and support.

My nephew.

In loving memory of my father and brother whose love, wisdom and strength continue to guide me.

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Last and not least, I dedicate this work to my dearest friend and partner Meriem; the first person I met when starting this academic adventure and the last one with whom I close its last chapter.

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Abstract

Effective communication in the English language requires a range of skills, with pronunciation being a particularly crucial one. Pronunciation has been identified as the most prominent feature of the English language, as well as the most difficult to teach and learn simultaneously. Despite its importance, learners, educators, and even educational programs often overlook it. This oversight has led to numerous challenges and issues that hinder the achievement of language proficiency and impede effective communication. Additionally, various factors related to the individual or their environment significantly exacerbate the situation. The objective of this research is to explore the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the various pronunciation challenges encountered by first-year EFL students at the department of English at the University of Bouira, as well as the contributing factors. Besides, it aims at identifying pedagogical strategies and solutions to help learners overcome these barriers. To reach this aim, a case study research method is used with a mixed approach. The current study is concerned with first year EFL teachers and students as the sample consisted of 6 EFL teachers and 30 EFL students collected through the use of questionnaires given to both teachers and students. Google Form Platform is used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires. Then, the findings of each question are represented statistically as percentages to be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results reveal that segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation are the major area of difficulty faced by students and lack of self-confidence and motivation are the main factors contributing to these challenges. Finally, the study highlights extensive listening as an effective strategy that enhance students' pronunciation.

Key words: teachers' and students' perceptions, pronunciation difficulties, pedagogical strategies, segmental and suprasegmental features, self-confidence, motivation, extensive listening.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

FL: Foreign Language

IPA: International Phonetics Alphabet

NNS: Non-Native Speakers

CAPL: Computer Assisted Pronunciation Technologies

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General

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The English language has emerged as the primary medium for global scientific advancement and economic growth. Recognizing the critical significance of English as the leading vehicle for scientific and technological communication has resulted in its widespread adoption in various educational contexts, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Jo Mc Dounough, Christopher Shaw and Hitomi Masuhara, 2013). With the growing popularity of English as a Lingua Franca, there is definitely a need for many learners to talk and engage in a variety of contexts using the language, whether for travel, business, or other professional purposes.

In numerous situations, an individual's speaking ability is often the primary criterion for initial assessment. (David Graddol, 2006). In other words, people may frequently create judgments about our language competency based on our speech rather than any other language abilities. The knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and mastering the language skills is not sufficient to lead to an intelligible and effective communication. The latter is assured by a proper and correct pronunciation.

Every English learner's goal is to speak English as a native speaker. However, with the complexity of the English language and its different varieties, this seems not an easy task. Christian Dalton and Barbara Seidlhofer (1994) explain that the objective of teaching pronunciation is to create models for reference rather than standards for replication. It is clear that a native speaker model is impractical for most learners, and achieving 'perfection' is an impossible aim. However, there are several essential elements of pronunciation and the English phonetic system that an instructor can focus on. These elements encompass sentence stress and rhythm, intonation, as well as the relationship between sounds and spelling. Frequent mistakes at any of these levels can obstruct effective communication and clarity.

Inappropriate utilization of suprasegmental features or incorrect pronunciation of phonemes can lead to significant challenges; for instance, it may become extremely difficult for individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to understand one another (Louis G. Kelly, 2000). According to Martha C. Pennington and Pamela Rogerson-Revell (2019), pronunciation encompasses the ability to articulate and distinguish the distinct sound units or phonemes that constitute the consonant and vowel system of a language, often termed segmental phonology. Additionally, it involves understanding the characteristics of connected speech that form its prosody or prosodic system, commonly known as suprasegmental phonology. The prosodic system, or suprasegmental phonology, fundamentally includes elements such as tone and intonation (characterized by pitch), rhythm (characterized by duration), and stress.

Furthermore, numerous elements influence the pronunciation of learners. These elements can be categorized into individual or external differences, including first language (L1), age, period of residence, and exposure to the foreign language (FL), which are significant indicators of foreign accent. Moreover, psychological or internal factors such as motivation and the desire to assimilate into the target culture also affect learners' pronunciation. In addition, the quality of formal instruction and the learning environment play a crucial role in determining pronunciation accuracy (Elizabeth M. Kissling, 2014). In the same context, Joanne Kenworthy (1988; as cited in Mohammed Abdalghane, 2020) states that factors including the native language, age, level of exposure, phonetic skills, attitude and identity, motivation, and concern for accurate pronunciation significantly impact the process of learning pronunciation.

Besides, in the area of pronunciation instruction, pronunciation is not given its real status despite its significant importance and little attention is attributed to teaching pronunciation in educational programs. The existing ones are far from being sufficient to address the problems students are struggling with when communicating and much work has to be done away from the "*conventional methodology*" consisting of drilling and automatic exercises (Fathia Kerroum, 2022). Teachers usually face issues concerning content, time and resources. As John J. McCarthy (1976) states that the instruction of pronunciation may only take up a fraction of the class time for a foreign language instructor, as their overall time must be allocated across various aspects of language education.

In Algeria, a rising interest has recently been accorded to the English language teaching which resulted in its implementation in primary schools. Nevertheless, the speaking skill and pronunciation teaching methodology is still far from providing a consistent content of an ideal pronunciation curriculum or program. As Bouhadjar Fethi Belkhir (2021) states that despite the significance of a syllabus, most of the informants (Teachers of Oral Expression) admit that there is no written document outlining the content and objectives established for Oral Expression for freshmen. Though English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Algeria have been studying English for so long, they are still struggling with several pronunciation issues which affect their communicative competence. In this regard, Belkhir (2016) claims that for several decades, English has been taught and learned as a foreign language in Algeria. However, there is a noticeable weakness associated with the learners' communicative skills, largely due to the challenges faced in mastering pronunciation.

There are numerous studies investigating pronunciation challenges and difficulties facing EFL learners which hinder effective communication in the existing literature. A study conducted by Mohamed Abdulgalil Abugohar and Kamariah Yunus (2018) entitled "*Difficulties Encountered*

by *Arab Students in Pronouncing English Correctly*” aimed at investigating the difficulties that hamper high school students in Saudi Arabia from pronouncing English vocabulary and simple sentences correctly and fluently. The primary conclusions of the research indicated that most of learners face considerable challenges in accurately pronouncing English. The most prominent issues include segmental and supra-segmental features, speech connectivity, a lack of awareness among teachers regarding effective pronunciation instruction methods, and the discrepancies between the phonetic systems of their native language, Arabic, and English, leading to interference from their mother tongue.

Besides, Raad Ali Hameed (2024) carried out a research called “*The Pronunciation Problems Encountered by EFL Learners in Spoken English at University*” at Al-Hikma University college in Baghdad, Iraq. This research examined the pronunciation difficulties of EFL undergraduate learners at universities when pronouncing English phonemes and aimed at providing practical teaching methods for teaching English phonemes and encouraging students to create and learn these phonemes appropriately. The findings indicated that the curriculum failed to address the specific needs of the students. Arab learners received inadequate instruction in English pronunciation within the educational system and had minimal opportunities to engage with the language beyond the classroom. Ali Hameed proposed several strategies to enhance learners' speaking skill and pronunciation, including fostering active interaction between educators and students, encouraging exposure to a variety of phonemes and vocabulary, and offering regular practice sessions for the learners.

In another study entitled “*Investigating Pronunciation Errors of Bejaia University EFL learners*”, Sadjia Chebchoub (2016) conducted a case study at Bejaia University to investigate the common major pronunciation errors of students and to find implications that help teachers and learners overcome these difficulties. The findings of the research indicated that the participants made a significant number of pronunciation mistakes concerning vowels, consonants, and the placement of stress.

However, none of these researches were conducted at Bouira University. Besides, they did not take into account all the pronunciation aspects from the perspectives of both teachers and students; as a result, the present study aims to investigate both teachers and learners' perceptions on the common pronunciation challenges faced by first year EFL students at Bouira university and the factors leading to these phonological difficulties. In addition, it attempts to provide some solutions and pedagogical strategies that could assist the students as well as teachers in order to overcome the challenges encountered.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the pronunciation difficulties faced by first year EFL learners at the University of Bouira as well as the factors contributing to them. First, the present research attempts to contribute to the existing literature and background knowledge in the field of pronunciation and its difficulties as it provides valuable insights into the intersection of pronunciation, confidence and speaking in EFL context. Second, it seeks to highlight the significance of pronunciation by unveiling key concepts and paving the way to new questions to emerge for further studies. Finally, it aims to encourage EFL teachers to look for pedagogical strategies and techniques that can be applied to address the challenges that most learners encounter in pronunciation.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research tries to answer the following questions:

- a) What are the pronunciation difficulties faced by first year EFL students?
- b) What factors influence learners' pronunciation?
- c) What pedagogical strategies can be employed to address these challenges?

In an attempt to answer the above questions, we forward the present hypotheses:

- ✓ Segmental and supra-segmental features are the major area of difficulty faced by students.
- ✓ Lack of self-confidence and motivation are the main factors.
- ✓ Extensive listening is an effective strategy that enhance students' pronunciation.

Research Techniques and Methodology

This study adopts an exploratory research type to examine challenges encountered by learners in pronunciation. It follows a mixed approach because it provides a deep understanding about a particular context using numerical data. The methodology involves collecting data from first year EFL students and their teachers through questionnaires aiming to gather detailed personal perceptions. The collected data is then analyzed using thematic analysis offering a balanced view of the perceived pronunciation difficulties.

The Structure of the Study

The present study is composed of three chapters. The first chapter supplies the reader with an overview about the theoretical background of pronunciation including its definition, its aspects, its significance, its difficulties and other concepts related to the research topic. It also tackles the factors that influence learners' pronunciation. Moreover, a special focus on the status of teaching English pronunciation in the Algerian educational system will be sketched out all along. The

second chapter demonstrates the research approach, design and its procedures. It highlights the nature of the research and gives its definition and usage. It delineates the population, sample and the setting. Besides, it deals with the analytical tools that are used to collect data from the research sample and analyze it. Furthermore, the chapter provides the research's restrictions and limitations. As for the third chapter, it is devoted to the presentation of the findings and their discussion. It ends with a general conclusion that sums up everything said throughout, along with a set of suggestions and recommendations in regard to pronunciation teaching improvement for EFL students.

Chapter One:

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide insights about different concepts concerning pronunciation in the EFL context, with a focus on its definition, its segmental and supra-segmental features and its importance. Besides, it examines the factors that influence pronunciation, delves into the challenges faced by EFL learners, and highlights the impact of pronunciation on intelligibility.

1. Pronunciation

1.1 Definition of Pronunciation

One of the key components of the speaking skill is pronunciation. It has been defined by numerous scholars from different perspectives. According Lynda Guehiliz (2019) pronunciation is the production of sounds, phrases, and sentences using appropriate articulation, linking, stress, and intonation to successfully convey the intended meaning. Martha C Pennington and Pamela Rogerson-Revell (2019, p.1) also refer to it as «*the foundation of messaging in speech through articulating words and their combinations in grammatical and discourse units and through projecting multiple facets of social and contextual meaning.*» In short, pronunciation enables people to articulate words and combine them into meaningful sentences and larger units of speech. Additionally, it conveys social and contextual meanings such as tone, emotion, or cultural nuances, which are crucial for effective interaction and understanding.

Some researchers define pronunciation as '*the use of a sound system*'. According to Kristina Diah and Rarasteja Zita, (2000 as cited in Imane Gueroui, 2016), pronunciation involves a sound system that includes both the production and reception of speech, ultimately leading to the conveyance of meaning. Moreover, in the words of Robert Lado (1964), it is the usage of a sound system in speaking and listening. He also states that the language pronunciation consists of consonants, vowels, intonation, stress, rhythm, junctures, and their sequences. It also includes phonemes, allophones, and phonemic features; adding to that, the syllable patterns, sound clusters, and phrase patterns permitted in the language.

However, pronunciation is viewed not only as a sound system expressing referential meaning, but also as a key communication component of the interactional dynamics process. i.e. pronunciation and communication cannot be separated (Martha C. Pennington and Jack C. Richard, 1986). Pronouncing words clearly and accurately is crucial for understanding other people's spoken language as well as for being understood by others. According to Murray J. Munro and Tracey M. Derwing (1995), accurate pronunciation, along with vocabulary and grammar, is key to effective verbal communication. Moreover, Susan Gass and Evangeline Marlos Varonis

(1984) investigated the role of pronunciation and grammar on the comprehensibility of non-native speech and their major finding was that both elements were important for intelligibility. Furthermore, Abugohar and Yunus (2018) confirm that in order to communicate properly and effectively, an accurate pronunciation is necessary for both making the message clear and ensuring that the learner understands it; therefore, improper pronunciation leads to misunderstanding. Moustafa Amrate (2018) explains that pronunciation is key to effective communication. While vocabulary and grammar mistakes can often be understood or compensated for, poor pronunciation can prevent a listener from receiving the message at all. Even a speaker with strong language skills may struggle to communicate if their words aren't clearly pronounced. This highlights why clear pronunciation is essential for ensuring ideas are properly conveyed in spoken language. In his own words:

While the lack of vocabulary and grammatical inaccuracy can be forgiven by the listener or compensated by the speaker, poor pronunciation is more likely to cause communication breakdowns as it prevents messages from being transferred to the listener in the first place. Even in cases where the speaker has a rich vocabulary and accurate grammar, poor pronunciation can prevent communication from taking place [...] (p.22)

1.2 Aspects of Pronunciation

When addressing pronunciation in EFL classrooms, there are two primary areas of focus:

1.2.1 Segmental Features of Pronunciation

Segmental features, also known as phonemic, pertain to the distinct phonetic attributes of individual sound segments (Pennington and Richard, 1986). They are the phonetic characteristics found in individual speech sounds, such as consonants and vowels (Okim kang and April Ginther, 2018). The phonemic element of pronunciation teaching emphasizes the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. When practicing such aspects of English pronunciation, teachers frequently employ phonetic transcription by means of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Such alphabets are a collection of symbols created and introduced by the International Phonetic Association with the objective of correctly representing segmental sounds for languages that use the Latin alphabets (Marnie Reed and John M Levis, 2015; as cited in Amrate, 2018).

