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Investigating EFL Pronunciation Errors

Case Study: First year EFL Students at Chadli Bendjedid University

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying, exploring, and analysing pronunciation errors made by first year English as a foreign language (EFL) students at chadli Bendjedid University. It attempts to find answers to the main research question which is "What are the factors / reasons that lead to pronunciation errors". In order to answer the research questions and confirm the hypothesis that students' errors can be due to some factors like the ignorance of pronunciation and phonetics rules, the French system interference, among others; an analytical study is embraced. The fieldwork is carried out using a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative), and to collect the data, three tools are involved: two questionnaires for both teachers and students, followed by a classroom observation, and an audio recording. The participants are 10 EFL teachers and 30 EFL students from Chadli Bndjedid University. The findings aligned with the research hypotheses and showed that the above mentioned factors affect students' pronunciation. Based on these findings, some teaching and learning techniques were generated as pedagogical recommendations to facilitate the achievement of the teachers' course objective, and to help students control the problems encountered in the classroom while learning English pronunciation.

Keywords: Analysing Pronunciation Errors, Phonetics Rules, French Iinterference, Teaching and Learning Techniques.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة البحثية إلى تحديد واستكشاف وتحليل أخطاء النطق التي تحدث في فصل دراسي للغة الإنجليزية الأجنبية (EFL) ، والتي قام بها طلاب السنة الأولى في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة شادلي بن جديد. تقوم هذه الرسالة على فرضية أن هذه الأخطاء ناتجة عن الجهل بقواعد النطق والصوتيات ، وتداخل اللغة الفرنسية ، وكذلك بعض العوامل النفسية. للإجابة على أسئلة هذا البحث تم عمل دراسة تحليلية لأخطاء النطق. يتم العمل الميداني باستخدام طرق مختلطة (كمية ونوعية) مع ثلاث أدوات لجمع البيانات ؛ استبيانان لكل من المعلمين والطلاب ، متبوعين بملاحظة الفصل وتسجيل صوتي. المشاركون هم 10 مدرسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية و 30 طالبًا من جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد. يتم تحليل الأدوات لتحقيق أهدافنا البحثية. كانت النتائج متوافقة مع فرضيتنا ، وأظهرت أن العوامل المذكورة أعلاه تؤثر على نطق المتعلمين. بناءً على هذه النتائج ، تم إنشاء بعض تقنيات التعليم والتعلم كتوصيات تربوية لتسهيل تحقيق هدف المقرر الدراسي للمعلمين ، ولمساعدة الطلاب على التحكم في جميع المشكلات التي يواجهونها في الفصل ، من أجل تطوير مستواهم في النطق.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CLI: Cross **L**inguistic **I**nterference

EA: Error Analysis

EFL: English as a **F**oreign **L**anguage

H: Hypothesis

L1: First **L**anguage

L2: Second **L**anguage

OE: Oral **E**xpression

Q: Question

SL: **S**econd **L**anguage

General Introduction

Introduction

English is a widely accepted and well-known language that has contributed as a medium of communication to the world and occupies a definite place in the curriculum of EFL schools, colleges, and universities. Learning English as a foreign language is needed for all learners in all categories in order to engage in life skills. Many Arabs struggle with English language acquisition and pronunciation remains one of the most significant challenges.

In fact, many novice EFL (henceforth English as a Foreign Language) learners around the globe find uttering words in English as the most difficult thing to deal with when learning. Since pronunciation is a critical component of oral communication, i.e. without correct and clear pronunciation; verbal communication can be done inadequately and can be rigorously impaired. Over the past few years and up till recently, there has been significant growth of interest and attention to pronunciation teaching and learning.

Furthermore, learning a foreign language requires not only patience but also practise. During practise, students make a variety of pronunciation mistakes. Students become more aware of the need to gain accuracy, fluency in their English pronunciation as the importance of English increases and a certain level of proficiency in English is expected. As a result, it is important to acknowledge that language learning, like any other human learning, is related to making errors. Studying English pronunciation errors is an excellent way to learn about students' mistakes. This is more likely to help teachers anticipate the difficulties that EFL students may encounter when learning a second or a foreign language and improve the effectiveness of English pronunciation teaching.

1. Statement of the Problem

Pronunciation errors affect not only beginners but also advanced learners studying at the university. Due to a significant mismatch between the Arabic and English sound systems, Algerian EFL learners may have some difficulties pronouncing English, whether in terms of consonants or vowels. Another issue is the resemblance between the English and French systems which impedes the pronunciation of Algerian learners who were exposed to the French language before English. Thus, these problems of pronunciation may influence their learning process, and may affect their self-confidence while learning English language.

Therefore, it was necessary to discover the factors that had a role in the learning of the phonological system of English as a foreign language and to find out the suitable remedial plans. Moreover, the study provided an explanation with regard to the possible factors or causes of such errors.

2. Aims of the Study

Throughout this study, we are aiming to find the common pronunciation errors encountered by EFL learners. Moreover, this study designs to:

1. Find out the types of pronunciation errors made by the learners.
2. Explain the causes of the pronunciation errors during the learning process.
3. Investigate the learning and teaching strategies to enhance pronunciation errors, and
4. Offer possible solutions that may help EFL learners to overcome pronunciation errors.

3. Significance of the Study

This current research is carried out to highlight the struggle of EFL learners with their pronunciation issues by proposing feasible pedagogical techniques for imparting English sounds and motivate the learners to produce and learn sounds more accurately.

4. Research questions

In light of the aims mentioned previously, this study seeks answers to the following questions:

Q1: What are the factors / reasons that lead to pronunciation errors and to what extent does the overgeneralization of the English phonological rules affect students' pronunciation?

Q2: What are the common problems met by novice EFL learners when pronouncing English?

5. Research Hypotheses

On the basis of the questions formulated earlier, our research assumes that:

H1: Second language interference, as well as psychological factors influence negatively on the oral production.

H2: First year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University have problems with certain sounds which can be due to the lack of practise and the ignorance of the phonetics rules.

6. Methodology

In order to examine the above-mentioned hypotheses, we need to employ the mixed (quantitative & qualitative) method, thus we selected 40 first year EFL students that may represent the sample of the study. 30 of them have been selected randomly while the remaining accepted to be recorded. We have decided to use two questionnaires for both teachers and students, a classroom observation, and an audio recording as research tools that can be helpful in collecting data. The participants of this study are EFL teachers and students at Chadli Bendjedid University.

7. Structure of the Study

The present study is composed of three chapters. Before starting chapter one we have presented a general introduction with all of its components. The first chapter casts light on the literature review of the pronunciation errors usually committed by EFL learners, as well as to the importance of the speaking skill. The Second chapter deals with the methodology, the data gathering tools and their analysis and interpretation, with the results discussion. Chapter three

contains a discussion of the hypotheses along with a set of recommendations, to conclude with the general conclusion.

8. Limitations of the Study

Although we accomplished several impressive findings by the end of our investigation, it is evident that we confronted several obstacles that delayed its accomplishment to some extent. The first limitation we faced was that half of the practical part was done during Ramadan, where the participants were exhausted, tired, and not willing to participate in the research study.

The second limitation was the number of the students' participants who participated in our study. We managed to work with 20 participants for the questionnaires and only 10 participants for the audio recording from the entire number of first year students since only a minority accepted to take part in the current study. As a result, the study's findings cannot be applied to the entire population of students of English.

The third limitation was that some teachers were not cooperative or helpful at all, they did not respond to our questionnaire, others took an extra time to answer it; therefore, it was impossible for us to collect all of the questionnaires' data at the same time.

The fourth limitation was the time constraints which impeded the students' speaking skills, and creativity while making the classroom observation.

The fifth limitation was the recording procedure itself. We encountered obstacles during the recording process because the participants were busy preparing for their tests and exposes at the time. Consequently, we were severely limited.

The final limitation was the amount of time available. It is a very important issue to consider when conducting research. Since we were so busy with classes and exams throughout the first semester, we had to postpone our dissertation for a while.

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW ON EFL PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

Chapter 1: An Overview on EFL Pronunciation Errors

Introduction

The gist of this chapter turns around the core concept of this study, which is pronunciation errors. It opens with a general explanation of the concept, which is divided into; definition of pronunciation; pronunciation goals; its importance and its difficulties; then, the chapter identifies both phonology and phonetics concepts, as well as the components of pronunciation in English. After that, it tackles language learning (its problems, its errors, its role, and its significance). This chapter also covers the general concept of error analysis with details, in addition to the sources of errors, such as mother-tongue interference, spelling-pronunciation inconsistency, and learning English pronunciation. The final part of this chapter deals with the impact of French-English cognates on English pronunciation.

1.1. General Concept of Pronunciation: Overview

English is widely recognized as a means of communication and is included in the curricula of several schools, colleges, and institutions around the globe. Arab learners, for instance, sometimes need to learn English as a foreign language in order to engage in life skills. In fact, many Arabs struggle while learning English as a foreign language and perhaps one of the most difficult areas is its pronunciation. In fact, pronunciation is a key aspect of spoken communication (Berry, 2021) and pronouncing words may be a hindrance to successful communication for many EFL students. As a result, without proper pronunciation, verbal communication can be ineffective and severely hampered.

There has been a tremendous increase in interest and attention towards pronunciation education in the past several years. Many studies were dedicated to pronunciation in EFL contexts (Abdul-Abbas et al., as cited in Jahara, 2021). While these studies on pronunciation are being conducted, further studies in EFL classes in the Arab countries are still required.

1.1.1. Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a critical component of oral communication success. It needs a lot of thought because it helps to express the proper message in oral communication. Moreover, it is the way in which people make sound of words. Swan, and Smith (1987) defined pronunciation as:

> Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (supra-segmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language.(p.1)

In addition, Richards & Schmidt (2010) define pronunciation as "the way a certain sounds are produced […] and often relates the spoken word to its written form". Moreover pronunciation, according to the Oxford Word Power (2006,p.469) , is "the way a language or a word is pronounced or a person's way of speaking a language". It is worth noting here that pronunciation has a close connection to the concept of identity: it is a domain within which one's identity is expressed (Zuengler, 1988).

Based on the previous definitions, we can say that pronunciation is an important aspect of language learning for any language learner because it affects one's competency as well as performance.

1.1.2. Pronunciation Goals

The main objective of any pronunciation rule is to improve students' speech, intellige nce, and understanding, rather than making them sound like native English speakers. Harmer (2001, p.67), in this context, pointed that:

Concentrating on sounds, showing where they are made in the mouth, making students aware of where words should be stressed – all of these things give students extra information about spoken English and help them achieve the goal of improving comprehension and intelligibility

To put it another way, the job of pronunciation is to make students aware of all components of pronunciation as well as directions for speakers to understand.

Pronunciation offers learners a choice in how to express themselves, feel a pleasure in exchanging ideas, and communicate effectively. Levis (2005) noted that the treatment of intonation in textbooks was often devoid of context and lacked communicative value. Once speaking English, the speakers and listeners have a mutual communication relationship (Habibi, 2016).This means communication occurs when both the speaker and the listener affect each other in communication. Improving pronunciation does not only lead to facilitating communication but also will boost self-confidence and refine self-image of the speaker.

Wrembel (2002,p.175) expressed pronunciation's aims as follows;

1. Functional intelligibility, creating easy-to-understand spoken English
2. Functional communicability, creating spoken language that fits communicative needs.
3. Improved self-esteem and creating a good self-image
4. Speech-monitoring skills and speech-modification tactics that allow students to improve their intelligibility, communicability, and confidence outside of the classroom.

Depending on these aims, it is possible to conclude that the goals of teaching pronunciation are to ensure that learners feel more at ease when speaking English, to build positive self-awareness as non-native speakers in communicative activities, and to improve the learner's ability to highlight and generate English sounds, as well as basic rhythm, stress, in a variety of contexts.

1.1.3. The Importance of Pronunciation

Many teachers focus more on teaching grammar and vocabulary rather than on pronunciation. Others see that the most important thing is comprehension but not pronunciation. As (Harmer, 2001) states, most teachers believe that pronunciation study is too complicated for some learners.

In fact, pronunciation is a very important feature when transferring knowledge to other people. Varonis and Gass (1982,p.114) claimed that grammar and pronunciation play together a role in listening comprehension. This latter needs a practical mastery of the sounds, rhythms and intonations of the English language and how they harmonize together in connected rapid speech. Consequently, pronunciation errors can impede conversations; learners with weak pronunciation will stay incomprehensible even if they use a large vocabulary and faultless syntax to express themselves. And as Harmer (2001) expressed, the first thing that native speakers usually discern during a conversation is pronunciation.

For these reasons, pronunciation is an essential skill that learners must pay close attention to as it is commonly considered as a criterion for measuring the intelligibility of the English language speech.

1.1.4. Difficulties of Pronunciation

English is sometimes thought of as one of the hardest languages to pronounce for the simple reason that there is a mismatch between the symbol and its sounds. In many cases, novice learners manage to understand the meaning of words but find difficulties to express the word orally.

Spelling and pronunciation have a complicated connection, Schütz (2008,p.106), in this context, states that “in the study of English as a foreign language, we must replace the saying seeing is believing with hearing is believing”. The English writing is deceiving sometimes; leading to mistakes i.e. what is written is not exactly what should be pronounced.

According to Bose (2005), the English language lacks an ideal correspondence between its word spelling and its pronunciation. Furthermore, some words are pronounced the same but with different spellings, or vice versa.

Mother tongue interference is one of the pronunciation's problems that affects learners' oral production. They are more likely to refer back to the first language they mastered and consequently while speaking the target language they will unconsciously use some sounds of their first language.

Moreover, teachers' lack of desire and reluctance to incorporate pronunciation in their instruction is another factor that usually shakes learners' motivation and attitude towards pronunciation. In fact, teachers should be innovative in order to make class fun, engaging and thus make the students more motivated and excited to study. In this regard, Harmer (2001) argues that "it is thanks to pronunciation teaching that students not only become aware of different sounds and sound features, but can also improve their speaking immeasurably" (p.183), that is to say teaching pronunciation is fundamental for both teachers and learners, hence teachers should give more value and time to teach it.

1.2.1. Phonology and Phonetics

1.2.1.1. Phonology

Phonology is a term that received several definitions, all of which agree that it is the study of sound patterns. Different linguists supported phonological definitions that were different in concept and yet related. Phonology is defined to be concerned with the organization of speech within specific languages, or with the systems and patterns of sounds that occur in particular languages (Clark; Yallop; Fletcher, 2007). Furthermore, according to Yule (2016), phonology is a description of the system and pattern of speech sounds in a language. However, this is in reference to the abstract and mental components of language sounds rather than the actual physical articulation of speech sounds.

From a general point of view, phonology has really explained the many principles and rules of how sounds are linked together, which is also the study of the categorical organization of speech sounds in languages, as well as the way speech sounds are organized in the mind and used to transmit meaning.

1.2.1.2. Phonetics

According to Clark; Yallop; Fletcher, (2007), phonetics is the study of sounds. It is divided into four categories: articulatory phonetics (which typically deals with the classification and identification of vowels and consonants), acoustic phonetics (which is sometimes limited to instrumental study and measurement of sound waves), and auditory or perceptual phonetics (which deals with the perception of sound waves) Mahon (2002) classified phonetics into three types:

1) Articulatory Phonetics which studies the production of sounds
2) Auditory Phonetics which studies the perception and perception of sound,
3) Acoustic Phonetics which studies the waves of sounds (Mahon, 2002, p. 27).

Phonetics, according to these definitions, is the scientific study of speech and language sounds. Phoneticians have historically depended on attentive listening and observation to describe speech sounds. In general, the study of the sounds we make when we talk is known as phonetics.

1.2.1.2.1. Speech Production

In order to produce sounds, air travels from the lungs through the vocal tract which includes the vocal cords (these resemble thick elastic bands rather than strings), the nose or nasal cavity, and the mouth or oral cavity. According to Heinz (1992) a speech sound can be separated into four distinct yet interrelated processes; the initiation of the air stream, generally in the lungs; its phonation in the larynx via the operation of the vocal folds; its direction by the

velum into the oral cavity or the nasal cavity (the oro-nasal process); and lastly its articulation in the oral cavities, primarily by the tongue.

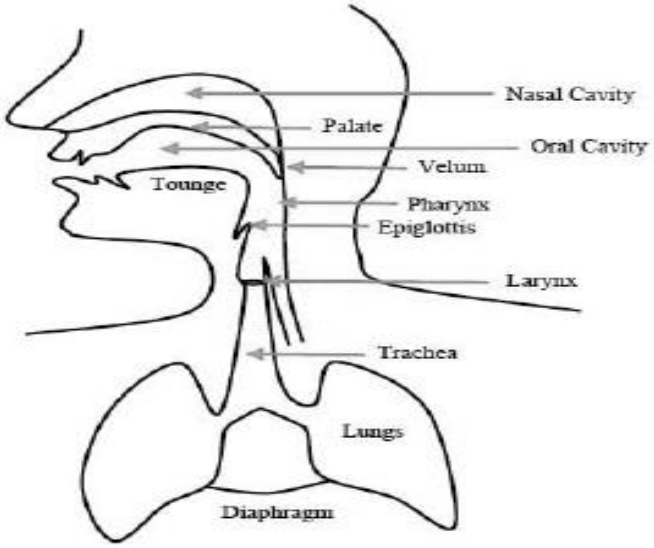

Figure 01 : A Schematic Diagram of the Human Speech Production Mechanism.(Goswami,2013)

1.2.1.2.2. Consonants and Vowels

The terms vowel and consonant are very familiar, but when researchers study the sounds of speech experimentally, they find it difficult to attain a precise definition of what they actually imply. According to Roach (2009, p10), the most common belief is that vowels are sounds in which the flow of air from the larynx to the lips is free from obstruction. When a doctor has to check the back of a patient's mouth, they are usually told to say"aah" since making this vowel sound is the most effective way of viewing the back of the mouth. However, if we make a sound like s, d, it is obvious that we are making it difficult for air to enter through the mouth.

1.2.1.2.3. Diphthongs

As a matter of convenience, diphthongs can be described as movements from one vowel to another. Ladefoged (1993) explains that the first component of the diphthong is frequently more prominent in English than the second. In fact, the final section is frequently so fleeting and transient that determining its exact quality seems difficult. In addition, "diphthongs frequently do not begin or end with any of the sounds found in plain vowels" (Ladefoged, 1993, p.92). In the same meaning, it is a truism to say that a diphthong is a sound produced by combining two vowels, particularly when one vowel sound is preceded by another.

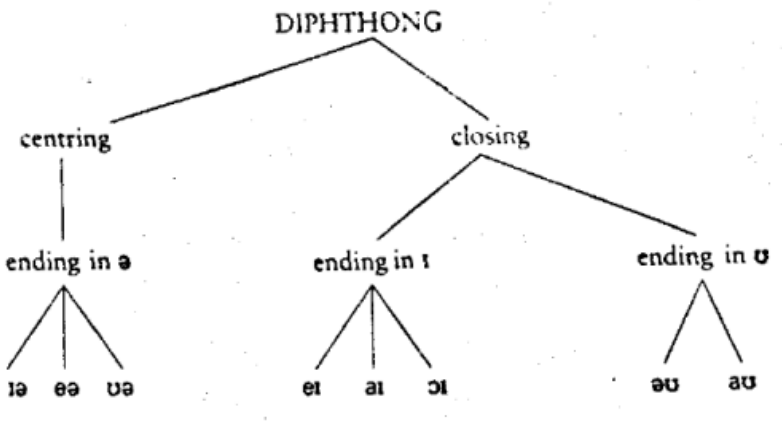

Figure 02: English Centering and Closing Diphthongs (Roach, 1991, p.20)

1.2.1.3. Phoneme

The phoneme is one of a number of distinct units that can be used to write down a language in a systematic and unambiguous manner (Ladefoged, 1993).Roach (2009) also stated that, "virtually all theories of phonology hold that spoken language can be broken down into a string of sound units (phonemes), and that each language has a small, relatively fixed set of these phonemes" (p, 59). In other words, the phoneme is considered as the smallest unit that differentiates one word from another.

1.2.1.4. Allophone

Allophones of a phoneme are sounds that:

(1) Do not change the utterance's meaning as was claimed by Kelly (2000), although there may be some differences in articulation, allophones do not alter meaning.

(2) They are very similar to one another (Ladefoged, 1993). Sometimes different incarnations may occur on the same phone. In other words, allophones may change the sound quality but not the meaning.

1.3.1. Components of Pronunciation in English

There are several factors that guide us to pronounce the words in English correctly. According to Harmer (2005, pp.187-198), "teachers should concentrate on teaching their students about: sound pronunciation, word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and related speech". In what follows is a discussion of these components.