The table below provides a summary of the phonemic alphabets utilized to represent vowels and consonants in the English language:

Vowels and diphthongs		Consonants	
Phonetic symbols	Examples	Phonetic symbols	Examples
i:	<u>See</u>	p	<u>P</u> et
ɪ	H <u>i</u> t	b	<u>B</u> ad
ʊ	P <u>u</u> t	t	<u>T</u> ea
u:	<u>Food</u>	d	<u>D</u> id
ɪə	<u>Near</u>	tʃ	<u>C</u> heck
eɪ	<u>E</u> ight	dʒ	<u>J</u> une
e	<u>B</u> ed	k	<u>C</u> ar
ə	<u>A</u> way	g	<u>G</u> ive
ɜ:	<u>L</u> earn	f	<u>F</u> ind
ɔ:	<u>D</u> oor	v	<u>V</u> oice
ʊə	<u>P</u> ure	θ	<u>T</u> hink
ɔɪ	<u>B</u> oy	ð	<u>T</u> his
əʊ	<u>S</u> how	s	<u>S</u> un
æ	<u>C</u> at	z	<u>Z</u> oo
ʌ	<u>C</u> up	ʃ	<u>S</u> he
ɑ:	<u>F</u> ar	ʒ	<u>V</u> ision
ɒ	<u>O</u> n	m	<u>M</u> an
eə	<u>A</u> ir	n	<u>N</u> o
aɪ	<u>E</u> ye	ŋ	<u>S</u> ing
aʊ	<u>N</u> ow	h	<u>H</u> at
		l	<u>L</u> ove
		r	<u>R</u> ed
		w	<u>W</u> indow
		j	<u>Y</u> es

Table 1 Phonemic Symbols of the English Language (Amrate, 2018).

1.2.1.1 Vowels

Vowels are spoken sounds produced without any interaction between speech organs. All vowels are voiced sounds whose articulation does not restrict or stop airflow that may escape via the mouth cavity as it moves from the larynx to the lips (Haroun Melgani, 2021). In his explanations, Peter Roach (1991) gives the example of a doctor who wants to examine the back of a patient's mouth; he frequently asks the patient to say “ah” as this vowel sound is the best way to provide an unobstructed view. Moreover, Richard Ogden (2009, p.56) points out that «*Vowels are syllabic sounds made with free passage of air down the mid-line of the vocal tract, usually with a convex tongue shape, and without friction. They are normally voiced; and they are normally oral.*» All in all, vowel articulation involves neither an airflow blockage nor articulator-to-articulator contact. Vowels are naturally voiced sounds that can be shaped by varying tongue positions,

heights, and lip rounding. In English, they are divided into three groups: monophthongs (or pure vowels), diphthongs, and triphthongs (Melgani, 2021, p.38).

1.2.1.1.1 Monophthongs

In General American English and BBC pronunciation, there are seven short vowels and five long vowels. The former vowels are quite common in everyday speech and typically short in length whereas the latter ones tend to be longer (Melgani, 2021). Short vowels include: /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɒ/, /ʊ/, and /ə/. As for long vowels, they are /i:/, /ɜ:/, /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, and /u:/.

1.2.1.1.2 Diphthongs

Diphthongs exhibit greater complexity compared to monophthongs. While short and long vowels are characterized by a single sound, diphthongs are formed by the combination of two distinct sounds. The articulation of diphthongs involves a smooth transition of the tongue from one position to another. This gliding motion signifies a change from one sound to another, as seen in the transition from /e/ to /ɪ/ in the word “rate” and from /e/ to /ə/ in “fair”. Roach (2009) notes that although the duration of diphthongs is generally comparable to that of monophthongs, the first vowel is typically longer and louder than the second. For instance, when pronouncing the diphthong /ɪə/, one can observe a decrease in loudness as the articulation shifts to the second sound, schwa (Melgani, 2021). English has three centering diphthongs: /ɪə/, /eə/, and /ʊə/, three diphthongs that terminate with the vowel /ɪ/: /eɪ/, /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/; adding to that, two other diphthongs that conclude with the vowel /ʊ/ which are /əʊ/ and /aʊ/.

1.2.1.1.3 Triphthongs

The triphthongs represent the most intricate sounds among English vowels. They can pose significant challenges in both pronunciation and recognition. A triphthong involves a seamless transition from one vowel sound to another, followed by a third, all produced swiftly and without interruption. For instance, when pronouncing the word 'hour' carefully, one starts with a vowel sound similar to /a/, transitions to a glide towards the back close rounded area (represented by the symbol /ʊ/), and concludes with a mid-central vowel sound (the schwa /ə/). The symbol /aʊə/ is used to depict the pronunciation of 'hour' (Roach, 2009).

According to Roach (2009), the triphthongs can be described as a combination of the five closing diphthongs mentioned above, with /ə/ added at the end. So, we obtain:

$$/eɪ/ + /ə/ = /eɪə/$$

$$/ɔɪ/ + /ə/ = /ɔɪə/$$

$$/aɪ/ + /ə/ = /aɪə/$$

/ əʊ / + / ə / = / əʊə /

/ aʊ / + / ə / = / aʊə /

1.2.1.2 Consonants

Consonants are all non-vowel sounds or the letters that correspond to them; A, E, I, O, U, and, occasionally Y, are classified as vowels not consonants (Guehiliz, 2019). Rachael- Anne Knight (2012, p.9) defines consonants as «*sounds made with a lot of constriction in the mouth, so that the air coming up from the lungs gets squashed. Consonant sounds also tend to occur at the start and end of syllables for example, like those at the beginning and end of the words ‘dog’, ‘cat’, ‘pen’ and ‘tub’.*»

A brief glance at the IPA chart indicates that the English language comprises a variety of consonants (Melgani, 2021). The 24 distinct consonant phonemes can be categorized based on three primary characteristics: voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation. These characteristics enable us to accurately describe each consonant phoneme and differentiate them from one another (Marriane Celce Murcia, Donna M. Brinton and Janet M. Goodwin, 2011).

1.2.1.2.1 Voicing

Voicing refers to the sound produced when the vocal folds vibrate (Roach, 1991). Consonants that are produced with the vocal cords vibrating are referred to as Voiced consonants, while those produced without any vibration are known as Voiceless consonants. Voiced consonants are /r/, /m/, /j/, /w/, /d/, /v/, /n/, /z/, /l/, /dʒ/, /ð/, /ʒ/, /fi/, /ŋ/ whereas voiceless consonants are /tʃ/, /f/, /t/, /h/, /θ/, /s/, /f/, /k/, /p/. In English, all consonants produce a single sound, except for / dʒ / and / ʃ /, which are made up of two consonants. It is important to recognize that each consonant represents a blend of two sounds that share the same voicing quality. For instance, / dʒ / consists of two voiced sounds: / d / and / ʒ / (Melgani, 2021).

1.2.1.2.2 Place of Articulation

Celce-Murcia et al (2011) refer to the place of articulation as the area where the sound is made. They are the locations where the airflow can be altered (Philip Carr, 2013). Melgani (2021) summarizes the eight places of articulation based on the works of other researchers as follows:

Bilabials /p/, /b/, /m/, /w/: Bilabial is a term derived from Latin, composed of two components: “bi” meaning two, and “labial” which pertains to the lips. Bilabial sounds, such as /p/, /b/, /m/, and /w/, are produced when the lower lip comes into contact with the upper lip, creating a complete closure between them.

Labiodentals /f/, /v/: To articulate the labiodental sounds /f/ and /v/, the lower lip comes close to the upper teeth. It is important to observe that when you pronounce the sound /f/ followed by the sound /v/, you can sense a slight forward movement of the lower lip.

Dentals /ð/, /θ/: The term “dentals” is derived from the French word “la dent” which means tooth. These sounds are produced when the lower teeth make contact with the upper teeth.

Alveolar /t/, /d/, /r/, /s/, /z/, /l/, /n/: Alveolar consonants derive their name from the alveolar ridge, a firm tissue situated just behind the teeth. You can readily locate the alveolar ridge by sliding your thumb back and forth over the tough tissue on the roof of your mouth.

Post-Alveolar /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/: The term “post-alveolar” refers to the area located just behind the bony alveolar ridge. When producing post-alveolar consonants, the tip or blade of the tongue is raised against the region situated behind the alveolar ridge. The differentiation between alveolar and post-alveolar sounds is relatively straightforward, particularly when pronouncing words that include /t/ and /tʃ/. For instance, in the word "teacher," one can observe that the tongue shifts slightly backward when transitioning from the /t/ sound to the /tʃ/ sound. This movement clearly demonstrates that the articulation of alveolar consonants and post-alveolar consonants occurs at two distinct points of contact.

Palatal /j/: The term “palatal” derived from the word “palate” refers to the articulation produced by positioning the front part of the tongue against the back area of the hard palate. Instances that exemplify the palatal sound /j/ include words such as “yield”, “yes”, and “yellow”.

Velar Sounds /g/, /k/, /ŋ/: To produce velar sounds, the back part of the tongue, known as the dorsum, elevates towards the soft palate, or velum. Examples of velar sounds include the words gate (/g/), tongue (/ŋ/), and case (/k/).

Glottal /h/: The previously mentioned points of articulation involve contact at the upper lip, upper teeth, or any specific area of the roof of the mouth, including both the hard and soft palates. In contrast, the glottal sound /h/ is produced with contact at the glottis, which is the space between the vocal cords within the larynx (Knight, 2012). The sound /h/ is considered voiced when it is followed by a voiced sound, whether a vowel or a consonant. Conversely, it is classified as voiceless (or devoiced) when followed by a voiceless sound or the sound /j/, as seen in the word “humid”. The voiced version is represented by the symbol /h/, while the voiceless version is denoted by the symbol /h̥/.

1.2.1.2.3 Manner of Articulation

Another way to characterize consonants is by examining their manner of articulation, which refers to the production of specific speech sounds. This concept emphasizes the interaction

between active and passive articulators as they come together to create a stricture within the vocal tract (Collins and Mees, 2013; as cited in Melgani, 2021). Speech sounds are generated through various manners of articulation, depending on how the airflow is manipulated by the vocal organs. Plosive sounds, which include /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/, are created by a complete closure in the vocal tract, followed by a sudden release of air. Affricates, such as /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ start like plosives but allow the air to be released more gradually. Fricatives, which encompass /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/ are produced by a narrow constriction that generates friction. Nasal sounds, including /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/, occur when air flows through the nasal cavity due to a lowered soft palate. The lateral sound /l/ is articulated by directing the airflow around the sides of the tongue. Approximants, such as /w/, /j/, and /r/, involve the vocal organs coming close to each other without producing turbulent airflow (Kelly, 2000).

1.2.2 Suprasegmental Features of Pronunciation

Suprasegmental features, known also as prosody, pertains to the functioning of speech sounds and their influence at the levels of sentences and discourse. This concept encompasses the interaction of various sound segments that come together to form phrases, clauses, and complete sentences. Enhancements in the suprasegmental features of English accent and pronunciation are crucial for producing clear and understandable speech patterns in English. These features are essential for accent reduction and overall speaking proficiency. Key suprasegmental elements of pronunciation include intonation, stress, and rhythm, among others (Lynda Badache, 2018).

1.2.2.1 Intonation

Intonation refers to the variation of pitch in speech that does not serve to differentiate words. Rather, it fulfills various roles, including conveying the speaker's attitudes and emotions, distinguishing between statements and questions, differentiating among various types of questions, emphasizing key components of the spoken message, and facilitating the flow of conversation. Furthermore, variations in pitch have a greater impact on the type of an utterance than on its literal interpretation. Consequently, intonation can distinguish between a declarative statement, an interrogative statement, or an exclamatory statement (Derwing and Munro, 2015; as cited in Amrate 2018). Overall, the intonation of a language refers to the rise and fall of the pitch of the voice that occur during speech. Consequently, intonation plays a crucial role in ensuring clarity, as it conveys the speaker's intentions. An incorrect intonation pattern or a mispronounced word can result in confusion and misinterpretation (Badache, 2018).

1.2.2.2 Stress

Certainly, stress is a significant factor in the phonetics and phonology of English, as it differentiates between stressed and unstressed syllables, thereby establishing the rhythm of spoken English (Amel Alouache, 2017). It is a suprasegmental characteristic of speech. It pertains not to single vowels or consonants, but rather to entire syllables. A syllable that is stressed is articulated with more energy compared to an unstressed syllable, making it more noticeable within the rhythm of speech (Ladefoged and Johnson, 2006; as cited in Badache, 2018). Besides, Pennington and Richard (1986) define the stress as the level of emphasis placed on individual syllables or groups of syllables that constitute a word or a longer expression.

There are three distinct levels of stress, which are outlined as follows:

- **Primary Stress:** This is the most intense form of stress, where the syllables are marked by increased length, strength, higher pitch, and a distinct quality compared to adjacent sounds. It is indicated by a small vertical line placed above the stressed syllable (').

- **Secondary Stress:** This level is less intense than primary stress but more pronounced than unstressed syllables. Syllables that maintain their form without being the most prominent in a word are classified as having secondary stress. This is denoted by a small vertical line positioned below the stressed syllable (,) (Badache, 2018).

1.2.2.3 Rhythm

The concept of rhythm refers to the occurrence of noticeable events at consistent time intervals. Examples of rhythm can be observed in a heartbeat, a blinking light, or a musical composition. It is frequently asserted that English speech possesses a rhythmic quality, which can be identified through the regular occurrence of stressed syllables. The theory suggesting that English exhibits a stress-timed rhythm indicates that stressed syllables are likely to appear at relatively consistent intervals, regardless of the presence of unstressed syllables (Roach, 1991).

2. Teaching Pronunciation

2.1 The Importance of Teaching Pronunciation

The element of pronunciation is a fundamental component of the speaking skill. It is a crucial aspect that must be carefully considered in the instruction of the English language for communication purposes. Effective and clear communication is essential in the context of global interactions, necessitating significant efforts to enhance the pronunciation abilities of students learning EFL (Nassira Boudersa, 2020). Therefore, it is essential for educators to prioritize pronunciation in their lessons. Elements such as sound, stress, rhythm, and intonation significantly

contribute to the clarity of meaning. To prevent misunderstandings, students must achieve proficiency in this aspect of the language (Imane Gueroui, 2016). In this regard, Helen Fraser (2000) asserts that a speaker can be easily understood with proper pronunciation, even if there are other mistakes; conversely, if pronunciation is poor, comprehension can be significantly hindered, regardless of accuracy in other aspects.

In addition to being a crucial and essential component of communication, pronunciation may, in the ideal circumstances, lead to positive exchanges and have a good influence on facets of life that rely on language and successful interpersonal connections. For many aspects of social, academic, and professional life that revolve around spoken language communication, it is therefore a crucial foundational and value-added component (Pennington and Rogerson-Revell, 2019).

Furthermore, pronunciation, as a key component of language, plays a crucial role in shaping identity and is interconnected with other identity factors, including one's country and region of origin, ethnicity, culture, education, and profession. In short, the way an individual pronounces words serves as a reflection of their identity and the communities to which they belong and wish to convey to others (Barry Bai and Rui Yuan, 2018).

All in all, it is always vital for English phonetics and phonology professors to provide EFL students with the theoretical information they need about English pronunciation system. Additionally, they must provide them efficient hands-on instruction to improve their pronunciation of English (Boudersa, 2020).