1.3.1.1. Sound

When learning the sounds of English, EFL students are expected to deal with particular sounds in order to understand how their mouths create and spell these sounds. For instance, selecting words that contain the /Q̄: / sound from the list (bird, word, worm, curl, heard, first, lurch) (Harmer 2005).

1.3.1.2. Stress

According to Harmer (2001), stress is defined as the point in the word when the length of the vowel is intentionally changed, the pitch of the voice is raised, and the volume of the voice is increased. There are three types of stress: word stress, word group stress, and sentence stress. They are explained in the following.

1.3.1.2.1. Word stress

Tennant (2007, p.2) argues that exercising word stress is more important than practicing individual sounds because it can totally change the meaning. A word can have one syllable

(red), two syllables (picnic), three syllables, or more (beautiful). There are some situations when stress placement can be predicted without effort, such as the “schwa” sound; however, there are some guidelines to follow in order to recognize word stress and then decide which section of speech a word belongs to.

1.3.1.2.2. Word group stress

Compound words and phrases are formed when two or more words are combined. As is the case with words, we also have primary stresses in word groups that indicate that a word is more essential than others.

1.3.1.2.3. Sentence stress

A sentence is made up of words, phrases, and word groups. That is to say, the stresses used in phrases will highlight essential words or parts of the sentence, and will reveal the speaker’s moods or emotions and tone eventually.

1.3.1.3. Intonation

Intonation is the rhythm, the music, the changing pitch over different syllables of a sentence. The intonation is sometimes named the melody of speech. Crystal (2008, p.252) defines intonation as "a term used in the study of supra-segmental phonology, referring to the distinctive use of patterns of pitch, or melody”.

1.4.1. Language Learning

Learning a language is a purposeful activity that can take place in an organized learning environment or a program of self-study (Kramina, 2000, p.27). Furthermore, language learning is a necessary component of all languages' unity Robbins (2007).

1.4.2. The Importance of Pronunciation in Language Learning

Pronunciation plays a significant role in language learning. As it is mentioned in (The Benefits of Improving Your Pronunciation When Learning English as a Second Language - ASC English, 2020), others can quickly understand what you are trying to say if you use the

correct sounds when speaking , and if you have excellent grammar and vocabulary, good pronunciation will help others hear and understand you more clearly.

Besides, pronunciation requires paying attention to speakers, focusing on how they make the appropriate sentences sound in order to construct natural sentence and become familiar with them. This means that good pronunciation makes learning languages easier and helps others comprehend and construct sentences more quickly.

1.4.3. Pronunciation Errors in Language Learning

Making errors is a crucial part of the learning process of any language; without committing errors, students cannot learn the language correctly. It is also a better way for students to know the reason behind their poor English speaking performance. That is to say a student who uses language extensively, while making errors is much more likely to improve his pronunciation, than a student who communicates rarely because he is afraid of making errors.

According to Yang (2010), there are three types of language learning errors which can be mentioned as follows:

1.4.3.1. Misspelling

The first type of errors are punctuation problems, which include certain writers' misapplication of the exclamation (!) as well as the disordering of the closing inverted comas. Missing a comma after the salutation, under or overuse of capitals, over inclusion of a comma between an antecedent and a restrictive relative clause, and over inclusion of a comma between an antecedent and a restrictive relative clause in letters all fall under the punctuation problems. The second form of errors is a typographical error. People who can spell well may have horrible typing skills. Their difficulty is automating the time and space mechanics that support competent typewriter fingering or word processor keystrokes. The third problem to highlight is

dyslexic errors. Dyslexics, for example, is making errors like; park and parc which is a misspelling of two letters that can represent the same sound in English /k/.

1.4.3.2 Lexical Errors

Chomsky (1980) distinguishes between lexicon and grammar. Grammar is considered as systematic, predictable, and structured in closed systems. Lexis, on the other hand, is composed of irregular and unsystematic open systems. In fact, lexis has begun to play a major role in language learning. Several variables have contributed to this. To begin with, the distinctions between lexis and grammar are no longer as clear as they used to be. Word morphology, which was traditionally classified under grammar, is now considered as a part of the word, for instance a single root can produce words of many form classes: brilliant, brilliance, brilliantly. Lexical errors are of two types: formal and semantic. Formal lexis errors include formal mis-selection, malformations, and distortions while semantic errors in lexis include sense relation confusion and collocational errors.

1.4.3.3. Pragmatic Errors

Pragmatic errors, often referred to as pragma linguistic deviations, are errors committed when using linguistic knowledge. They usually happen when speakers miscode a message, not at the expense of its meaning, but at the expense of its pragmatic power, or the speech act or rhetorical force it should have. Discourse or interactional errors, on the other hand, are the result of sociocultural incompetence rather than linguistic failure. Thomas (1983) refers to it as "sociopragmatic failure" which is caused by cultural clashes, or cultural differences of opinion about what constitutes appropriate social behaviour in various settings. Taboos, the degree of the imposition, values and authority, and social distance are all elements that contribute to such errors.

1.4.4. The Significance of Errors in Language Learning

No one denies the fact that errors are important to language learning as they serve to reflect on learners' progress. Moreover, they reveal how a language is taught and acquired, in addition to demonstrating the tactics used by the learner and thus allow him to benefit from them. In this context, Carroll (1955) noted that rather than giving a learner the correct answer directly, it is more effective to allow him to discover it and test several theories. In a similar line of thought, Corder (1981), states:

> Errors have three separate consequences. If the teacher provides a systematic analysis, they notify him of how far the learner has progressed toward the goal and, as a result, what remains for him to learn. Errors demonstrate how language is taught or acquired. They are vital to the student, because making mistakes can be considered as a technique of learning. (p.10)

1.4.5. The Role of Errors in Learner Development

Learning a second or a foreign language, according to Brown (2000, p.1), is "a difficult process that necessitates seeking to expand beyond one's own tongue into a new language". Throughout this process, learners are likely to encounter issues that may cause them to make a variety of linguistic blunders. According to Corder (1973), these errors are a normal component of the language learning process. Errors are also important indicators of students' progress and development.

Furthermore, Bahloul (2007, p.45) recognized them as natural stages of developmental variables by claiming that "many of the linguistic mistakes that learners of English make; stem from the linguistic growth stage, and the conditions that learners are capable of making". Such errors are beyond the control of students. By the time errors are made, such students have not achieved the required level.

1.5. General concept of Error Analysis

1.5.1. Definition of Errors:

The term Error has been defined in different ways by several researchers. Those definitions are practically the same, with the distinction between errors and mistakes being the sole variation. An error, according to James (1998, p.1), is “a failed bit of language”. Norrish (1987, p.7) defined it as “a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt anything and continually makes mistakes” consistently.

Richards and Schmidt (2010) have also defined errors as “the usage of a linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language perceives as demonstrating incorrect or inadequate learning». Crystal (2008), on the other hand, defined error as “mistakes in spontaneous speech or writing”.

From a general perspective, errors reveal learners’ target language deficiencies which are not simply the product of the mother tongue's involvement but many other universal and underlying structures are also to blame for the learners' mistakes. The learners’ cognition, as well as a variety of other elements, are responsible for the learners' errors and mistakes.

1.5.2 Error Analysis

Error analysis (henceforth EA) is undeniably important and significant in that it assists teachers and researchers in gaining a comprehensive understanding of students' errors when learning a foreign or a second language. However, error analysis has limits; according to Schachter (n.d), the fundamental criticism is that it does not account for “avoidance phenomena”, which is when learners avoid using a specific term, structure or language in general for the simple reason that they believe it difficult to apply. Another cause for EA's failure is what Eliss (2008) described as flaws in methodological methods, theoretical issues, and scope constraints.

Similarly, Schachter and Murcia (1977) argued that error analysis only focuses the investigator's attention on errors and so excludes the investigation, adding that error classification is not always correct, and error-frequency assertions are frequently false and unclear. They went on to remark that identifying areas of difficulty in the target language is frequently ignored. Finally and according to Schachter and Murcia, the biased nature of sample processes is another drawback of EA. This indicates that the nature of data collection and informant selection is biased when it comes to gathering information from a variety of sources.

1.5.3. The Difference between Error and Mistake

To properly analyze learner language, it is necessary to distinguish between error and mistake, which are technically two distinct phenomena. Brown (2000, p.217) differentiates between error and mistake, arguing that a mistake is a performance issue caused by a random guess, whereas an error is a failure to use a recognized system correctly. A native speaker is generally capable of recognizing and correcting such "lapses" or mistakes as the result of a momentary breakdown or fault in the process of producing speech rather than underlying inability.

In other words, the error cannot be repaired by oneself. Mistakes must be distinguished from errors made by a learner of a second language. An error, or a noteworthy variation from a native speaker's adult grammar, demonstrates the learner's skill. It is impossible to self-correct an error. According to Harmer (3rd Ed, 2001, p.99), we can divide mistakes into three broad categories: “"slips" (mistakes that students can correct themselves once the mistake has been pointed out to them), "errors" (mistakes that they cannot correct themselves and thus require explanation), and "attempts" (mistakes that students cannot correct themselves and thus require explanation)”.

1.5.4. Types of Error Analysis

As previously stated, one of the primary goals of error analysis is to distinguish between the many types of errors. This is an important step in organizing them into categories.

To deal with this situation, Dulay & Burt (1974, p53) divided learners' errors into three categories: first, developmental errors, which are identical to L1 acquisition faults. Second, there are interference faults, which are linked to the L1. Finally, there are mistakes that are neither developing nor interfering. Furthermore, errors are divided into three categories: vocabulary errors, grammar errors, and sentence faults. As a result, pronunciation errors could be included in this category.

In addition, errors can be categorized based on their source; errors are divided into two categories: global errors and sentence structure errors. Local mistakes, on the other hand, are those that harm a single ingredient. Finally, according to Richards (1971, p.32), errors are divided into two groups based on their sources. Intralingual mistakes are the first category (interference). These mistakes appear to be made by all L2 learners, irrespective of their mother tongue. These may reflect the tactics used by L2 learners to learn the language. Interlingual errors are the second type of error. The grammatical system of L2 is reflected in such blunders.

1.6. Source of Errors

A variety of factors influence language acquisition in general, and English sound pronunciation in particular. As a result, there are numerous error sources triggered by L1 or L2. L1 is responsible for inter-language (transfer) errors, while L2 is responsible for intra-language errors. This appears to be a common mistake committed by all L2 students, regardless of their native language.

Moreover, L1 interference occurs when students learning English as a second language already have a solid understanding of at least one other language, and when the two meet, there are frequently misconceptions that cause learners to commit mistakes in their English

pronunciation. This might be at the sound level, where the students' L1 has a different system, or at the grammatical level, where the students' L1 has a different system, and so on. Overgeneralization is a phenomena that experts in infant language development have been aware of for a long time. Errors are an element of a student's interlanguage, which is the version of the language that a learner has at any given point in time and that is constantly altered as he/she strives for full mastery. Overgeneralization is a phenomena that experts in infant language development have been aware of for a long time. Errors are an element of a student's interlanguage, which is the version of the language that a learner has at any given point in time and that is constantly altered as he/she strives for full mastery.

Also, there are several elements that contribute to an error. Examining the source of the issue is one strategy for preventing it from happening again According to the idea above, errors are the most concerning factor for teachers, even though the students' attempt may reveal information about their existing language and may provide an opportunity for opportunistic teaching.

1.6.1 Mother-tongue Interference

The influence of first language (L1) on English language learning has been studied in a number of ways. "The /p/ and /b/ sounds are two distinct phonemes that native speakers can tell apart," Moosa (1972, p.44). In Arabic, where there is only one phoneme, /f/, the situation is different, which is why most EFL students mispronounce phrases with /v/ sounds. Learners are perplexed by the distinction between /v/ and /f/ in terms like (love, lofe), (visitor, fisitor), etc

Brown (2000, pp.50-60) discovered that "a second language encounters some challenges due to his or her first language L1 effects in his or her second language L2." L1 transfer is responsible for this impact. As a result, it is a common source of errors for second language learners.

Carter and Nunan (2001, p.58) found that “Mother-tongue has an influence on acquiring L2 pronunciation,” When L1 and L2 rules clash; foreign learners are likely to make mistakes in this situation. All of these can be traced back to a phenomenon known as L1-L2 interference. As a result, many students use /t/ as/d/, while others use /s/ for /z/, etc

In addition, O'Connor (2003) looked into pronunciation issues and the influence of L1. He discovered that several sounds, including /p/ and /b/, /s/ and /z/ and /f / and /v/, are confused. (Pit /bit), (thin/sin), (question/action), (leaser/bather), and (extremely /berry) are some examples.

1.6.2. Spelling-Pronunciation Inconsistency

Vocabulary micro-skills include spelling and pronunciation. The pronunciation of certain words has been altered by spelling. "Many words have letters that are not pronounced" (Redman, 1997, p.14). A language's phonemic system is linked to its writing system. As a result, there should be some kind of reference to spelling in the language that provides guidance on pronunciation and speech perception. Apart from the variations in symbols which usually lead to some phonological issues; there is an inconsistency in connection between letters and sounds. This explains the discrepancy in spelling and pronunciation. The orthography of English is complex, but the orthography of Arabic is phonemic, with each letter representing a single sound. EFL learners suffer from pronunciation mistakes as a result of these disparities.

English includes terms from a variety of languages, including Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Russian. Because the relationship between letters and sounds in many of these borrowed terms is unclear, English pronunciation is challenging, particularly for non-native speakers.

Malmberg (1965, p.99) claimed that the pronunciation of a language does not necessarily remain the same. The pronunciation may not necessarily correspond to the spelling. Although the spelling does not change, the pronunciation does.

According to Altaha (1996, p.9), there are no fixed rules for English spelling. "It is not always the case that the spelling matches the pronunciation. Similar sounding words, such as to, two, too; their, there; seas, seize; are frequently spelled differently, even though their pronunciation is nearly identical". When the student encounters such words, he will be perplexed as to how to pronounce them correctly. Unless he has prior knowledge, he simply guesses the pronunciation by glancing at the spelling of the word. It is critical to consult a dictionary in this situation.

1.6.3 Learning English Pronunciation

Despite the fact that humans now have writing systems to record their languages and a plethora of digital machines to make saving them even easier, people still prefer to communicate verbally rather than through writing. Pronunciation is important because it aids in the delivery of the correct message in oral communication. Pronunciation can sometimes impede communication or lead to a misinterpretation of what is stated if the message is not correctly articulated. According to Zemmermann (2004, p.29), "pronunciation is extremely significant because it is frequently the first thing people notice about language learners English."

1.7. The Impact of French-English Cognates on the English Pronunciation

Learning multiple languages is challenging. A third language is actually more difficult to master than a second one. There has been a recent rise in interest in the research of cross-linguistic influence (henceforth CLI), particularly in multilingual environments where one's first and second languages may influence the learning of a third. CLI might appear as errors, or miscommunication (Odlin, 1989). Moreover, the great majority of studies concentrated only on the influence of mother tongue on second/foreign language acquisition. Kellerman (1985) states that the more similar a language is felt, the more frequent transfer will occur. People commonly change their second language from French to English because of the typological similarities

between the two languages (Cenoz, 2001, pp.8-20). The impact of French on English could be significant. Lawless (2006), for instance, states:

> "As a result of French conquest of England, English adopted over 10.000 French words, about three-quarters of which are still in use today, This language can be found in all fields, including arts, literature, food, law, and government. More than one-third of all English terms are borrowed directly or indirectly from French .A native English speaker who has never studied French knows around 15.000 French words". (p.26)

Conclusion

This chapter covered the core concept of this study which is English pronunciation and how it is influenced by phonological characteristics, language learning, error analysis, and French interference. Although errors may block communication, they can also help learners improve. They also play a significant role in assisting teachers and researchers in recognising and categorising the flaws of their students, as well as in establishing appropriate procedures. It is also important to note that EFL teachers should be aware of the situation in the field of error analysis and keep a watch on the theories that surround it.

Chapter 2
Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter attempts to shed light on the methodology of this study. It is divided into two sections. The first section of this chapter describes the research methodology, participants, research instruments, setting, and procedures. Using a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative), data were collected through a questionnaire for both students and teachers, through classroom observations, and through audio recordings. The second section is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the already mentioned tools, followed by a discussion of the results.

2.1. Participants

This study's population consists of 30 EFL first-year students and 10 EFL teachers from Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf. The students sample consisted of eight (08) males and (22) females who were randomly chosen from a population of 135 first year L.M.D students. However, most of the teachers' sample were chosen based on specific criteria, such as teaching oral expression or phonetics for the simple reason that they are familiar with the learners' production and pronunciation.

To ensure the validity of the study, students were ignorant of the concept and the goal of the study which centers upon pronunciation of EFL leaners; and to stimulate them to speak freely and contribute regardless of their pronunciation. The purpose of selecting two groups of first-year L.M.D students as the study's sample is to analyze the errors they make during their first year of university , another reason is that they are exposed to phonetics and oral modules, and thus to pronunciation lessons where they are more likely to produce language and make errors consequently.

Ten (10) teachers from Chadli Bendjedid University were chosen, with the majority having previously taught either the oral or phonetics modules. Unquestionably, these teachers will provide valuable information about some effective techniques that can be used to solve the

issues of pronunciation students usually come across when using the language. The questionnaire was distributed in a delightful environment; but unfortunately, some teachers were not cooperative or responsive because of the exams.

2.2. Research Instruments

To carry out this research work, three instruments were used: two questionnaires (for students and teachers), classroom observation, and audio recording.

2.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire

2.2.1.1. Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is target for first-year LMD students at Chadli Bendjedid University, it consists of 17 questions, Open-ended, and the rest are Close-ended questions which limit the respondents to choose yes/no answers. A multiple-choice question is another type of close-ended inquiry in which the respondents' responses are limited to one of several options. (Sometimes/rarely/always). The questionnaire is divided into two separate sections. The first section consists of three general information questions that aim at collecting data about student's age, and the module they prefer to study.

The second section contains 15 questions. The important points raised in this section are summarized in the following: whether or not students commit pronunciation mistakes, the difficulties they encounter with some prescribed English consonants, vowel length, consonantal clusters, silent sounds, syllabification, French interference and other pronunciation problems. The last question in this section, moreover, is an open-ended question, which is very useful to collect the respondents' opinions; it provides a free space for the students' suggestions about the strategies and techniques they employ in order to develop their pronunciation.

2.2.1.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire contains two types of questions: close-ended questions in which teachers are asked to choose between 'yes' and 'no' answers or to select the appropriate responses from a list of options, some questions are followed by open-ended questions in which teachers are invited to express or add their justifications .

This questionnaire is divided into three sections; the first section entitled "*General Information"* consisting of three questions aims at gathering general pieces of information about the teachers; degree, years of teaching the oral expression module.

The second section, entitled *Teachers' Perceptions about Students' Pronunciation Errors*," contains four questions about teachers' perspectives on the purpose of teaching oral expression in first year, as well as how fluent students' pronunciation is in the classroom. The third question addresses whether teachers consider the differentiation in the students' capacities while teaching phonetics with justification. The final question in this section attempts to find teachers' opinions about the learners' weaknesses in the phonetics module.

The third section is entitled *"Pronunciation Issues"*. The ten questions aim to identify the factors leading to students' difficulties with English pronunciation, such as stress, insufficient time, French interference, consonant clusters, constructive vowel length, syllabification, in addition to mispronouncing certain sounds such as schwa, th, short i and silent letters. Another question is put to find out the most effective and successful way teachers think that it helps students to achieve fluency in their pr²onunciation. The final question allows teachers to make suggestions and comments about the techniques and strategies they commonly use to improve students' pronunciation.

2.2.2. Description of the Classroom Observation

Classroom observation falls within the qualitative method that facilitates the direct collection of data on a certain behaviour. It focuses on how common this type of behaviour is in the classroom. It is typically used by the class teacher or a visitor to the class who is usually referred to as a participant observer.

Our classroom observations took place at Chadli Bendjedid University with first-year EFL students. Starting on the 18th of April and ending on the 16th of May. These observations lasted three weeks and involved two different groups. We began by participating in an oral expression (henceforth OE) classroom with the first group (group2) of 36 students. We attended six sessions with this group, which ran from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. The other group (group 3) had sessions from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with another OE teacher, and this group included 36 students, but only a few of them attended the courses. The teachers were inviting their students to speak in class.

The observations were noted using a checklist (appendixIII) which was divided into two sections. The first section covers teachers' attitudes towards their students, as well as whether or not they motivate them to talk and interact, and the techniques they employ to improve students' pronunciation. The second section discusses phonological and articulation problems as well as the types of pronunciation errors students make, such as mispronouncing specific sounds ("th","schwa", short "i" and silent letters), or having difficulty with vowel length, second language interference, shyness, and lack of confidence.