2.2 Teaching Pronunciation in Algerian Universities

EFL students in Algeria engage in English pronunciation instruction through two distinct modules. The phonetics module familiarizes learners with English sounds, transcription rules, stress patterns, and intonation. Concurrently, the oral expression module, which spans three years at the undergraduate level, focuses on enhancing the listening skill and oral performance, while phonetics is covered over a two-year period. Despite the significance of these modules in developing English pronunciation and the oral skill, students continue to struggle with speaking proficiency. Additionally, there is a notable absence of authentic materials, effective teaching strategies, and updated syllabi that prioritize the integration of ICT in the classroom, resulting in a lack of emphasis on these skills within the educational framework at the school level (Nadia Ghounane and Hanane Rabahi, 2021).

Belkheir (2021) conducted a research on «*Teaching EFL speaking skill: What status to grant to pronunciation and listening instruction.* » Its results reveal that in the realm of pronunciation

teaching; teachers often rely on their intuition instead of empirical research and scientific principles. They typically approach the subject through articulatory phonetics or neglect it entirely.

Algerian universities still rely on traditional grammar-translation methods for teaching English pronunciation to EFL learners. This is despite the presence of audio-visual language laboratories in some universities. Teachers often focus on pronunciation assessment without considering micro-level accents for oral proficiency improvement. Most exams are written, leaving students without opportunities to speak and receive guidance. Additionally, teachers neglect the importance of ICT in pronunciation and their students' needs and motivation (Ghounane, 2019)

3. Pronunciation Goals

3.1 Accuracy vs Fluency

According to Pennington and Richard (1986), with the new communicative orientation and the latest trends in language teaching and learning, pronunciation tends to be a component and a feature of fluency rather than accuracy as it used to be in traditional language learning theories. In this regard, Pennington (2021) states that the emphasis on pronunciation has transitioned from a native speaker standard of correctness or accuracy to include L2 varieties, evaluating pronunciation based on broader objectives such as intelligibility and communicative competence.

3.1.1 Accuracy

Accuracy pertains to the degree to which a speaker effectively utilizes the target language according to its established system (Rod Ellis and Gary Barkhuizen, 2009). Pennington and Rogerson-Ravell (2019) distinguish between “*accuracy*” or referred to as “*correctness*” which is measured according to a model of language or norms of a speech community considering aspects such as consonant articulations, vowel articulations, stress and intonation and “*nativelikeness*” or “*accentedness*” which is assessed according to native speaker model of performance that is devoid of errors and accents.

However, numerous scholars in the domain of phonology (e.g. Jenkins, 2000, 2002; Levis, 2005; Pennington, 2015) have highlighted the challenges in achieving a native-like pronunciation model, given the influence of factors such as age, exposure, and native language. Furthermore, in a diverse landscape of English dialects, establishing standards for nativelikeness proves to be challenging. Alan Davies (2017, p.186) states that «*In the absence of an adequate description of the native speaker, what takes its place is the Standard Language.*», that's to say the standard will vary depending on the specific speech community, (eg. British, American, etc) the model derived

from. In the same context, Jennifer Jenkins (2000) argues that language proficiency can be attained without sticking to native speaker norms.

3.1.2 Fluency

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2009) define fluency as the generation of language in real-time without unnecessary pauses or hesitations. Pennington and Rogerson-Revell (2019, p.299) consider fluency,

to be a global type of proficiency indicative of skilled communicative performance as a result of learning and automatization of behaviors over time, as observed in the speaker's ability to produce continuous and coherent speech in phrasal, clausal, and discoursal units, and to avoid disfluencies and communication breakdowns.

Kathleen Browne and Glenn Fulcher (2017) suggest that learners should be afforded the opportunity to express their thoughts during instruction without immediate interruption or correction. Fluency, which serves as a marker of coherence and is indicative of advanced or "*nativelike*" proficiency in a second language, is frequently linked to concepts of ease, flow, or the "*fluidity*" of speech.

Norman Segalowitz (2010, p.165) distinguishes between cognitive fluency which is the effectiveness of the functioning of the fundamental processes that are accountable for the generation of utterances. , and perceived fluency which is the conclusions that listeners draw regarding speakers' cognitive fluency influenced by their perceptions of the smoothness of the speakers' utterances.

3.1.2.1 Communicative Competence

Communicative competence refers to the ability to use the language not only correctly, but also appropriately in various social situations (Dell hathaway Hymes, 1972). This can be accomplished by implementing significant communicative pronunciation activities in the classroom that concern the use of English in real-life situations, including role-plays, as well as providing exposure to conversations through audiotapes and videotapes to discern variations in pronunciation (Abbas Pourhossein Gilakjani, 2012). Fraser (2000) also advocates the use of communicative methods in teaching pronunciation as it is the case with other skills.

Pennington (2021) adds that teaching pronunciation in isolation is generally improbable, except in certain instances where it may address specific requirements of advanced learners or second language (L2) professionals seeking to enhance their pronunciation.

3.2 Intelligibility

Murray J. Munro, Tracey M. Derwing and Morton S.L. Benson (2006, p.112) define intelligibility as «*the extent to which a speaker's utterance is actually understood.* », contrasting it with 'comprehensibility' as «*the listener's estimation of difficulty in understanding an utterance.*» John M. Levis (2006) suggests two definitions of intelligibility. "*The narrow definition*" refers to the capacity to dissect an L2 speaker's speech into individual words and larger phrases, commonly referred to as 'intelligibility.' In contrast, "*the broader interpretation*" encompasses not only 'intelligibility' but also the understanding of the speaker's intended meaning, which is termed 'comprehension' or 'comprehensibility'.

This intelligibility or comprehensibility could be hampered by many factors. Researchers have divergent points of view concerning the pronunciation features which Non-Native Speakers (NNS) are struggling with and impede intelligibility. Levis (2018) thinks that meaning can be influenced by various pronunciation elements, including segmental and supra-segmental features, as well as other factors such as fluency, speech rate, voice quality, and volume. Jenkins (2000) further asserts that consonant clusters, regardless of their position within a word, pose significant challenges for the majority of adult learners of English. However, when these clusters occur at the beginning of a word, the omission of sounds could hamper the intelligibility of English as an International Language (EIL). Another example provided by Jenkins (2000) is the Japanese speakers of English who often struggle with the pronunciation of the sound represented by 'r', which they frequently confuse with 'l'. This issue is particularly more serious when producing consonant clusters like 'gr'.

Furthermore, prosodic aspect plays a vital role in conveying meaning and the speaker's intentions and emotions. Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms (2005) argue that proper application of stress at the word or sentence level enhances comprehension and aids in differentiating between similar terms, such as the noun 'present' /'preznt/ and the verb 'present' /pri'zent/. According to Jeremy Harmer (2001), the modulation of intonation plays a crucial role in expressing various messages, including emotions, engagement, empathy, and more.

Another aspect that is considered to hinder NNS intelligibility is accent. Many native speakers have prejudices towards foreign accents (Munro et al, 2002, p.246). This claim is supported by studies conducted by Donald L. Rubin and Kim A. Smith (1990) and Rubin (1992) which demonstrated the negative attitude and the reluctance of Native Speakers (NSs) to comprehend NNS foreign accented speech. Nevertheless, Fraser (2000, p.9) views that «*Intelligibility is a two-way street*» involving both speaker and listener. In her own words: "*Many native speakers of Australian English are quite inexperienced and unskilled in listening to foreign*

accents, speaking clearly to help learners understand them, and in other aspects of cross-cultural communication. »

4. Factors Affecting Pronunciation

Many researchers and specialists agreed on the fact that pronunciation is the most important and complicated aspect of the English language. During his/her process of learning the target language, the learner's aim is to obtain a native-like pronunciation or at least an intelligible pronunciation for an effective communication. However, along this journey, there are many factors that hamper the achievement of such a goal. Qian-Mei Zhang (2009) categorized these factors into internal and external factors. Internal factors involve the L2 learners themselves, encompassing biological aspects such as age, auditory perception and aptitude, as well as individual differences including personality, attitude, motivation, identity, personal efforts, and goal setting. On the other hand, external factors are associated with the learning environment of L2 learners, which include their native language, exposure to the foreign language, and educational influences. These factors can be also classified into individual, phonological, psychological, social and more. The most salient ones are listed herein.

4.1 Internal Factors

4.1.1 Motivation and Attitude

Motivation is considered one of the important factors that influence second language learning. It is defined as *«an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action. It is said high learning motivation can facilitate language learning and lower learning motivation can influence language learning rate»* (Zhang, 2009, p.42). As stated by Robert C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert (1972), motivation can be categorized into two primary types: instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation relates to practical benefits, such as securing a better job, gaining admission to a prestigious university, or successfully passing an examination. In contrast, integrative motivation is characterized by a favorable disposition towards the target language and its community, as well as a desire to become part of that community. Consequently, a learner aiming to learn the language will show interest in the phonetic system of the target language and actively seek opportunities to utilize it. Zoltan Dornyei (2009) affirms that in the absence of adequate motivation, even those possessing exceptional talents are unable to succeed even with affective curricula. He declares without adequate motivation, even those with the most exceptional talents are unable to achieve long-term objectives, and suitable curricula along with effective teaching alone are insufficient to guarantee student success.

Research has found that having a personal or professional goal for learning English can influence the need and desire for native-like pronunciation. The review by Stefka H. Marinova-Todd, D. Bradford Marshall Catherine E. Snow (2000) of research on adult acquisition of English concluded that even the adults have the potential to achieve a high level of proficiency in a second language, often reaching a native-like fluency, particularly when they are motivated to learn.

Moreover, setting goals assists in the development of the learner's motivation. Most studies demonstrate that the objective of L2 learners is to both produce and comprehend the speech of native speakers (Zhang, 2009). Many researchers agreed on the fact that having a personal or professional goal for learning English can influence the need and desire for native-like pronunciation.

There is a close relation between motivation and attitude, since attitude forms an integral part of motivation (integrative). Zhang (2009) points out that negative attitude towards the target language or community will engender unfavorable consequence on the language learning.

4.1.2 Anxiety and Lack of Confidence

As EFL learners, we have all experienced the fact that we intend to say something and we produce a completely different utterance that may have another meaning. This is not due to the lack of knowledge but rather to some factors such as lack of confidence, inhibition and anxiety. Many EFL learners have good pronunciation skills, however, when delivering a speech in public or during oral presentations, they find difficulties in expressing themselves correctly. As expressed by Hidehiko Nakazawa (2012), numerous EFL students often face feelings of inhibition and anxiety during communication. This inhibition can lead to a lack of confidence in pronouncing words correctly. In this respect, Zumala Fajriyyatul Husna (2021) declares that when students deliver presentations in English before the entire class, they frequently experience anxiety and lack of confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations or everyday interactions. This anxiety may stem from diminished self-assurance due to various factors, including the apprehension of mispronouncing certain words. In a similar study conducted by Roosa Korhonen (2019) on Finnish and Spanish university students, she pointed out that it was particularly evident that those participants who rated their pronunciation skills the lowest tended to experience increased nervousness and concern about making errors while speaking English. This point of view is supported by Fraser (2000, p.10) who asserts that «*Many native speakers also have trouble in speaking clearly and expressing themselves confidently, especially in public situations. These difficulties can affect their advancement in employment, and certainly do need to be addressed.*»

Several researches have been carried out regarding anxiety and its relation with self-confidence. Korhonen (2019) reported that the relationship between pronunciation and language anxiety is a significant factor influencing an individual's self-confidence in a second language and that a negative correlation exists between these two elements. Students with elevated language anxiety rated their pronunciation more poorly, while those who perceived themselves as more competent in pronunciation reported lower levels of anxiety.

Accordingly, language learning and teaching environments should be designed to be supportive and devoid of stress and anxiety, allowing learners to feel more at ease and thereby participate more actively in classroom discussions (Stephen D. Krashen, 1982). Therefore, many researchers agreed on that pronunciation training is the key point for the development of self-confidence when speaking English (Korhonen, 2019).

4.1.3 Age

It is widely believed that age is one of the significant factors that affect foreign language learning. Learning any language is proved to be more effective in childhood. Biologically, there exists a specific timeframe during which language acquisition occurs with greater ease; however, after this period, the process of learning a language becomes progressively more challenging (Zhang, 2009, p.6). Thus, the earlier we begin learning a language, the more advantageous it is for achieving precise pronunciation. Fraser (2009) highlights that when a second language is acquired during childhood, individuals typically achieve fluency and a native-like accent; however, adults may reach a high level of fluency and adaptability, yet it is improbable for them to develop a native accent. This phenomenon is particularly evident among children who immigrate from non-English speaking nations, as their pronunciation tends to be one of the least challenging elements of language learning, in contrast to the significant difficulties faced by adults.

Numerous scholars agree that there exists a phase in childhood, specifically until the onset of puberty, during which a child is optimally prepared to learn a language. This phase is referred to as the 'critical period,' a concept introduced by Lenneberg in 1967 through his 'Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH).' (Zhang, 2009). I. S. P. Nation and Jonathan Newton (2009; as cited in Zhang, 2009) suggest that proficiency in the pronunciation of a second language is more effectively developed during early childhood stages.

4.2 External Factors

4.2.1 Mother Tongue

It is widely agreed that a learner's native language significantly impacts the accurate acquisition of pronunciation in a foreign language. In other words, the first language of the learner

is a crucial element that contributes to foreign accents and affects the pronunciation of the target language (Zhang, 2009). Numerous researchers assert that learners face challenges in comprehending the speech of foreigners due to the disparities in the sound systems and vocal pitch between their native language and the target language. David Arthur Wilkins (1972; as cited in Abddalgane, 2020) observes that during the process of learning a foreign language, a learner may apply certain characteristics of his/her native language to the target language. This application is termed “*positive transfer*” when the structures of the two languages are alike, a phenomenon known as “*facilitation*”. Conversely, when the structures of the native and foreign languages differ, the transfer is considered “*negative*” or referred to as “*interference*”. This interference is defined by Heidi C. Dulay, Marina K. Burt and Stephen D. Krashen (1982, p.25) as: «*the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language.* »

According to Peter Avery and Susan Ehrlich (1992; as cited in Abbas pourhoussein Gilakjani and Mohammad Reza Ahmadi, 2011), the phonetic system of a learner's native language can affect their pronunciation of a foreign language in several ways. Firstly, if the target language contains sounds that are not present in the learner's native language, the learner may struggle to produce or even recognize these sounds. Secondly, discrepancies in the phonotactic rules governing sound combinations between the native and target languages can create challenges for learners, as these rules are specific to each language. Lastly, the rhythm and intonation patterns of a language influence its stress and melody, which may lead learners to apply these patterns when speaking the target language. Zhang (2009) asserts that L1 interference could engender high probabilities of errors in L2.