2.2.3. Description of the Audio Recording

Audio recording is a research tool for capturing speech samples from respondents. The ability to record audio data using devices such as tape recorders has been a significant

advancement in qualitative research, replacing the researcher's handwritten notes (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

The fieldwork was carried out using a cell phone, recording the voices of ten students as they read a list of words after obtaining their approval (these words have different articulation norms). Each student was recorded separately so that they could not imitate one another. Reading these words normally takes 50 seconds to a minute, depending on the students' abilities. We need to mention here that we wanted to record as many students as possible, but unfortunately they were not cooperating and willing to participate and thus only seven students accepted to be recorded.

2.3. Research Design

Our study used a mixed methods research design in order to identify the pronunciation problems that occur among first-year Chadli Bendjedid EFL students. We employed a triangulation approach to collect and analyze varied but relevant data for the study, therefore two qualitative and one quantitative methods were used (teachers and students' questionnaires, the observation, and the audio recordings). We observed and analyzed the students' pronunciation and behaviour without the researchers' least intervention. Finally, we analyzed and validated the research findings.

2.3.1. Research Procedures

Data has been collected in an appropriate manner in order to accomplish the study's objective and answer the research questions. As previously stated in our methodology, the researchers employed a triangulation design, so the first data collecting tool that has been employed was two questionnaires handed to both teachers and students. The students were chosen at random from a class of 36, but only 20 (3 males and 17 females) responded to the questionnaire which took 5 to 7 minutes depending on their capacities. They were really helpful and immediately responded to our request, however they did so in a noisy environment, making

it difficult to concentrate on the questions. All in all it was a successful tool which really helped us to identify some pronunciation errors they made and the reasons behind them. Followed by the questionnaire for teachers, they were chosen specifically for their experience in teaching oral modules to EFL students. Ten teachers were given the questionnaire in a pleasant setting; most of them were quite helpful and responded the same day; some took a while to respond that we had to delay our work; and others did not respond at all. The teachers' responses were accurate and useful because they are aware of their students' strengths and weaknesses in pronunciation.

The second tool was classroom observations, which were conducted with two groups of EFL students, totaling 72 participants (36 in each group). The first group was quiet, which made our job more difficult. Just after that, many of them had oral deliveries, which we took advantage to observe and to take some notes. The second group was quite active and had a fluent accent, but the majority of the group was absent, hence the teacher really gave them the opportunity to speak freely. So all of these participants' errors were noted in our checklist to make our work easier while analyzing.

The last data collecting tool was an audio recording. The researchers prepared a list of words to read and printed ten copies, but only seven were used because the participants were uncomfortable with recording. They were told that reading those documents would improve their general language skills. If participants had been told the study was about "pronunciation problems," they would have become more hesitant, stressed, and their readings would have taken much longer, or they might even have adjusted their pronunciation. If they wanted, they might also look at the papers before reading them. They were put at ease when they were told to speak freely, just as they did in general. After individually recording each student, we began by carefully listening to each audio independently with headphones and transcribed using the Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary. The study's primary focus is articulatory

(individual sounds), and it is worth noting that phonemic transcription was used during the analysis and interpretation of any articulation.

2.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

2.4.1. Student's Questionnaire Analysis

Section one: General Information of the Students

Question 01: How old are you? A/ Under 18 years old B/ More than 18 years old

Table 01

Participant's Age

Options	Frequency	%
A	02	10
B	18	90
Total	20	100

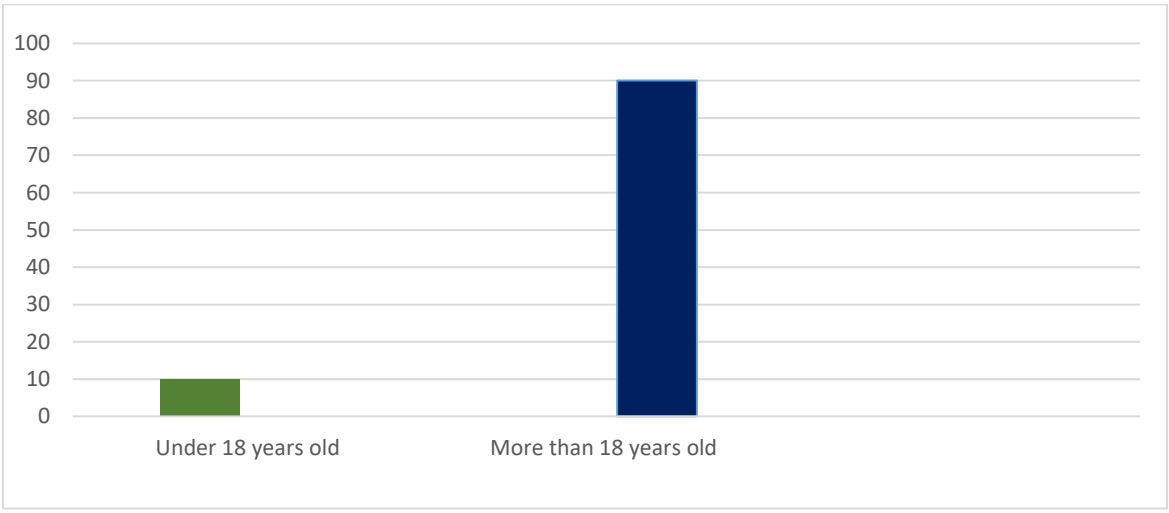

*Figure 03:*Participant's age

Interestingly, tables (1) and (03) illustrate the age range of the participant students, with the majority being above 18. The remaining (10%) were under 18. In the following results of the analysis, we are going to confirm whether adults perform better in pronunciation or not.

Question 02: What is your favourite module? A/ Oral B/ Phonetics C/ Other module

Table 02

Students' Preferences

Options	Frequency	%
A	09	45
B	03	15
C	08	40
Total	20	100

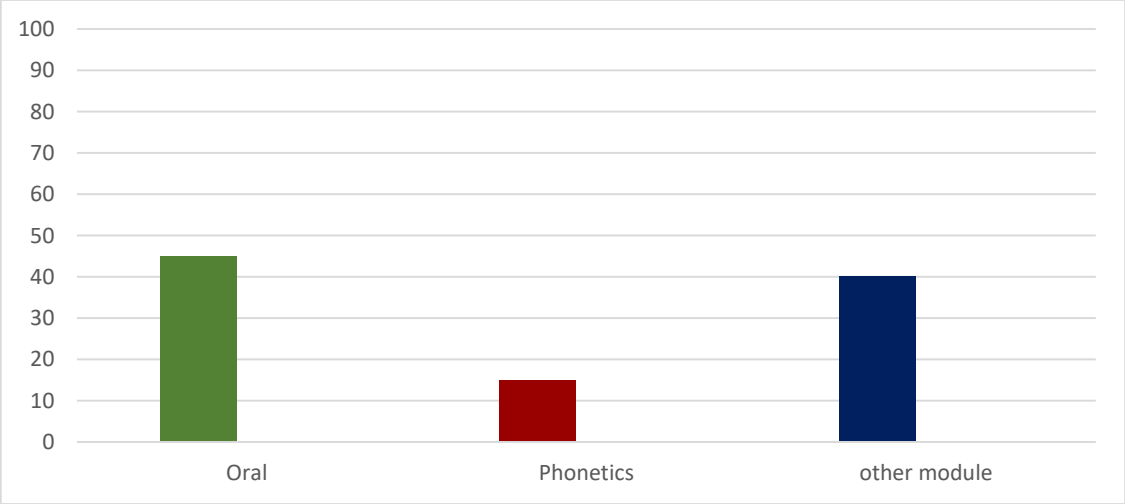

Figure 04: Students' Preferences

Statistics above revealed that the majority of students prioritize the oral module. About 45 % of students chose the oral module, while only 15% selected phonetics and 40% selected other modules. This means that they are aware and motivated to study oral module that entails teaching them pronunciation, oral skills, accents, etc.

Section Two: Common Struggles that Students may /may not encounter

Question 01: How often do you mispronounce certain sounds in English?

A/ Always B/ Sometimes C/ Rarely

Table 03

Mispronouncing Certain Sounds in English

Options	Frequency	%
A	00	00
B	18	90
C	02	10
Total	20	100

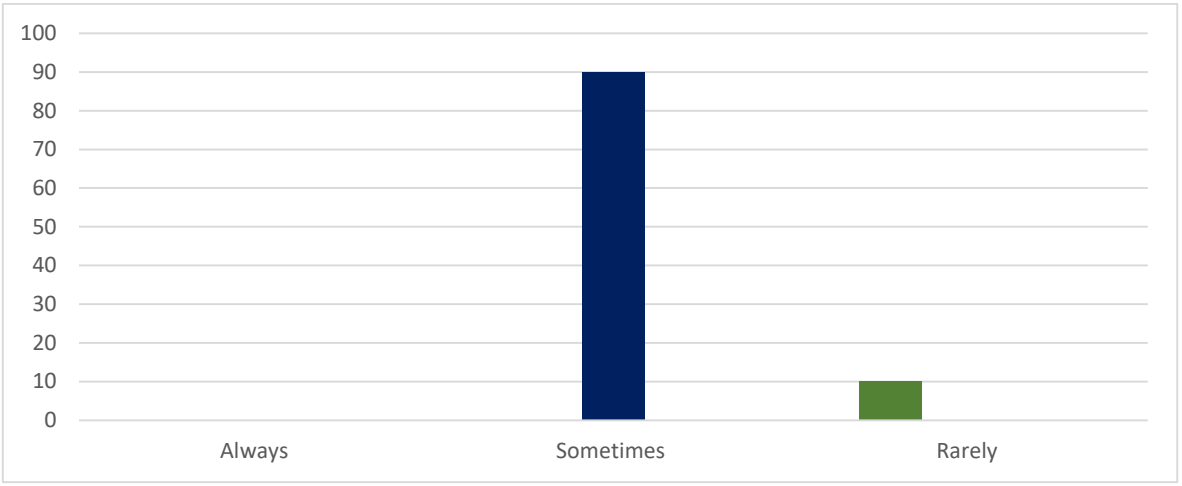

Figure 05: Mispronouncing Certain Sounds in English

The majority of the participant students answered that they sometimes mispronounce certain sounds (90%), however, only (10%) of them declared that they rarely commit pronunciation errors. From these results, we can say that since the majority of the students admit that they mispronounce certain sounds, this indicates that they watch their pronunciation and they are aware of their pronunciation errors.

Question 02: How often do you have difficulties with consonants cluster?

A/ Always B/ Sometimes C/ Rarely

Table 04

Difficulties with consonants cluster

Options	Frequency	%
A	03	15
B	14	55
C	03	30
Total	20	100

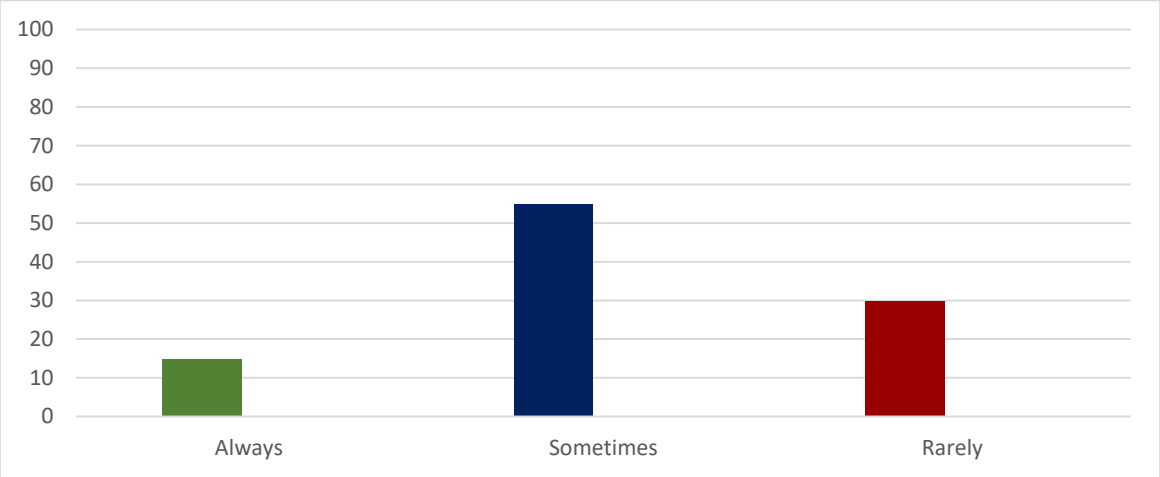

Figure 06: Difficulties with Consonants Cluster

When asked about their difficulties with consonant clusters, 55% revealed that they sometimes do have difficulties with consonant clusters, while 30% of them rarely struggle with English consonants. The answers provided by the participant students indicated that most of them are competent in their pronunciation of English consonants. In fact, this violates the results found during the observation

Question 03: How often do you find silent sounds confusing?

A/ Always B/ Sometimes C/ Rarely

Table 05

Finding Silent Sounds Confusing

Options	Frequency	%
A	10	50
B	09	45
Total	01	05

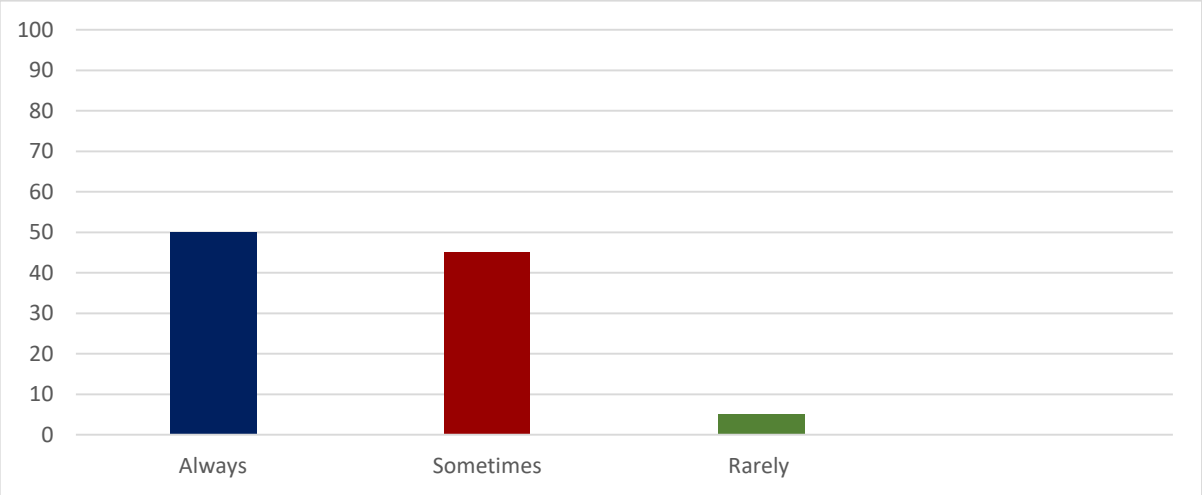

Figure 07: Finding Silent Sounds Confusing

Half of the respondents reported that they find silent sounds confusing (50%), 45% do sometimes face that problem, and only 5% chose the 'rarely' option. According to these findings, silent sounds are a huge concern for first year EFL students. Therefore and since this problem affects a high ratio of the participants, we deem it important for both students and teachers to put efforts to overcome that issue; knowing that silent letters and sounds are important to master in the language since they make a difference to pronunciation and to meaning more importantly.

Question 04: Do you think insufficient time triggers pronunciation errors?

A/ Yes B/ No

Table 06

Effect of Time on Pronunciation

Options	Frequency	%
A	11	55
B	09	45
Total	20	100

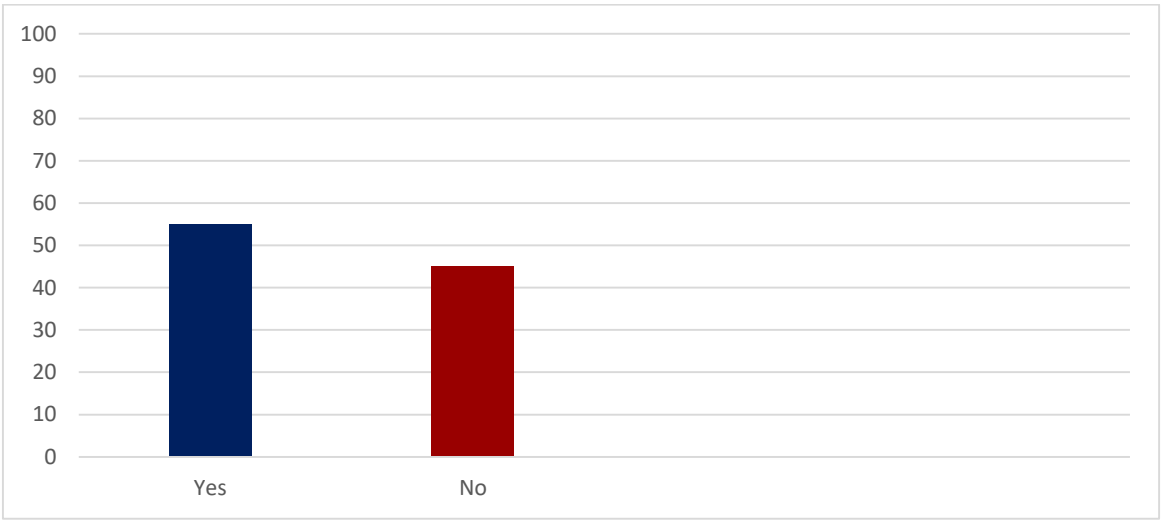

Figure 08: Effect of Time on Pronunciation

Most of the students agreed on the fact that insufficient time affects pronunciation (55%).Unlike 40% of them, who declared the opposite .Such results lead one to deduce that; pronunciation is not only listening and repeating, but rather needs time so that to think and reorganize one's ideas . Hence, lack of time is also another factor that may influence the oral production of the speaker.

Question 05: How often do you have difficulties with syllabification?

A/ Always B/ Never C/ Sometimes

Table 07

Difficulties with Syllabification

Options	Frequency	%
A	00	00
B	11	55
C	09	45
Total	20	20

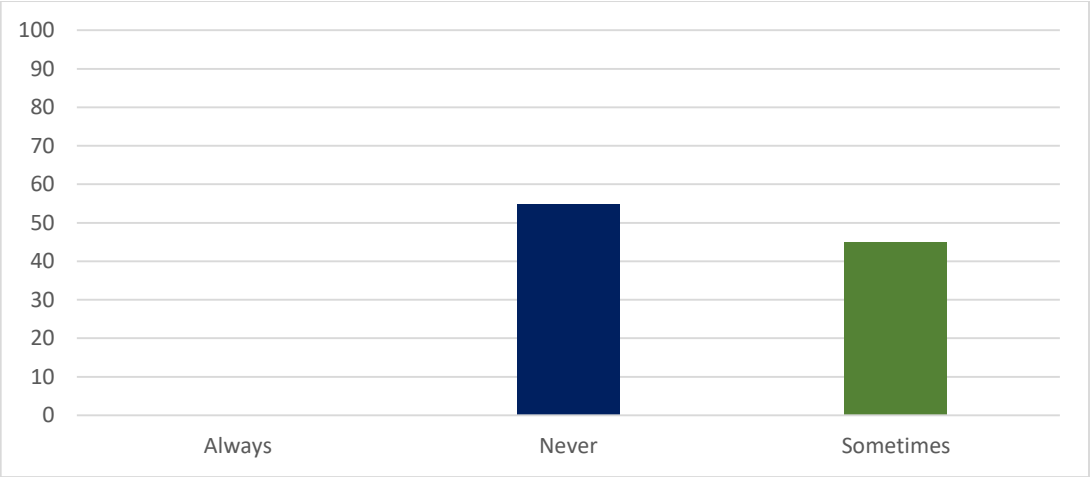

Figure 09: Difficulties with syllabification

Table (07) and figure (09) explain that students who chose the ‘never’ option got the highest percentage (55%) while 45% selected the 'sometimes' option, and no one opted for the 'always' option (00%). This, in fact, means that students do not have difficulties identifying syllables, and they are aware of the syllabification rules.

Question 06: Which sounds do you usually struggle with?