In his research on cross-cultural interactions, John Joseph Gumperz (1982) illustrates that the transfer of voice-setting and prosodic characteristics from one's first language can result in significant misunderstandings within the target culture. In addition, Claus Faerch and Gabriel Kasper (1984, p.125) report the transfer of specific mother tongue intonation patterns observed in the speech of Danish learners of English:

1. A tendency to pitch the unstressed syllables higher than the preceding stressed ones (the normal pattern in Copenhagen Danish), creating a weaving or lilting impression.
2. Instead of full [intonational] glides (falls, rises, fall-rises), flattening them out (as is the case in Danish) and consequently making them less clearly marked.

Another significant area of influence of the first language (L1) on the second language (L2) is accent. As cited in Gilakjani (2012), Avery and Ehrlich (1992) note that the phonetic characteristics of the learner's native language are carried over into the second language, which may result in the presence of foreign accents. Rod Ellis (1986) supports the same idea and points out that the impact of L1 is distinctly observable in the foreign accent of learners while speaking the foreign language. A case in point is a French individual speaking English with a noticeable French accent.

4.2.2 Lack of Exposure to the Target Language

One of the major difficulties EFL learners may face is the lack of exposure to the target language and practice. Exposure is an important factor in the learning of a foreign language and its pronunciation as well. Henry Douglas Brown (2007) defines exposure as the duration of time that learners reside in an environment where the target language is spoken. The specific location or country of residence is less important than the extent to which they engage with English in their everyday activities. With respect to this, Shumin Kang (1997) argues that acquiring proficiency in a new language and utilizing it in conversation poses significant challenges for foreign language learners, as successful verbal communication necessitates the appropriate application of the language across diverse interactions. The primary difficulty faced by EFL learners lies in achieving effective communication, which demands interactive language use. Furthermore, he notes that verbal communication encompasses supra-segmental elements such as pitch, stress, and intonation, which cannot be fully learned through formal instruction.

According to Krashen (1982), learners primarily acquire a second language through input, receiving a substantial amount of comprehensible input prior to engaging in speaking activities. Zhang (2009) illustrates the case of immigrant children who begin their second language learning in an environment where the target language is spoken. These children possess greater advantages compared to those who attempt to learn the target language in their home countries, due to the distinctions between language usage and language learning.

However, Revell (2012; as cited Abdalgane, 2020) claims that currently, this assertion is increasingly being revised to incorporate the term “*proficient*” instead of “*native*” speakers of the foreign/second language, including non-native class instructors. In his own words:

Nowadays, this claim is more likely to be modified to include “*proficient*”, rather than “*native-speakers of the F/SL, including the non-native class teacher. It could also include “comprehensible input” via a variety of multimedia channels such as TV, radio, DVD or synchronous on-line chat rather than simply face-to face conversation (p.9).*”

Thereby, residing in an environment where the native language is spoken does not guarantee the attainment of a native-like pronunciation. This outcome is influenced by the learner's attitude, motivation, and willingness to engage. Numerous individuals immersed in an English-speaking setting may hesitate to connect with native speakers or embrace their culture and traditions, opting instead to maintain their own identity (Zhang, 2009).

4.2.3 Sound System

Among the obstacles impeding pronunciation mastery is the complexity of the sound system of the target language or the difference between the sound systems of the mother tongue and the second language. According to David Malcolm Berry (2021), the sound system comprises a set of speech units that learners must articulate accurately and distinctly. These speech units are commonly referred to as vocabulary.

Phonemic differences is one important factor. Phonemic variations represent a significant factor. Numerous linguists and researchers have noted a conflict between the phonetic systems of L1 and L2. Research indicates that the primary challenge in teaching and learning English pronunciation stems from the discrepancies between the sound system of English and that of the learner's native language. Abdalghane (2020) illustrates that in Arabic, each letter corresponds to a single sound, making it straightforward to pronounce any word from a written text. Additionally, there are no silent letters, unlike in English where this occurs frequently. When discrepancies arise between the sound systems of L1 and L2, it is anticipated that errors will occur, as learners tend to transfer the phonetic characteristics of their native language into the target language.

Achilova Ra'no Tachpulatovna (2024) adds that the differentiation between sounds in English can pose significant challenges for speakers of languages that lack these phonemes; he illustrates: *«For example, the distinction between the sounds (/θ/ and /ð/) in English can be particularly challenging for speakers of languages that do not have these sounds. This can lead to difficulties in accurately producing and distinguishing between these sounds in English words.»* (p.59). Atalah Mohammad Al-Rubaat and Hammad Ali Alshammari (2020) in their study about pronunciation barriers of university students, they observed that EFL students encountered six challenging phonetic and phonological patterns, including initial consonant clusters, final consonant clusters, multisyllabic words, novel sounds, vowels, and voiced or voiceless phonemes.

Furthermore, inconsistency of English Vowels is a major problem hindering learners to develop a good pronunciation. In the English language, a vowel can possess multiple pronunciations, which can create significant challenges for learners and result in mispronunciations (Abdalghane, 2020), for instance, son /sʌn/, come /kʌm/, among /əməŋ/, blood

/blʌd/; in all these instances, /o/ and /oo/ represent the same sound of /ʌ/, yet the majority of learners, unless they have mastered the pronunciation of such vowels, mispronounce these words.

Influence of spelling on pronunciation is also a serious problem confronted by learners. The inconsistency and the complexity of English spelling poses significant challenges. The spelling of English and its pronunciation are distinctly different aspects. For example, while English is often thought to have 5 or 6 vowels, it actually contains 20 unique vowel sounds (Claire A. Forel and Genoveva Puskas, 2005). They state «*English spelling and English pronunciation are two very different things. For instance, English has not 5 or 6 but 20 different vowels, even if these vowels are all written by different combinations of 6 different letters, "a, e, i, o, u, y". e.g. please, [pli:z]. Thus, the word please consists of three consonants, [p, l, z], and one vowel, [i:].* » (p.3). Connor Mayer (2003; as cited in Abdalghane, 2020) further states that certain words that are typically spelled identically can differ in pronunciation. Additionally, there are words that are spelled differently yet sound the same, such as rain, rein, and reign, all of which are pronounced /rein/. Furthermore, pronunciation can be perplexing due to the fact that the same letter can produce various sounds. For instance, consider the pairs: (bath – bathe), (South – Southern), (now – know), and (uncle – university). Another example is that the letter 'k' is silent before 'n' in words like knee, know, knot, and knight; a student who has not mastered their pronunciation may incorrectly articulate these with a /k/ sound. Consequently, a learner who is not attentive to language pronunciation or has not previously encountered these words may struggle to pronounce them accurately.

In order to overcome these challenges, a range of solutions has been suggested. Concentrating on auditory systems can enhance a learner's pronunciation and speaking abilities (Kesavan Vadakalur Elumalai, Mohammad Sufian Abdullah, Jayendira P. Sankar and Kalaichelvi R., 2021). Furthermore, exposure to the target language is essential for learners to distinguish between 'good' speech, which is 'intelligible', and 'poor' speech, which is 'unintelligible' (Daniel Jones, 1956).

In a study carried out by Bai and Yuan (2018) on EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about pronunciation teaching, several participants recommended utilizing the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as a crucial tool for mastering English pronunciation. Others highlighted the importance of interactive tasks and activities. One teacher recounted her experiences with various strategies employed in the classroom, including the word segmentation technique based on IPA, as well as the use of songs and tongue twisters to help students reinforce their learning in an enjoyable manner.

4.2.4 Pedagogical Factors

The educational system serves as an implied yet a crucial element in second language learning. It is influenced by the nation's social policies, economic progress, and cultural traditions. When a country adopts favorable educational policies or fosters a conducive environment for language learning, it benefits learners in their language learning journey. Optimal educational conditions can offer learners increased opportunities to engage with the target language and its associated community (Zhang, 2009). Since EFL learners have no opportunity to practice their English in real life situations outside their countries and lack exposure to the target language, it is the responsibility of both educational institutions and instructors to create appropriate conditions and opportunities for students to practice their language skills, such as in language laboratories or learning centers (Celce Murcia et al, 1996).

Fraser (2000) thinks that pronunciation instruction receives minimal focus from educators who are not adequately trained and lack confidence in this domain. This situation arises from various factors, including overcrowded classrooms, the duration of courses, and the numerous objectives that must be achieved within a limited timeframe as dictated by the curriculum. Additionally, a significant challenge in teaching pronunciation is the absence of an explicit instructional approach, as teachers typically employ a mixed methodology where pronunciation is merely one component.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed existing researches on different aspects related to pronunciation such as its segmental and supra segmental features, its teaching as well as its importance. It identified the distinct factors affecting pronunciation including internal, external and pedagogical. It also tackled teaching pronunciation in Algerian context. This literature review showed that pronunciation plays a significant role in many aspects; as a result, EFL teachers need to take it into account in their teaching. The following chapter will look into the practical research design, its tools, and data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter Two:

Research Design

and

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter addresses the methodology and the procedures used for the achievement of this research. It gives an insight about the research method and describes the population of the study, its sample and the setting. Moreover, it delineates the research instrument that is utilized to collect data from our sample of interest which is the questionnaire for both teachers and students. Also, it contains the description of the content and the form of the questionnaires. It also describes the procedures of data analysis. Finally, this chapter tackles the limitations and the restrictions of the study.

1. The Research Method

To begin with, the aim of this research is to explore EFL teachers' and students' perceptions on the pronunciation difficulties faced by first year EFL learners at the University of Bouira and the factors contributing to them. Therefore, a mixed method approach which is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. It provides a comprehensive exploration about a particular context and numerical data is supplied as well. Moreover, it provides richer insights and enables the researcher to enhance the reliability of the results and offers a better understanding of the research topic within EFL classroom context. In our research, since we are investigating perspectives and we tend to explore the pronunciation difficulties that the learners are facing in their first year at university, we opted for the case study.

1.1. Case Study

A case study is a research approach used to develop an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a particular topic in its real-life context. It is a well-established research design that is widely used across a wide range of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences (Crowe et al, 2011).

Creswell (2009) defines the case study as a qualitative design in which the researcher delves deeply into a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The cases are limited in time and activity, and the researchers collect detailed information over a period of time using a variety of data collection procedures.

1.1.1. The Use of Case Studies

Case studies, according to Yin (2009), can be used to explain, describe, or explore events or phenomena in their everyday contexts. These can, for example, aid in understanding and explaining causal links and pathways that emerge as a result of a new policy initiative or service development. Unlike experimental designs, which seek to test a specific hypothesis through

deliberately manipulating the environment, the case study method is well suited to gathering information on more explanatory 'how,' 'what,' and 'why' questions. The case study method can provide additional insights into what gaps exist in its delivery or why one implementation strategy may be preferred over another. This, in turn, can help to develop or refine a certain theory (Crowe et al, 2011).

2. The Population and Setting

The population of this study consisted of one hundred sixty-six (166) students. These students are EFL learners at their first year at the University of Bouira. Moreover, eleven (11) first year EFL teachers were also part of this population.

The setting is our university for all data collection: the department of English at the University of Akli Mohand Oulhadj, Bouira. It is mainly selected for easy accessibility.

3. The Sample

The data is collected from only some members of the population who are called the sample of the study. The sample is a part of population that will be taken as the representative to observe. According to Creswell (2002), a sample is a subgroup of the population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population. In drawing the sample of this study, we adopted the convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling is a purposeful sampling in which the researcher selects participants who can help him/her develop a detailed understanding of his/her phenomenon. It involves using “*convenient*” sources of data. It is also known as availability sampling as the researcher relies on participants who are available to participate in the study.

In this research, we selected first year students because this study aims to explore challenges concerning them. The total number of participants is thirty (30) EFL students studying at the University of Bouira. They are twenty-seven (27) females and three (3) males and their age average is between eighteen (18) and twenty-seven (27) years old. Furthermore, the sample includes six (6) EFL teachers teaching phonetics and oral expression. Their experience stretches from three to fifteen years at teaching English. They majored in different branches: applied linguistics, didactics, English language and literature, language sciences and literature and civilization. All participants engaged in the questionnaire, and their identities were kept confidential to prevent any potential biases.

4. Data Collection Instruments

In this research, data is collected about the perceptions on the pronunciation challenges faced by first year learners. For this purpose, one instrument is developed to collect data for this study. Two semi-structured questionnaires are used for EFL learners and teachers. These instruments are adequate for this study since they provide rich data. They are also reliable and valid tools of research that go well with exploratory research.

4.1. Questionnaire

«A questionnaire is a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions.» (Pritha Bhandari, 2021, p.1). Bulmer (2004; as cited in Deanne Bird, 2009, p.1307) defines it as *«a well-established tool within social science research for acquiring information on participant social characteristics, present, past behavior, standards of behavior or attitudes and their beliefs and reasons for action with respect to the topic under investigation.»* The questionnaire is commonly used as it can gather a large size of information in a short period of time. Besides, it is cheaper than most of the other primary data collection methods. Moreover, it provides researchers with an in-depth understanding about his/ her topic of research.

The questionnaire tool is chosen to be used in this research because of its well-known reliability and validity. Furthermore, it allows people to express themselves anonymously and confidentially. As a result, they are more likely to be truthful in their responses. The questionnaire is, in fact, designed to elicit the sample's perceptions on the pronunciation difficulties encountered by first year EFL learners. Questionnaires can be comprised of different forms of questions: closed, open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Both questionnaires are built based on the literature review outcomes and other researches. They were sent to participants via social media platform “messenger” and emails. The process lasted from May, 16th up to May 26th, 2025.

4.1.1. The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is designed to have an overview about their perceptions concerning the different difficulties that they face in their pronunciation. This questionnaire consists of five sections; each one of them includes different types of questions. The first section is devoted to demographic information in which students were kindly required to answer questions related to their age and gender whereas the second part is related to students' views on their pronunciation problems. While the third section is about the students' challenges at the level of

segmental features, the fourth one is about the suprasegmental features. The last part deals with the factors affecting students' pronunciation as well as their opinions about their motivation and the use of technological apps.

4.1.2. The Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is designed to analyze the degree to which teachers' and students' perceptions are similar or different about the pronunciation challenges and the factors that contribute to them. Just like the students' questionnaire, the teachers' questionnaire begins with an introduction where we notified them that their responses will be kept private and only used for research purposes. The teachers' questionnaire consists of four sections; the first is for their personal information (their gender, years of teaching and specialty). The second section is about the pronunciations' obstacles facing both teachers and their students in the teaching-learning process. The third part focuses on the curriculum and its deficiencies whereas the last one sheds light on teachers' suggestions and recommendations of some strategies to overcome pronunciation challenges.