A/The “Th” sound B/ The “schwa” sound

C/ The short “I” sound D/ Pronouncing a silent consonant

Table 08

Mispronounced sounds by Students

Options	Frequency	%
A	01	05
B	09	45
C	02	10
D	06	30
B+D	01	05
B+ C	01	05
Total	20	100

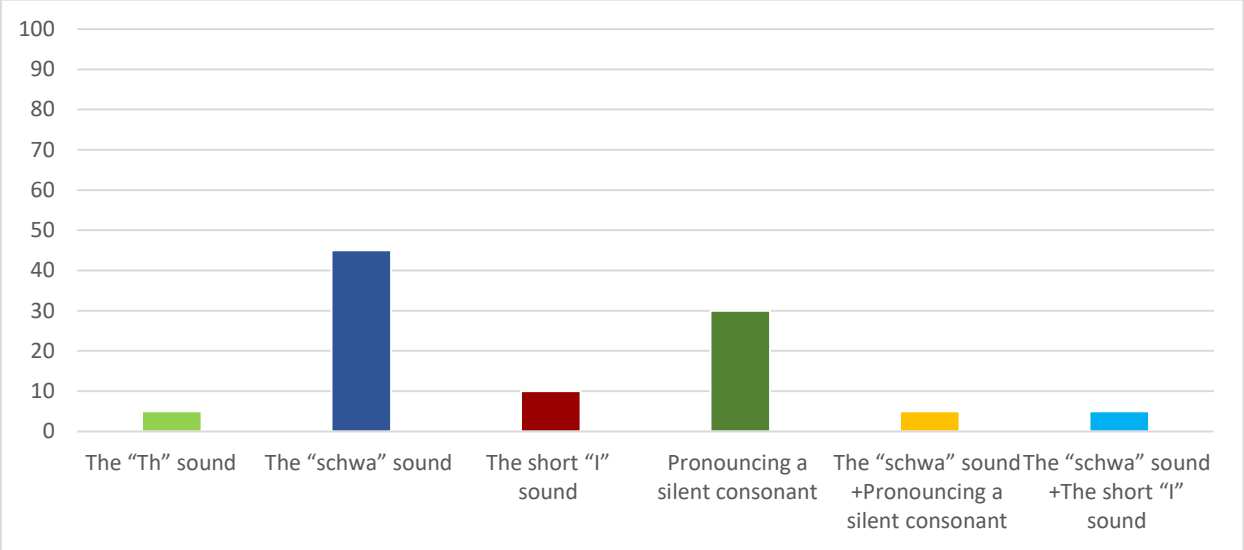

Figure 10: Mispronounced Sounds by Students

The analysis of the results provided to question (6) reveals that a good number of the participant students (45%) declared that they have issues with mispronouncing the‘schwa’ sound, and about (30%) of them have problems with pronouncing silent sounds while only 10% struggle with the short "I" sound. Interestingly, just a few students encounter problems with the "Th" sound. Such results drive one to say that since schwa is kind of a "lazy" sound, it can be

very difficult for students to pronounce or to hear. The schwa sound is used to make speech more fluent because many unstressed syllables and even unimportant words are pronounced with the schwa.

Question 07: How often do you encounter problems with contrastive vowel length?

A/ Always B/ Never

Table 09

Problems with Contrastive Vowel Length

Options	Frequency	%
A	14	70
B	06	30
Total	20	100

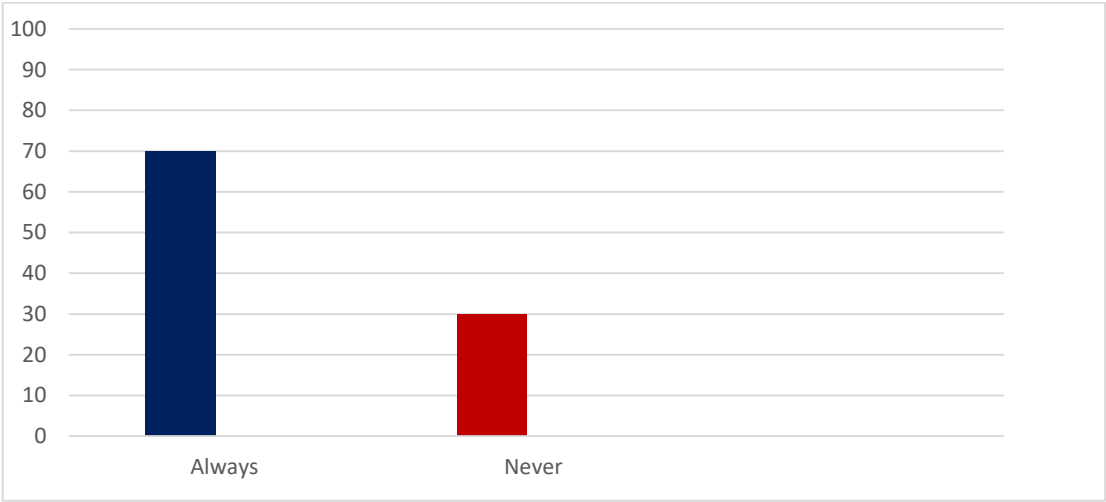

Figure 11: Problems with Contrastive Vowel Length

The statistics prove that the majority of students have problems in pronouncing short and long English vowels (70 %).While the minority around (30%) do not have problems with vowel length (30%) .It shows that students are still not familiar with the words, and they do not distinguish between long and short vowels. This latter can affect meaning and pronunciations well.

Question 08: Do you think that your pronunciation errors are due to the French sound system interference?

A/ Yes B/ No C / Sometimes

Table 10

Pronunciation Errors due to French Interference

Options	Frequency	%
A	15	75
B	02	10
C	03	15
Total	20	100

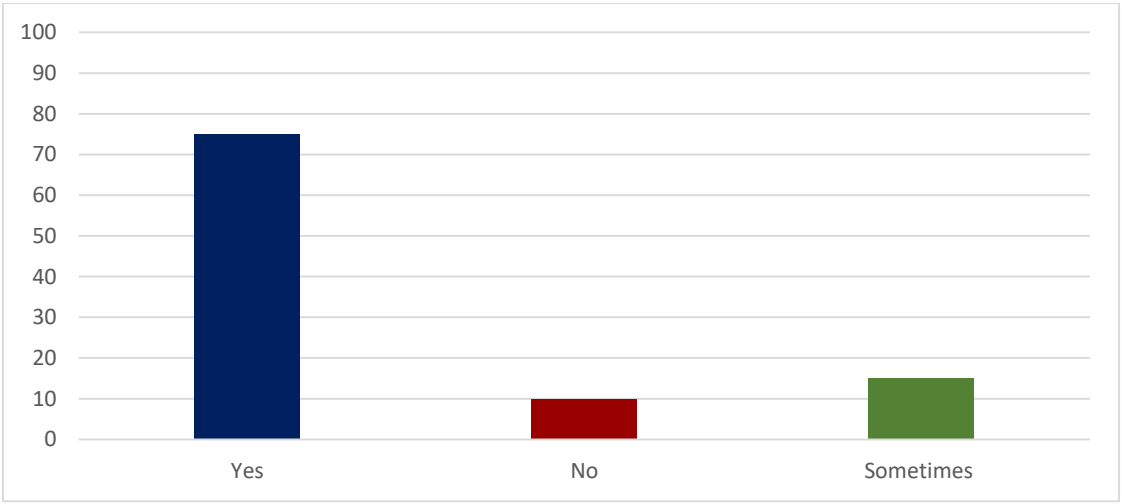

Figure 12: Pronunciation Errors due the French Interference

As it is shown in table 10 and figure 11, the great majority of the participant students (75%) agreed that most of their pronunciation errors are made due to the French interference, while only (10%) of them reported that they do not have such a problem . These results clearly show the influence of French on English pronunciation. This impact may affect the speech production and articulation of the students and make them mix between vowels unconsciously, as it was clearly noticed in the observation.

Question 09: Do you know the pronunciation rules?

A/ Yes B/ No

Table 11

Mastery of the Pronunciation Rules

Options	Frequency	%
A	11	55
B	09	45
Total	20	100

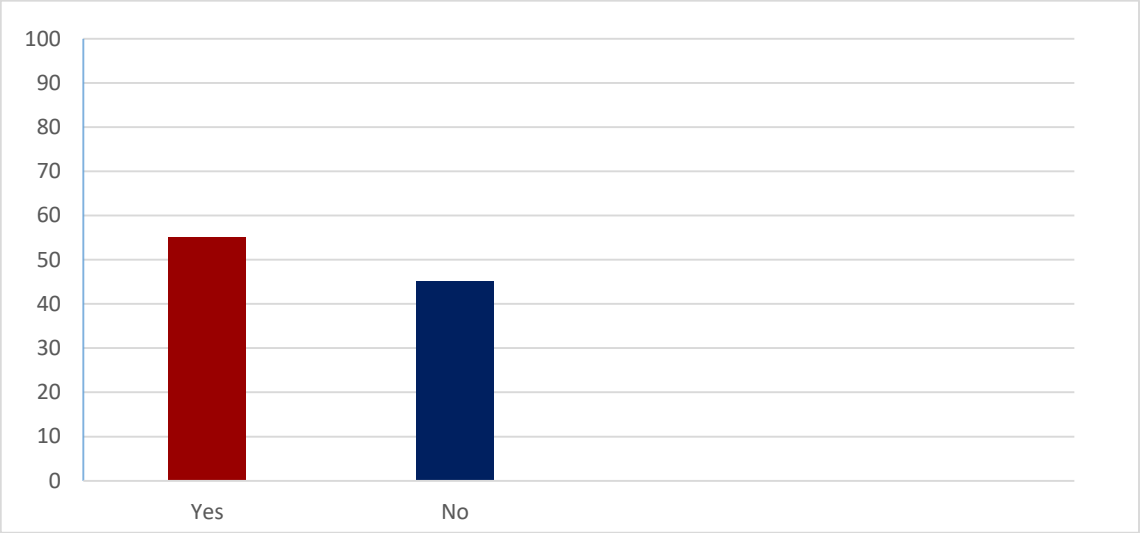

Figure 13: Mastery of the Pronunciation Rules

More than half of the respondents' answers (55 %) revealed their awareness of English pronunciation rules and about (45%) admitted their ignorance of the English pronunciation rules. These results lead one to say that one of the reasons behind the students' pronunciation problems is the ignorance of the English pronunciation rules. As a result, pronunciation rules need to be more emphasized at Chadli Bendjedid University, and students should work harder to learn and memorize phonetic rules.

Question 10: Do you have problems with phonetic transcription?