5. Pilot Testing

The next important step is to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. According to John W Creswell (2012, p.390) a pilot test is *«a procedure in which a researcher makes change in an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instrument.»* In order to validate items, it was requested from a subgroup of the sample to check the format and the language to make the questionnaires simple and understandable. In the light of feedbacks received, the questionnaires were finalized. Pilot testing is critically important as participants submit written feedback directly on the survey, prompting the researcher to adjust or amend the survey in accordance with those observations. Concerning the students' questionnaire, we have distributed the questionnaire to some students in order to test the clarity of the questions and review it before final submission.

6. Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected by both questionnaires is automatically presented through graphs by the Google Form Platform which is a complementary web-based application offered freely by Google; it provides all the necessary tools to design a straightforward poll or an interactive survey (Jessica Lau, 2024). We analyzed and presented also the data using tables to make it clearer. Furthermore, the thematic analysis method is used to identify themes, patterns, and correlations in informants' responses and experiences. Thematic analysis is a technique used to systematically identify, categorize, and provide insights into recurring patterns of meaning (themes) within a dataset

(Braun and Clarke, 2006). Altogether, the insights of the respondents, as well as the researcher's analysis of what they wrote, will be thoroughly provided in the following chapter.

7. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is not without limitations. Concerning the literature review, we have found difficulties to access a lot of hard books and e-books related to our topic. Furthermore, in the beginning of the study, we decide to use two instruments: an interview and a questionnaire. However, due to time limitation and some circumstances, we eliminate the interview which takes a long period of time for its transcription and interpretation and conduct two questionnaires instead.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the methodology and its procedures. First, it presents the research method adopted. Then, the population, the setting, and the sample of the study were described. The population consists of one hundred sixty-six EFL students and 11 EFL teachers at the University of Bouira. Moreover, the research tool which is comprised of two questionnaires for both teachers and students is described. Adding to that, it discusses data analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter provides the study's scope and limitations.

Chapter Three:

Presentation and

Interpretation of the

Results

Introduction

The third chapter is concerned mainly with the practical part of the research as it deals with the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from students' and teachers' questionnaires. The principal purpose of using the questionnaire is to explore the perceptions of teachers and students on the pronunciation challenges encountered by first year EFL learners and the factors which contribute to them. This chapter also discusses and interprets the findings. Furthermore, it presents some recommendations and crucial suggestions to improve learners' pronunciation.

1. Results of the Study

1.1. Results of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Demographic Information

In this section, the participants were asked two questions about their age and their gender.

Question 1: How old are you?

Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	27	Total
Participants	13	13	1	0	1	1	1	30
Percentage	43.4%	43.4%	3.3%	0%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	100%

Table 2: Students' Age

As it is shown in table 2, thirteen (13) of the students are eighteen (18) years old, thirteen (13) of them are nineteen (19) years old, and the last four ones have different ages as the first is twenty (20) years old, the second was twenty two (22) years old, the third is twenty three (23) years old, and finally the last one is twenty seven (27) years old.

Question 2: Are you a male or a female?

Gender	Participants	Percentage
Male	3	10%
Female	27	90%
Total	30	100%

Table 3: Students' Gender

According to table 3, most participants are females (27), and only two (3) of them are males.

Section Two: Pronunciation Problems

In this section, the participants were asked five questions about their pronunciation problems.

Question 3: How good is your English pronunciation?

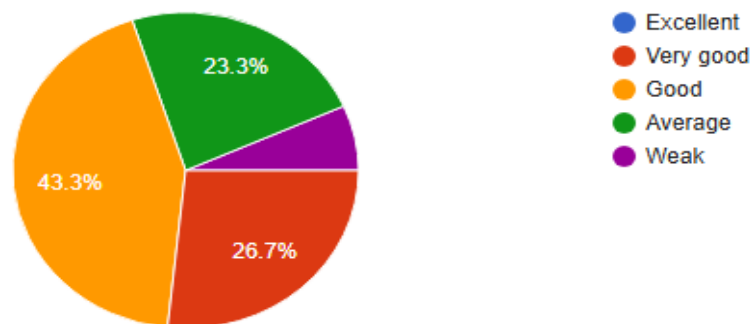


Figure 1: Students' Level of Pronunciation

As it can be seen in figure 1, the participants have different opinions about their pronunciation. While 43.3% of the participants say that their pronunciation is good, 26.7% of them say that it is very good. 23.3% of the students say that they have an average pronunciation and 6.7% say that they have a weak pronunciation. None of them have chosen the “Excellent Pronunciation” option.

Question 4: What do you consider your biggest challenge when speaking?

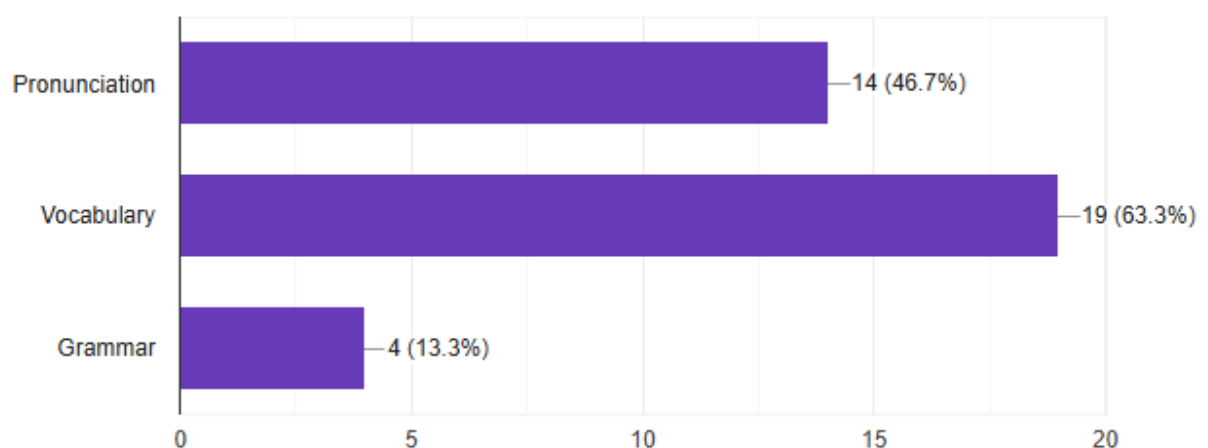


Figure 2: Students' Biggest Challenge When Speaking

In this question, 63.3% of the participants see that vocabulary is their biggest challenge when they speak; however, 46.7% of them choose pronunciation. The rest declare that grammar is their problem.

Question 5: Are you aware where your pronunciation difficulties lie?

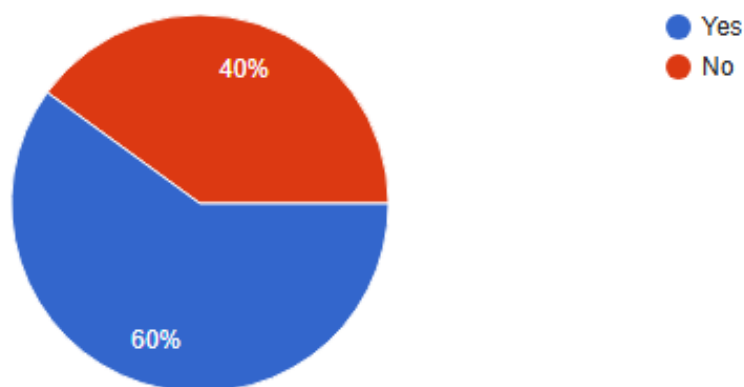


Figure 3: Students' Awareness of their Pronunciation Difficulties

As it is seen in this figure, most of the participants (60%) reply with 'yes'; it means that they are aware where their pronunciation problems are whereas the others (40%) respond with 'no' as they are not aware of them.

Question 6: What pronunciation problems do you encounter in English learning?

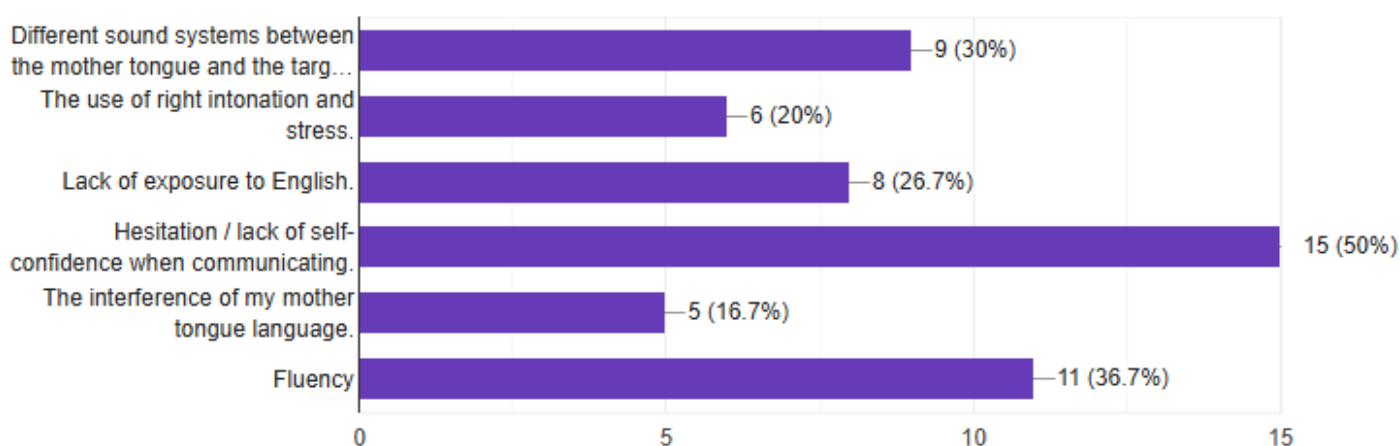


Figure 4: Students' Pronunciation Problems in English Learning

As it is displayed in figure 4, half of the respondents (50%) say that their problem is that they hesitate and they lack self-confidence when communicating. 36.7% of them choose fluency to be their problem while 30% reply that their issue is embodied in the different sound systems

between the mother tongue and the target language. Moreover, 26.7% find that their lack of exposure to English is the concern and 20% of the informants say that they have difficulties in using the right intonation and stress. The rest (16.7%) respond with the interference of their mother tongue language.

Question 7: How frequently do you make mistakes in pronunciation?

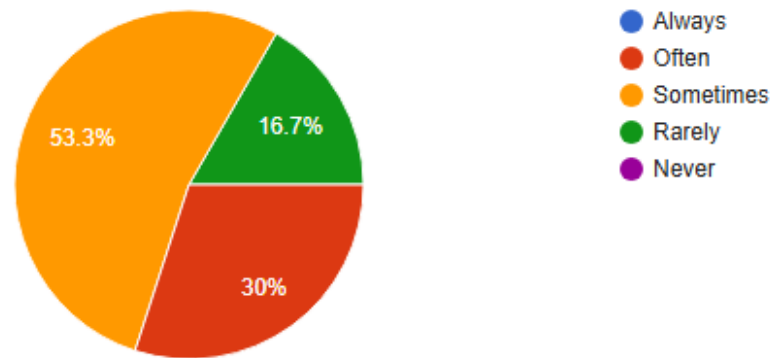


Figure 5: The Frequency of Making Pronunciation Mistakes

According to this figure, 53.3% of students report that they sometimes make pronunciation mistakes whereas 30% of them declare that they often make them. Only a smaller portion (16.7%) indicates that they rarely commit mistakes.

Section Three: Pronunciation Features' Challenges

Question 8: As a learner, I cannot differentiate between the consonant sounds (Scale Statement)

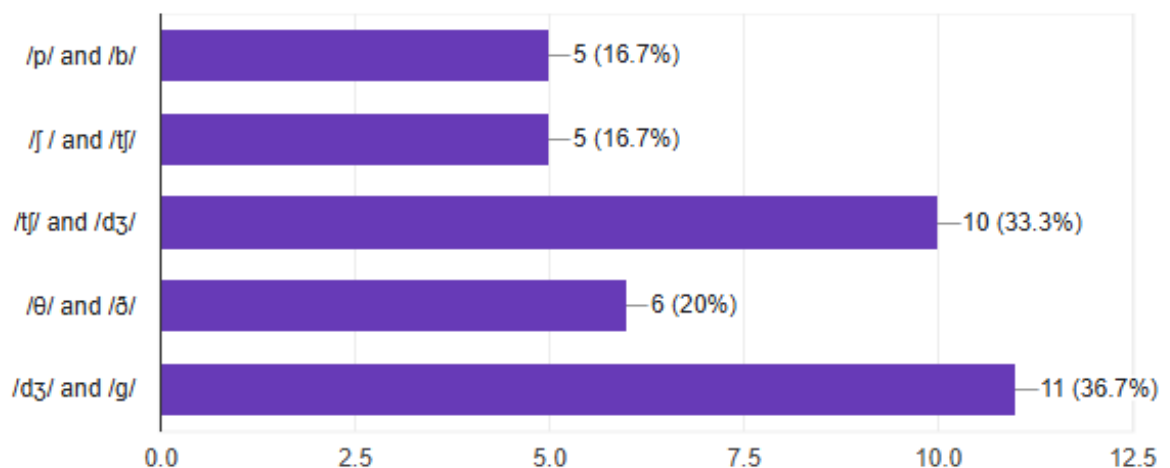


Figure 6: Students' Challenges to Distinguish Consonant Sounds

Figure 6 illustrates the specific consonant pairs that learners find most difficult to differentiate. The data shows that the majority of participants (36.7%) report difficulty

distinguishing between /dʒ/ and /g/, making this the most challenging pair. This is followed closely by /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, with 33.3% of students indicating confusion between these two sounds. In contrast, 20% of the respondents struggle with /θ/ and /ð/, which are both interdental fricatives (e.g., "think" vs "this"). Finally, /p/ and /b/ as well as /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ are each selected by 16.7% of the participants, showing they are comparatively less problematic.

Question 9: As a learner, I cannot distinguish the vowel sounds (Scale Statement)

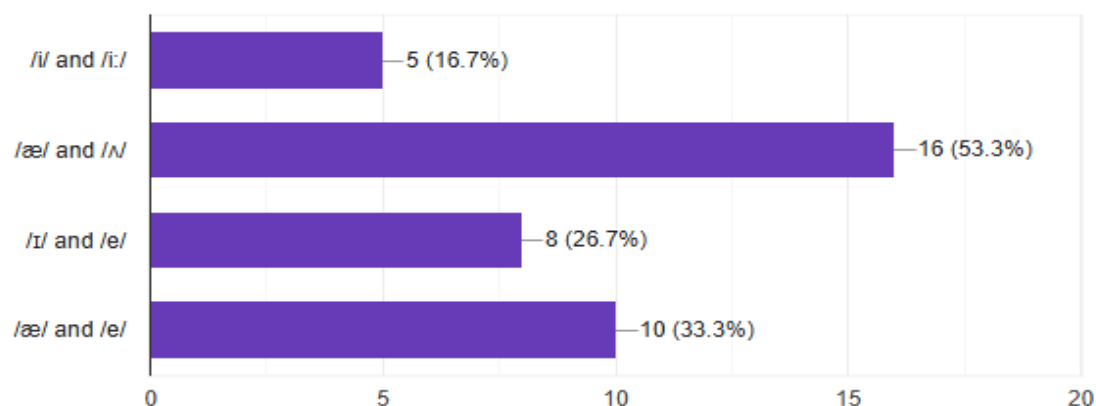


Figure 7: Students' Difficulties to Distinguish Vowel Sounds

According to figure 7, 53.3% of the informants cannot distinguish between the vowel sounds /æ/ and /ʌ/; however, 33.3% of them cannot differentiate between /æ/ and /e/. While 26.7% of the students find it difficult to make the difference between /ɪ/ and /e/, 16.7% of them cannot identify /i/ from /i:/.

Question 10: As a learner, I confuse when I pronounce the following words:

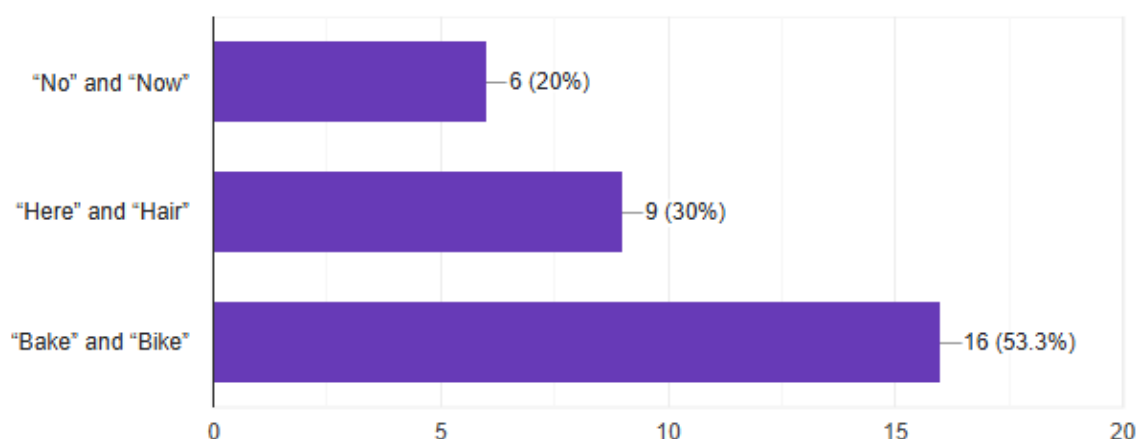


Figure 8: Students' Confusion when Pronouncing Some Words

The results reveal that the majority of learners, 16 students (53.3%), report confusion with the pronunciation of “Bake” and “Bike.” This is followed by 9 students (30%) who indicate difficulty distinguishing between “Here” and “Hair.” The pair “No” and “Now” is identified as challenging by the fewest respondents, with 6 students (20%) selecting this option.

Question 11: Do you apply the stress patterns when speaking?

	Yes	No
Participants	17	13
Percentages	56.7%	43.3%

Table 4: Students’ Use of the Stress Patterns

According to table 4, 17 participants reply with ‘yes’ as they apply stress patterns when speaking while 13 of them do not apply them; as a result, they respond with ‘no’.

Question 12: Do you use the correct intonation patterns?

	Yes	No
Participants	22	8
Percentages	73.3%	26.7%

Table 5: Students’ Use of the Correct Intonation Patterns

As it is shown in table 5, 22 of the students say that they use the correct intonation patterns while the others (8) do not use them.

Section Four: Factors Affecting Pronunciation

Question 13: I practice my English enough

	Participants	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	16.7%
Neutral	14	46.7%
Agree	8	26.7%
Strongly Agree	3	10%

Table 6: Students’ Practice of English

The results in table 6 reveal that nearly half of the participants (46.7%) selected the neutral option, indicating uncertainty about whether they practice enough English. A combined total of 36.7% expressed agreement with the statement, with 26.7% agreeing and 10% strongly agreeing, suggesting that over one-third of the students feel they do practice English sufficiently. On the other hand, 16.7% of the participants disagreed, while none strongly disagreed.

Question 14: My pronunciation would be better if I had more exposure to English.

Suggestions	Participants	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	1	3.3%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	5	16.7%
Agree	13	43.3%
Strongly Agree	11	36.7%

Table 7: Pronunciation and its Relation with Exposure to English

According to the results shown in table 7, 24 students expressed their agreement on the statement, with 13 of them who agree and 11 who strongly agree. While 5 students remain neutral and one who strongly disagrees, none of them choose the option of ‘disagree’.

Question 15: When I speak, I always refer to my mother tongue language.

Suggestions	Participants	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	3	10%
Disagree	10	33.3%
Neutral	11	36.7%
Agree	6	20%
Strongly Agree	0	0%

Table 8: Students’ Reference to their Mother Tongue

According to the previous table’s results, 36.7% of the participants are neutral. 33.3% of them show their disagreement; however, 20% agree with the statement. While 10% of the informants strongly disagree. i.e. they do not refer to their mother tongue when they speak, no one strongly disagrees with the statement.

Question 16: I feel embarrassed when I speak in English.

Suggestions	Participants	Percentages
Strongly Disagree	8	26.7%
Disagree	7	23.3%
Neutral	7	23.3%
Agree	8	26.7%
Strongly Agree	0	0%

Table 9: Students’ Embarrassment when Speaking English

As it can be seen in table 9, ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘agree’ are each selected by 26.7% of the participants whereas ‘disagree’ and ‘neutral’ are selected by 23.3% of them and none of them strongly agrees with the statement.

Question 17: Are your teachers encouraging you to correct and improve your pronunciation?

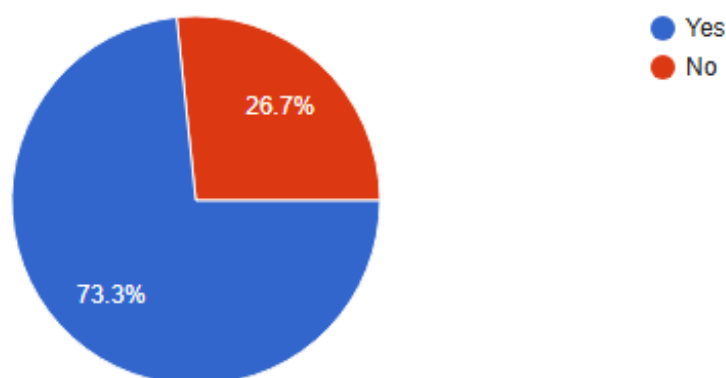


Figure 9: Teachers’ Encouragement to Correct and Improve Pronunciation

According to the pie chart (figure 9), most of the students (73.7%) respond with ‘yes’ as their teachers are encouraging them to improve their pronunciation; however, 26.7% reply with ‘no’ i.e. they are not motivated by their teachers.

Question 18: What motivates you to ameliorate your pronunciation?

The students’ responses are as follows:

- I’m motivated to improve my pronunciation so I can communicate more clearly and be better understood by others.
- Wanting to be fluent
- For a better communication and it can help in job interviews, meetings or presentations
- Listening to native speakers’ videos... And repeating in order to get a good accent... With a lovely pronunciation
- I want to speak the language like native speakers
- When I’m talking in the classroom and my classmates laugh at me
- I want to speak more clearly so people can understand me better. Good pronunciation helps me feel more confident when I talk. It also helps me sound more natural, like a native speaker. I want to improve so I can communicate well in university, work, or when I travel.
- I am motivated to improve my pronunciation to communicate clearly, boost my confidence, access better career opportunities, and fully master the English language.
- Getting to know new people around the world.
- Travelling to other countries / taking more job opportunities / earning excellent marks in them
- Having a good job opportunity/ To be intelligible when speaking to native speakers
- When I listen to an English song, I want to be able to sing it just like the singer
- English is an international language

Question 19: What applications do you use to improve your pronunciation?

The students mentioned the following:

- Hellotalk
- Generally, YouTube, Tik Tok (watching native videos)
- YouTube and reverso context (traductor)
- Instagram, Channels on YouTube... E Dictionary
- Duolingo
- I use Elsa Speak to practice my pronunciation and get feedback. I also use Forvo to hear how native speakers say words. Sometimes, I use YouGlish to listen to words in real sentences. Google Translate helps me repeat and compare my pronunciation. I also watch YouTube videos and try to copy how native speakers talk.
- English score
- Discord, video games, even learning new synonyms to some words from chat GPT.
- Podcasts
- Elsa speak
- Copilot (it's an AI tool)
- To phonetics

1.2. Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the student's pronunciation challenges, the factors contributing to them as well as their teaching strategies to overcome these challenges. It consists of seventeen questions designed for teachers to articulate or clarify their viewpoints freely. Each question will be examined and analyzed individually.

Section One: Demographic Information

This section is concerned with teachers' personal information. It consists of three questions including their gender, years of teaching experience, and specialty.

Question 1: Are you male or female?

Gender	Male	Female	Total
N° of Teachers	0	6	6
Percentage	00%	100%	100%

Table 10: Teachers' Gender

According to the results of table 10, all the teachers (6/6) are female who stands at 100%, with no male representation at all, indicated by 0%.

Question 2: How many years have you been a teacher?

N° of Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1
EFL Teachers' Experience	3 years	4 years	7 years	10 years	13 years	15 years

Table 11: EFL Teachers' Teaching Experience

As shown in the table above, the teachers' teaching experience ranges between 3 and 15 years. There is one teacher who has been teaching English for 15 years, 1 teacher has been teaching English for 13 years, one teacher for 10 years, one for 7 years and two others with 4 and 3 years only.

Question 3: What is your specialty?

N° of Teachers	2	1	1	1	1
Specialty	Applied Linguistics	Didactics	English language and literature	Language sciences	Literature and civilization

Table 12: Teachers' Specialty

As illustrated in table 12, there are two teachers who specialize in Applied linguistics, one teacher who specializes in Didactics, one teacher who specializes in English Language and Literature, one teacher who specializes in Language sciences, and another one in Literature and civilization.

Section two: Students' Pronunciation Obstacles

Question 4: What subskill is the most challenging for your students?

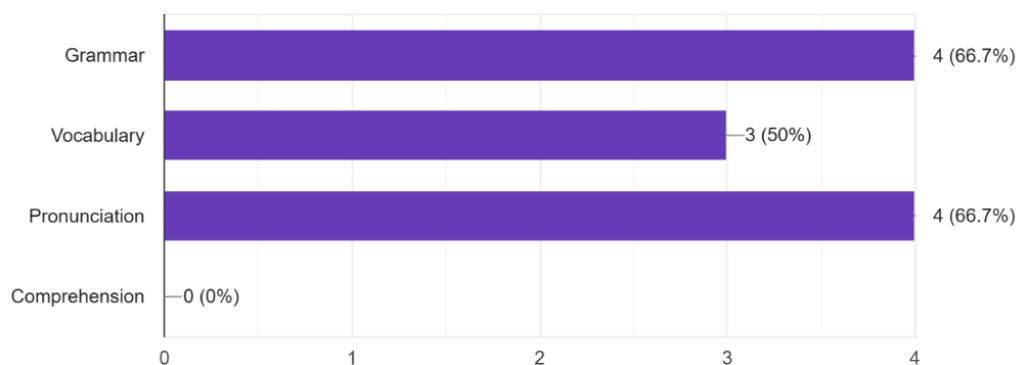


Figure 10: The Most Challenging Subskill for Students

As revealed by the figure above, 4 teachers (66%) agree that both pronunciation and grammar are the most challenging subskills for their students. Conversely, 3 teachers (50%) believe that vocabulary poses the greatest difficulty for them. Whereas, none of the teachers (00%) think that comprehension is a challenging aspect for students.

Question 5: To what extent do you think pronunciation is important for Algerian EFL students?

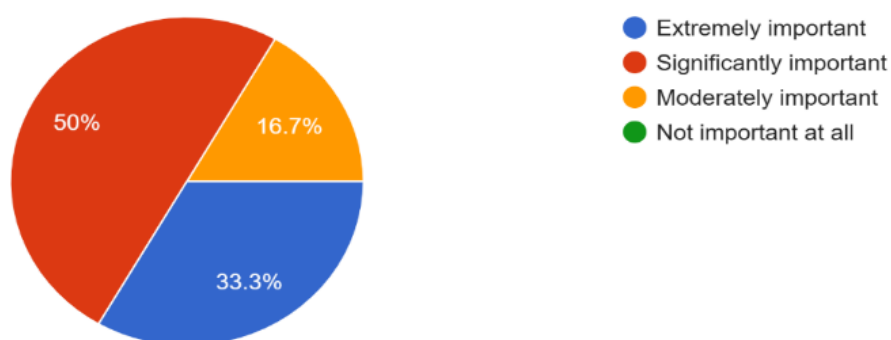


Figure 11: Pronunciation Importance for EFL Learners

As the chart above shows, half the teachers (50%) acknowledge that pronunciation is significantly important for EFL Algerian learners. However, 33.3% see that pronunciation is extremely important. While only 16.7 % of the teachers believe that it is moderately important.

Question 6: How would you evaluate the overall pronunciation level of your students?

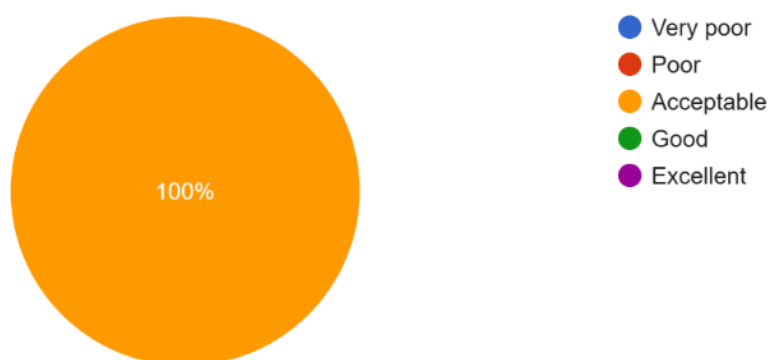


Figure 12: Overall Pronunciation Level of Students

As illustrated in the figure above, all the teachers (100%) assess the overall pronunciation proficiency of their students as acceptable.

Question 7: What are the major pronunciation problems faced by students?

The teachers provided the answers below:

- A problem with supra-segmental phonology (including stress, intonation, etc.
- The Schwa Sound /ə/, silent letters and unexpected pronunciations, and stress
- Mis-pronouncing the words, especially in relation to the weak and long sounds of the vowels.
- They do not apply the correct stress patterns. They cannot differentiate between some sounds either consonants or vowels...

- Pronunciation of some vowels such as “ship” and “sheep” / Mispronunciation of some consonants such as "ship" and "chip"/ Misplacing stress / Intonation
- Many students do not pronounce words correctly; they even do not recognize that they made pronunciation mistakes. They do not distinguish many vowels, even some consonants such as /ʃ / and /tʃ/

Question 8: Do you think that pronunciation difficulties hinder your students’ communicative abilities?

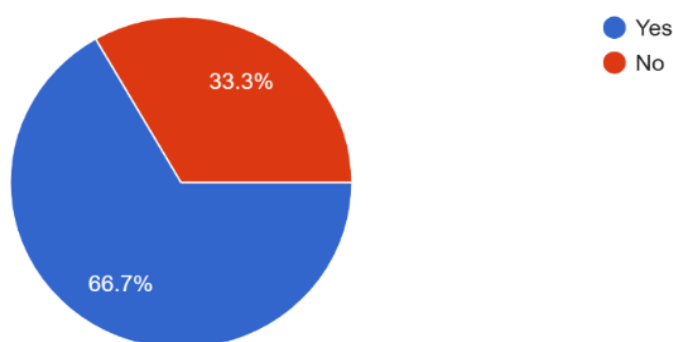


Figure 13: Pronunciation Difficulties Hindering Students’ Communicative Abilities

As represented by the chart above, 66.7% of the teachers think that pronunciation difficulties hinder the students’ communicative abilities. While 33.3% provided a negative response.

Question 9: What are the obstacles facing you when teaching pronunciation?

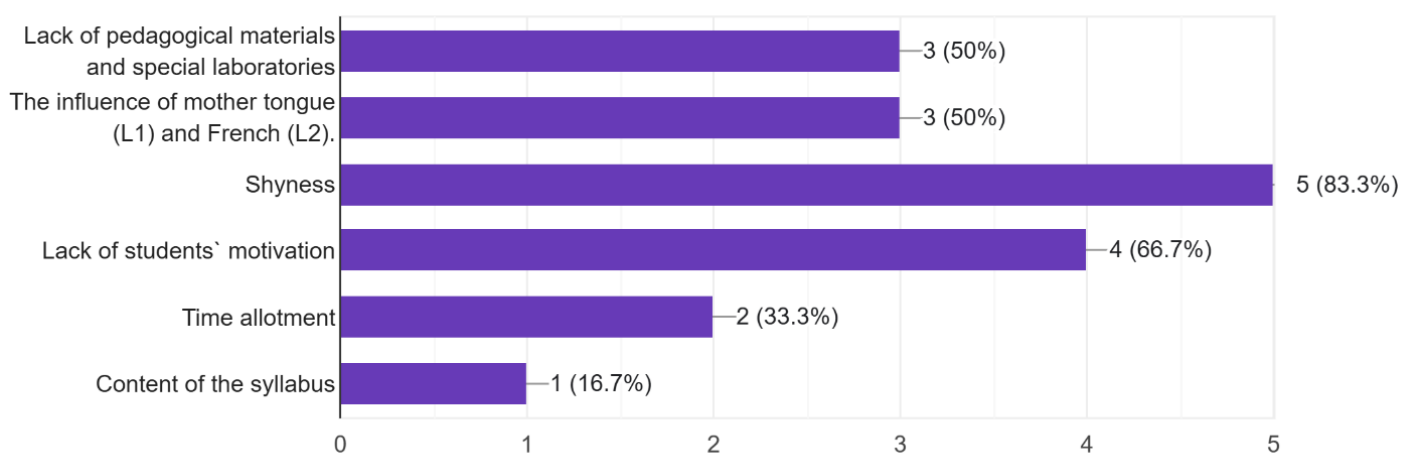


Figure 14: Obstacles Faced by teachers When Teaching Pronunciation

From the figure presented above, it is evident that the majority of the participants (5) who rate 83% concur that shyness represents a significant challenge they encounter in teaching English

pronunciation. Nevertheless, four of them (66.7%) acknowledge that lack of motivation constitutes another major issue. Additionally, 3 informants (50%) identify the mother tongue (L1) and French (L2) interference along with lack of pedagogical material and special laboratories among the concerns. Furthermore, two teachers (33.3%) recognize that time allotment can pose a barrier in the teaching of pronunciation. Whereas one participant (16.7%) admits that the content of the syllabus can be an obstacle for them.

Section Three: Pronunciation's Curriculum Deficiencies.

Question 10: Does the Curriculum meet all the pronunciation needs of the learners?

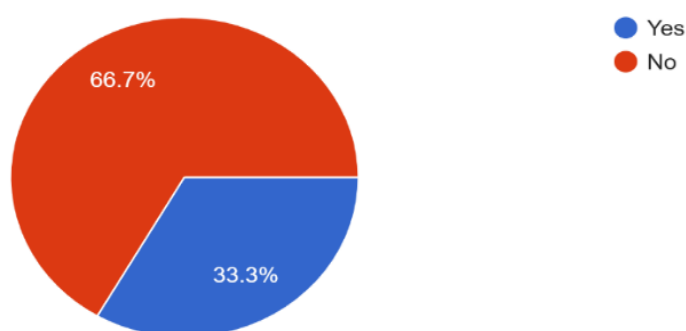


Figure 15: Curriculum and Meeting the Learners' Needs

As shown in the above figure, four teachers (66%) of the respondents perceive that the curriculum does not meet all the pronunciation needs of the learners, while 33% of them affirm that these pronunciation needs are taken into account by the curriculum.

Question 11: If no, what are its deficiencies?

The teachers' replies were:

Teacher 1: there is more focus on presenting material, that is courses.

Teacher 2: Students need more sessions to practice their English.

Teacher 3: a) Lack of contextual and functional use b) Lack of Integration with other skills (i.e. teaching pronunciation in isolation)

Teacher 4: It gives importance to the sounds of English in relation to their place & manner of articulation rather than using them in concrete situations. Phonetics is taught as an independent module.

- Teachers 5 and 6 have provided negative responses.

Question 12: What are your suggestions to improve it?

The teachers suggested the following points:

- I think that instructors should give more practice on pronunciation and phonetics. Personally, I usually give remarks in context even when I am teaching other modules. Correct pronunciation is a springboard for comprehension.
- The only thing that is needed is the adequate material to help the teacher doing his/her work
- To re-structure the content of the curriculum according to the main needs / weaknesses of the learners. To focus on specific courses that accentuate the material of pronunciation
- Provide an explicit program which gives importance to pronunciation
- Promote Communicative Pronunciation Practice/ Provide regular, formative feedback focused on intelligibility rather than native-like accuracy
- Since many students do not give importance to phonetics, I think teachers should give their students the opportunity to speak, organize pair-work activities to encourage them speak and practice the different sounds of English.

Section Four: Strategies to Improve Students Pronunciation

Question 13: Do you use educational technologies in your classes?

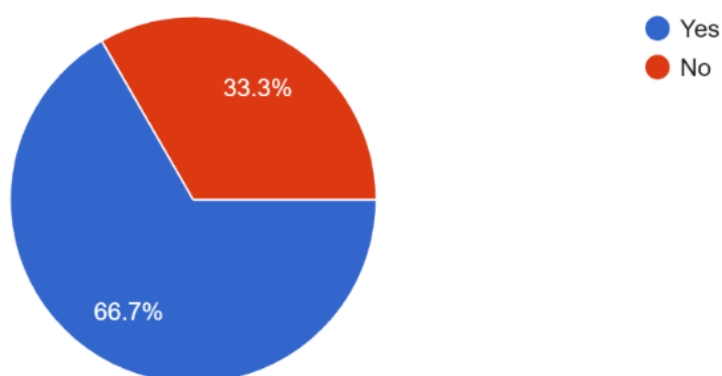


Figure 16: Teaches' Use of Educational Technologies

As demonstrated by the chart above, 66.7 % of the respondents confirm their use of Educational Technologies in their classes, whereas 33.3 % respond negatively.

Question 14: If yes, what are they?

- Videos/ audios...
- AI-driven applications such as "loora", educational videos and games.
- Speakers/ audios
- PowerPoint and Google Slides to introduce and reinforce pronunciation, Multimedia resources such as videos, podcasts, along with pronunciation/accents audiobooks such as Martin Hewings' or Lisa Mosjin's.

One participant with a negative response justifies her answer as follows:

- I don't rely on educational technologies because I was not given the necessary training in it.

Question 15: What strategies do you suggest to improve students' pronunciation?

The teachers proposed the following strategies:

- Students can record themselves speaking in English to improve their pronunciation and to keep track of their progress. Students can take notes of how words are pronounced (using phonetic transcription) to facilitate memorization of new or difficult words.
- Listen and imitate native speakers, practice minimal pairs (ship/sheep, bad/bed), record themselves and compare with native speech, and work on stress and intonation patterns.
- The curriculum of oral production and pronunciation has to be undertaken by specialists in the field who can better take into consideration the needs of the learners.
- Role plays - active interaction
- Shadowing exercises (listening and imitation)/ Teaching suprasegmental features such as linking, reduction, rhythm, etc. / The use of tech for autonomous practice
- Students should apply what they study in phonetics when speaking English, especially the diphthongs and triphthongs. They should practice the different sounds of English, listen to native speakers of English, and above all give to the module of phonetics importance.

2. Discussion of the Results

2.1. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results of Students' Questionnaire

We have asked students some questions related to our topic which is pronunciation challenges encountered by EFL learners and the factors contributing to them. Based on the content and corresponding analysis, the majority of the students consider their level of pronunciation between good and very good although they are just in their first year (see question three). 60% of the students declare that they are aware of their pronunciation problems (see question five). We elicit that students face problems at both features of pronunciation, segmental and suprasegmental because of the difference of the sound systems between the mother tongue and the target language; adding to that, lack of exposure to the English language (see question six). According to question eight of the questionnaire, most students have difficulties in differentiating between the different consonant sounds such as /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, /dʒ/ and /g/. In fact, Ana Maria Do Val Barros (2003) has already backed up these findings in his study entitled "*Pronunciation Difficulties in the Consonants System by Arabic Speakers When Learning English after the Age of Puberty*". The results of her study reveal that Arabic speakers have difficulties to pronounce some of the English consonants due to the different sound systems of the mother tongue "*Arabic*" and the target language "*English*". Moreover, results from question seven show that students cannot make the difference between the distinct vowel sounds as most of them cannot identify /æ/ from /ʌ/. In short, students have problems at the level of segmental features that can lead to improper pronunciation. Furthermore, they encounter issues at the suprasegmental level since they do not use the right

stress and intonation patterns which may hinder intelligibility when communicating (see question nine and ten from section three). In this regard, Badache (2018, p.163) states: *«intonation is very important for intelligibility [...] it is used to express intentions. This is because an inappropriate intonation pattern or a mispronounced word can lead to misunderstandings. »* These findings support and answer the first research question which says: “*What are the pronunciation difficulties faced by first year EFL students?*” and indicate that the set hypothesis “*segmental and supra-segmental features are the major area of difficulty faced by students*” is valid.

Based on the results of question four from section two, half of the students have obstacles in speaking English fluently due to hesitation and lack of confidence. Besides, students claim that their teachers are not encouraging and motivating them to improve their pronunciation; thus, they feel anxious, embarrassed and not confident when they speak (see question fourteen and fifteen from the last section). A significant factor contributing to students' diminished confidence is the absence of encouragement from educators. Encouraging students to engage and enhance their English language skills may positively impact their performance (Brown, 2001; as cited in Boutheyna Ghedira Mezdad and Oumayma Soukou, 2024). Overall, all what is mentioned previously answers the second question of this study which is: “*What factors influence learners' pronunciation?*” Accordingly, our 2nd hypothesis that says that lack of self-confidence and motivation are the main factors that contribute to breakdowns in pronunciation, is confirmed.

Finally, we can say that the results of the students' questionnaire are in the direction of our hypotheses confirming that both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation are the major area of difficulty and lack of confidence and motivation are the main factors contributing to them.

2.2. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results of Teachers' Questionnaire

This section addresses the primary findings from the teachers' questionnaire aimed at revealing the pronunciation challenges faced by first year EFL students at Bouira University. The results indicate that pronunciation is the most challenging subskill for students. In this regard, Fraser (2000) states: *«Ironically, pronunciation is also the aspect of language that is most difficult to acquire. »* Thus, all the teachers evaluate the level of their students to be acceptable (see question five and six). Additionally, the teachers' questionnaire reveals that many students encounter difficulties at both the segmental and supra-segmental levels of pronunciation. These difficulties are apparent in the students' inability to apply the stress patterns and intonation correctly. In addition, students make mistakes in pronouncing words due to confusion and the incapacity to discriminate some vowel sounds (long and short) and even consonants such as “tʃ”

and “j”. These pronunciation mistakes can affect their communicative abilities as expressed by the teachers (see question seven and eight). This is supported by Pennington and Rogerson Revell (2000) who point out that the incorrect pronunciation of specific vowels or consonants can lead to significant issues in communication in certain circumstances. They state: *«a lack of differentiation between one phoneme and another can easily interfere with understanding and can also lead to impression formation and triggering of stereotypes that may have other kinds of impacts on communication»* (p.9). They add *«Prosody is also an important indicator of a speaker’s attitude towards the audience, and may even determine whether a listener will give the attention and effort needed to receive and interpret the speaker’s message.»* (p.15); consequently, the first question of the study which asks: *“What are the pronunciation difficulties faced by first year EFL students”*, is answered. Subsequently, the first hypothesis which states that segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation are the major area of difficulty faced by students is validated.

Teachers’ answers to question nine affirm that there is a variety of factors that cause pronunciation issues; for instance, lack of pedagogical materials, lack of exposure to the target language and inconsistency of the syllabus. Students’ shyness and lack of motivation are the major obstacles facing teachers when teaching pronunciation. Shyness is a significant psychological factor that hinders student’s learning process. Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz and Joann Cope (1986) observe that students’ apprehension about making mistakes during the learning process, along with the fear of negative evaluations from teachers or peers, increases their feelings of anxiety and shyness. This results in becoming hesitant speakers in the classroom. Our participants also note the lack of motivation and interest in pronunciation. This point of view is confirmed by Meihua Liu (2005) who found in her study that the participants’ lack of motivation and reluctance stem from their disinterest in learning spoken English, despite being strongly motivated to achieve high grades in examinations and assignments. The second research question that says: *“What factors influence learners’ pronunciation?”* is, therefore, answered and the hypothesis which stipulates that lack of confidence and motivation are the salient factors contributing to pronunciation challenges is confirmed.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, most teachers affirm that it does not meet the learners’ needs since it focuses on presenting material rather than practicing it. The module of phonetics is taught separately with an emphasis on transcription rather than practicing it in contextual situations and integrating it with other skills (see question seven and eight). Subsequently, the participants suggest some solutions to address these deficiencies and improve the teaching practices. First, instructors should give more practice on pronunciation and phonetics and integrate pronunciation with other modules. Second, providing adequate material

is a necessity in teaching pronunciation. Third, policy makers should review some pedagogical programs and re-structure the content according to the main needs and weaknesses of the learners and design specific courses that accentuate the importance of pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers point out that students do not give much importance to pronunciation when taught in isolation; as a result, they suggest practicing it in communicative situations which gives students more opportunities to practice their language through different activities such as pair work in order to foster their communicative competence. This same orientation in pronunciation teaching is advocated by Fraser (2000, p.25) *«Learners need to be taught pronunciation, as all other aspects of language, in a communicative method. Though communicative methods for teaching vocabulary, grammar and pragmatics have been around for decades, there has been little development of a communicative method for pronunciation teaching.»*

Nevertheless, the affordances of technology-based teaching and learning assist the educators in improving the pronunciation practices. Numerous informants confirm their use of technology and digital tools in their classes such as videos, audios, AI-driven applications like "loora", educational games in addition to PowerPoint and Google Slides to introduce and reinforce pronunciation. Also, Multimedia resources such as podcasts, along with pronunciation and accent audiobooks such as Martin Hewings' or Lisa Mosjin's are used by the teachers (see question ten and eleven).

Moreover, the participants suggest some strategies to address the students' pronunciation issues (see question twelve). Students can record themselves speaking in English to improve their pronunciation and to keep track of their progress. As claimed by Pennington and Rogerson-Revell (2019, p.235) *«Computer Assisted Pronunciation Technologies (CAPT) can also provide endless opportunities for repetition and imitation, instantaneous responses, and exposure to a wide range of target language speech; it can also facilitate individualized, self-paced learning. »* Students can take notes of how words are pronounced (using phonetic transcription) to facilitate memorization of new or difficult words. Moreover, listening to and imitating native speakers are important strategies to enhance one's pronunciation. Additionally, teachers propose that the curriculum of oral production and pronunciation has to be undertaken by specialists in the field who can better take into considerations the needs of the learners. Furthermore, role plays and active interaction play a crucial role in improving students' speaking skill and pronunciation. The participants insist on extensive listening as a key point in developing a good pronunciation. In this regard, Morley (1991) emphasizes the connection between listening, pronunciation and

speaking; adding to that, the necessity to broaden the scope and variety of pronunciation-focused listening activities. Concentration on pronunciation-oriented listening instruction constituted a significant aspect of conventional pronunciation teaching, primarily concentrating on sound discrimination and identification exercises. From what is said above, we answered the third question: What pedagogical strategies can be employed to address these challenges? and the hypothesis of our study that assumes: “*extensive listening is an effective strategy that enhances students’ pronunciation*”, is confirmed.

3. Recommendations and Suggestions

3.1. Recommendations

There are some recommendations that help in creating good outcomes in teaching pronunciation. They are as follows:

- Improvements are needed in pedagogical pronunciation programs regarding EFL context.
- EFL teachers need to be provided with special training and materials to help them improve their effectiveness in pronunciation teaching.
- Pronunciation skill must be given more attention by both teachers and students.
- There is an extreme need for specialized laboratories where pronunciation and listening classes can be taught.
- Using computer or mobile assisted technologies in the field of pedagogy is no more an option rather a necessity due to its benefits in both teaching and learning processes.
- Researchers should dive into the psychological depths of learners by investigating the role of teachers in affecting learners’ confidence.

3.2. Suggestions for further research

After discussing and analyzing the results of both students’ and teachers’ questionnaires, we recommend some important points for further research:

- It is worth noting that teachers should integrate technology in their classes as its role became crucial in fostering students’ motivation in learning pronunciation.
- Researches should be directed towards Listening and its significant role in the development of pronunciation’ proficiency.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals students' and teachers' perceptions on pronunciation challenges faced by EFL learners and the factors contributing to them. It addresses the interpretations of the results obtained from both students' and teachers' questionnaires. The results of this research confirm our hypotheses as students find difficulties at the level of both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation. Moreover, it was found that there are many factors that hinder students' pronunciation ability such as shyness, lack of motivation and self-confidence, interference of mother tongue and lack of pedagogical materials. Last and not least, the findings also reveal that intensive listening, role plays and audios visual materials are effective strategies that enhance students' pronunciation.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Conveying and understanding messages in the English language involve a variety of skills, and pronunciation is not the least important one. According to a general educational consensus, pronunciation stands as the most salient aspect of the English language and the most challenging to teach and learn at the same time. Despite its significance, not much importance is attributed to it either by learners, teachers and even educational programs. This fact has engendered several difficulties and issues which prevent the attainment of language proficiency and affect effective communication. Furthermore, some factors related to the individual or his/her environment play a key role in aggravating the situation. Thus, the aim of undertaking the present research is to investigate both teachers and students' perceptions of the different pronunciation challenges faced by the first year EFL students and the factors contributing to them. Besides, it seeks some pedagogical strategies and solutions to assist learners to overcome these obstacles in order to reach a higher level of the language mastery. To find answers to the above-mentioned problem, the following research questions were put forward:

- What are the pronunciation difficulties faced by first year EFL students?
- What factors influence learners' pronunciation?
- What pedagogical strategies can be employed to address these challenges?

Besides, we put forth the present hypotheses:

- ✓ Segmental and supra-segmental features consist the major area of difficulty faced by students.
- ✓ Lack of self-confidence and motivation are the main factors.
- ✓ Extensive listening is an effective strategy that enhances students' pronunciation.

The rationale behind this study is to contribute to the existing literature and background knowledge in the field of pronunciation teaching and learning. It seeks to enrich the research already done in this area, and open new horizons to researchers wanting to explore this domain. Furthermore, it is a useful tool to raise the awareness of students about the importance of pronunciation and to unveil their areas of difficulties. Additionally, the present study serves as a reminder to teachers to focus more on this aspect in their classes and find out novel teaching methods that grab the attention of their students and encourage them to delve deeper in this aspect of language.

This research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the theoretical foundations and aims to offer insights into various concepts related to pronunciation within the EFL context, emphasizing its definition, its goals, segmental and supra-segmental

features, and its teaching significance in Algeria. Additionally, it explores the factors that affect pronunciation, and underscores the effect of pronunciation on intelligibility and communication ability.

The second chapter describes the research methodology, design, and procedures. It describes the nature of the research and defines and applies it. It distinguishes the population, sample, and setting. Furthermore, it discusses the analytical tools used to collect data from the research sample. Two questionnaires, one for students and one for teachers, are designed. In addition, the chapter discusses the research's constraints and limitations.

The third chapter is concerned with the practical aspect of the research; it presents the results of the teachers' and students' questionnaires, as well as the analysis and interpretation of the findings. This chapter ends with some recommendations and suggestion of some strategies for both students and teachers to rely on in order to improve the overall pronunciation level and competence.

The analysis and the discussion of the results revealed that the findings of the study indicated that students struggle with some elements of pronunciation, including segmental features represented by a lack of discrimination between vowel sounds along with consonant sounds, and suprasegmental features shown by the inability to apply correct stress and intonation patterns. The analysis of the two questionnaires disclosed that students are not aware of the pronunciation mistakes they make and consider themselves as having a good pronunciation level. In addition, the questionnaires provided insights into the factors that lead to incorrect pronunciation among learners. Feedback from both teachers and students identified several contributing factors, including interference from the native language, a lack of sufficient practice opportunities, inadequate explicit instruction on pronunciation, as well as lack of pedagogical materials. However, the most outstanding ones are lack of confidence and shyness, lack of motivation and need of encouragement from teachers. Thus, this research supplied answers for the raised questions as well as the results are in the direction of our hypotheses.

Finally, the questionnaire designed for teachers tries to collect teachers' proposals on possible solutions to improve their students' pronunciation skill. The feedback from the teachers highlighted the significance of integrating targeted practice activities such practicing minimal pairs and using phonetic transcription to memorize new vocabulary, integrating pronunciation with other skills in order to practice the language in real communicative situations rather than teaching it separately and a greater exposure to authentic language through audios, videos and podcasts. In addition, teachers consider shadowing exercises which consist of listening and imitating native speakers as an effective strategy to enhance the use of stress and intonation patterns. More

recommendations are suggested at the end of this study enlarging the scope of responsibility to include policy makers and curriculum designers whose task is to lift up the status of pronunciation in the educational programs by designing special courses that meet the students' needs and assist teachers in their teaching practices.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Students' Questionnaire

Dear participants,

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this questionnaire. The following questions were created as a part of our research on the pronunciation challenges encountered by first year EFL learners and the factors which contributed to them. All of your responses will be kept private and evaluated solely for research purposes. Your opinions are valuable and significant.

Instruction: kindly tick the answers that suit you and complete the space where necessary. In the multiple-choice question (MCQ), you can choose more than one answer.

Section One: Demographic Information

1. How old are you?

2. Are you?

☐ Male

☐ Female

Section Two: Pronunciation's Problems

3. How good is your English pronunciation?

☐ Excellent ☐ very good ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ weak

4. What do you consider your biggest challenge when speaking?

- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary
- Grammar

5. Are you aware where your pronunciation difficulties lie?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. What pronunciation problems do you encounter in English learning?

- Different sound systems between the mother tongue and the target language.
- The use of right intonation and stress.
- Lack of exposure to English.
- Hesitation / lack of self-confidence when communicating.
- The interference of my mother tongue language.
- Fluency

7. How frequently do you make mistakes in pronunciation?

☐ Always

☐ Often

- ☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never
-

Section Three: Pronunciation Features` Challenges

8. As a learner, I cannot differentiate between the consonant sounds:

- ☐ /p/ and /b/
☐ /ʃ/ and /tʃ/
☐ /tʃ/ and /dʒ/
☐ /θ/ and /ð/
☐ /dʒ/ and /g/

9. As a learner, I cannot distinguish the vowel sounds:

- ☐ /i/ and /i:/
☐ /æ/ and /ʌ/
☐ /ɪ/ and /e/
☐ /æ/ and /e/

10. As a learner, I confuse when I pronounce the following words:

- ☐ “No” and “Now”
☐ “Here” and “Hair”
☐ “Bake” and “Bike”

11. Do you apply the stress patterns when speaking?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. Do you use the correct intonation patterns?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Section Four: Factors Affecting Pronunciation

13. I practice my English enough.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

14. My pronunciation would be better if I had more exposure to English.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

15. When I speak, I always refer to my mother tongue language.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

16. I feel embarrassed when I speak in English.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

17. Are your teachers encouraging you to correct and improve your pronunciation?

Yes ☐

No ☐

18. What motivates you to ameliorate your pronunciation?

.....

19. What applications do you use to improve your pronunciation?

.....

Thank you for your participation

Appendix Two

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear participants,

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this questionnaire. The following questions were created as a part of our research on the pronunciation challenges encountered by first year EFL learners and the factors which contributed to them. All of your responses will be kept private and evaluated solely for research purposes. Your opinions are valuable and significant.

Instruction: kindly tick the answers that suit you and complete the space where necessary. In the multiple-choice question (MCQ), you can choose more than one answer.

Section One: Demographic Information

1. Are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female
 2. How many years have you been a teacher? :
 3. What is your specialty/ Major:
-

Section Two: Students' Pronunciation Obstacles

4. According to you, what subskill is the most challenging for your students?
☐ Grammar ☐ vocabulary ☐ pronunciation ☐ comprehension
5. To what extent do you think pronunciation is important for Algerian EFL students?
☐ Extremely important ☐ significantly important ☐ moderately important
☐ Not important at all
6. How would you evaluate the overall pronunciation level of your students?
☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ acceptable ☐ good ☐ Excellent
7. What are the major pronunciation problems faced by students?
.....
8. Do you think that pronunciation difficulties hinder your students' communicative abilities?
☐ Yes ☐ No
9. What are the obstacles facing you when teaching pronunciation?
 - Lack of pedagogical materials and special laboratories
 - The influence of mother tongue (L1) and French (L2).
 - Shyness
 - Lack of students' motivation
 - Time allotment
 - Content of the syllabus

Section Three: Pronunciation`s Curriculum Deficiencies

10. Does pronunciation`s Curriculum meet all the needs of the learners?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. If no, what are its deficiencies?

.....

12. What are your suggestions to improve it?

.....

Section Four: Strategies to Improve Students` Pronunciation

13. Do you use educational technologies in your classes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. If yes, what are they?

.....

15. What strategies do you suggest to improve students` pronunciation?

.....

Thank you for your participation

Résumé

Une communication efficace en anglais nécessite un ensemble de compétences, la prononciation étant particulièrement cruciale. La prononciation est considérée comme la caractéristique la plus importante de la langue anglaise, mais aussi la plus difficile à enseigner et à apprendre simultanément. Malgré son importance, les apprenants, les enseignants et même les programmes éducatifs la négligent souvent. Cette négligence a entraîné de nombreux défis et problèmes qui entravent la maîtrise de la langue et empêchent une communication efficace. De plus, divers facteurs liés à l'individu ou à son environnement aggravent considérablement la situation. Par conséquent, l'objectif de cette recherche est d'explorer les perceptions des enseignants et des étudiants concernant les différents défis de prononciation rencontrés par les étudiants de première année apprenant l'Anglais comme langue étrangère, ainsi que les facteurs qui y contribuent. Par la suite, la recherche vise à identifier des stratégies et des solutions pédagogiques pour aider les apprenants à surmonter ces obstacles. Pour atteindre cet objectif, une étude de cas a été utilisée avec une approche mixte. La présente étude porte sur les enseignants et les étudiants de première année de langue Anglaise comme langue étrangère. L'échantillon étant composé de six enseignants et de trente étudiants de langue Anglais comme langue étrangère à l'université de Bouira. Les données sont collectées par moyen de questionnaires distribués aux enseignants et aux étudiants. Google Forms est utilisé pour analyser les données obtenues. Les résultats de chaque question sont ensuite représentés statistiquement sous forme de pourcentages, afin d'être analysés qualitativement et quantitativement. De plus, les résultats des questionnaires confirment les hypothèses de recherche. Premièrement, les traits segmentaux et suprasegmentaux de la prononciation constituent le principal point de difficulté rencontré par les étudiants. Deuxièmement, le manque de confiance en soi et de motivation est le principal facteur contribuant à ces difficultés. Troisièmement, l'écoute intensive est une stratégie efficace pour améliorer la prononciation des étudiants. Enfin, des conclusions et des suggestions sont formulées pour contribuer à des recherches ultérieures.

Mots clés: les perceptions des enseignants et des étudiants, défis de prononciation, solutions pédagogiques, les traits segmentaux et suprasegmentaux, la confiance en soi, la motivation, l'écoute intensive