A/ Yes B/ No

Table 12

Students 'Problems with Phonetic Transcription

Options	Frequency	%
A	15	75
B	05	25
Total	20	100

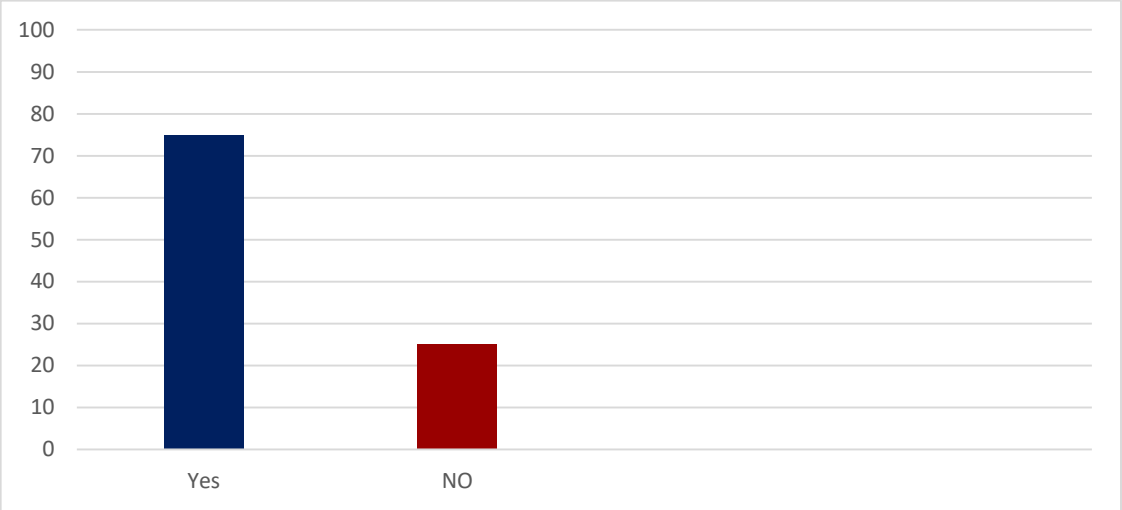

Figure 14: Students' Problems with Phonetic Transcription

As it is stated in table 12 and figure 14 a few number of students do not have problems with phonetic transcription (25%) ,while 75% of them encounter the phonetic transcription problem .These results may impact students' pronunciation because transcription is giving a direct specification of the utterance's pronunciation.

Question 11: Do you imitate teacher's pronunciation

A/Yes B/ No C/ Sometimes

Table 13

Imitation of the Teacher's Pronunciation

Options	Frequency	%
A	03	15
B	08	40
C	09	45
Total	20	100

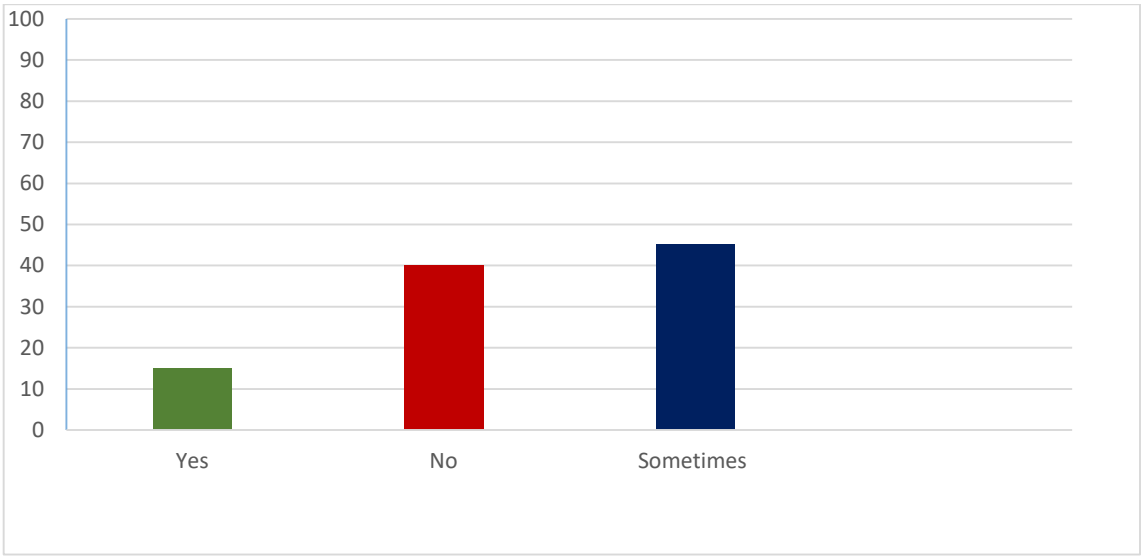

Figure 15: Imitation of the Teacher's Pronunciation

Table (13) and figure (15) show that the majority of the students (40%) and (45%) reported that they do not imitate their teacher's pronunciation. While only (15%) imitate their teacher's pronunciation. This means that the majority of teacher do not which is one of the techniques that improve students' pronunciation by seeing the teacher as a model that they imitate.

Question 12: How often do you mix vowels?

A/Always B/ Sometimes C/ rarely

Table 14

Mixing Vowels

Options	Frequency	%
A	00	00
B	12	60
C	08	40
Total	20	100

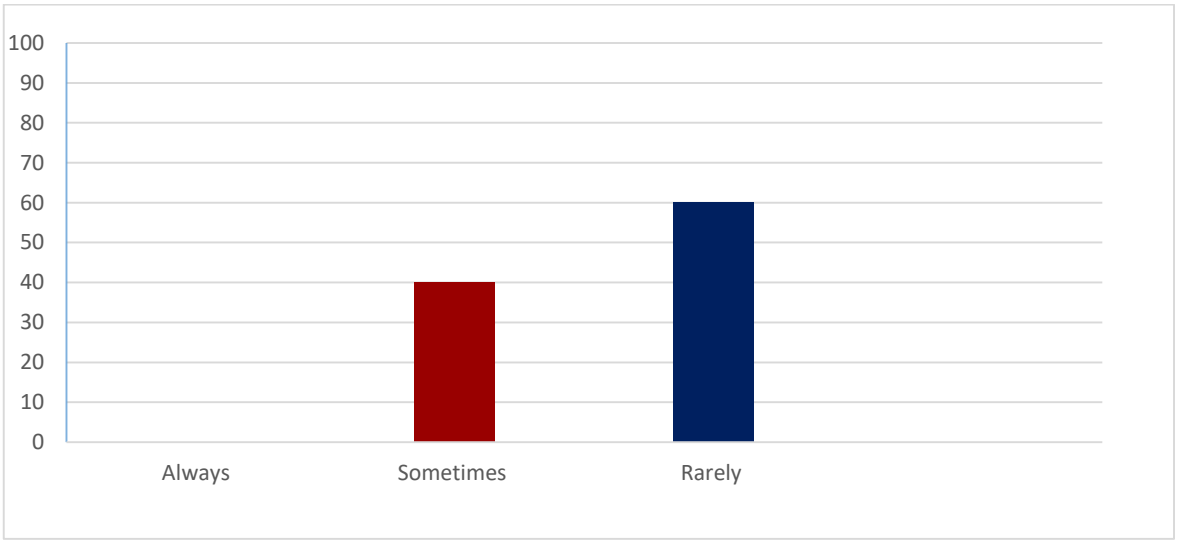

Figure 16: Mixing Vowels

From the analysis of questions (12) and figures (16), it is noticeable that (60%) of the respondents mix between vowels sometimes while speaking, while (40%) rarely mix between vowels. These findings reveal the necessity to adapt the pronunciation instructions to the students' specific areas of difficulty in order to promote the successful acquisition of the vowels and sounds, in addition to knowing how sounds need to be taught and what sounds to emphasize

Question 13: Do you use dictionary to identify the phonemic transcription?

A/ Always B/Sometimes C/ Rarely

Table 15

Using Dictionary to Identify the Phonemic Transcription

Options	Frequency	%
A	01	05
B	04	20
C	15	75
Total	20	100

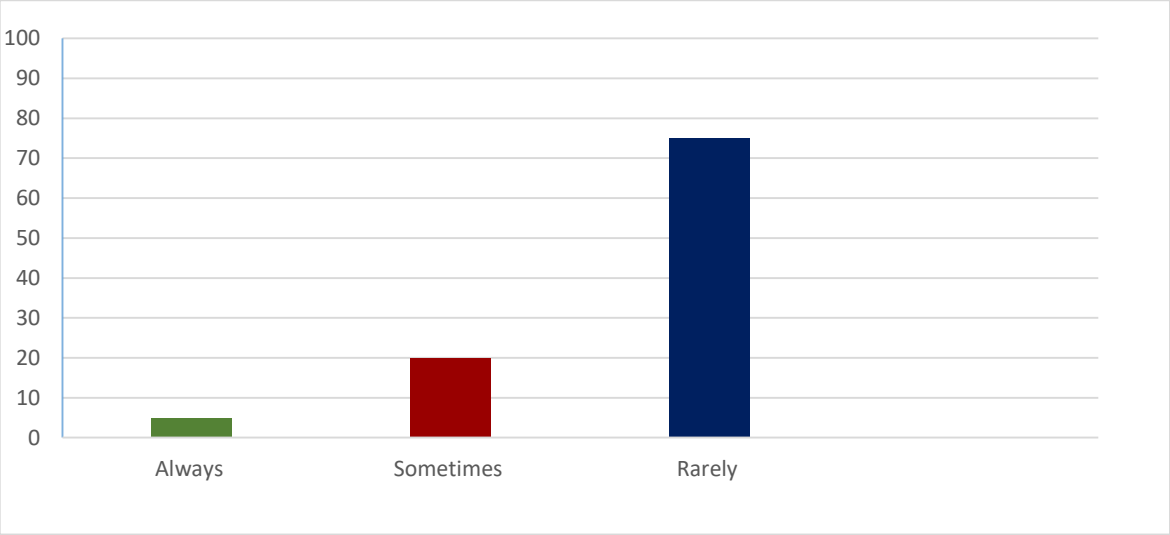

Figure 17: Using Dictionary to Identify the Phonemic Transcription

Table (16), and figure (17) reveal that the majority of the respondents rarely check their dictionaries to identify the phonemic transcription (75%), while (20%) of them sometimes do. Only (5%) of them use their dictionaries. These results show the lack of the use of the dictionary by first year EFL student's .Which could be an issue per se, because using a dictionary is much recommended in teaching pronunciation as it helps learners to improve their pronunciation skills especially in familiarizing them with phonetic symbols and the relationship between ordinary letters.

Question 14: **What is the factor that badly influences your pronunciation?**

A/ Fear of making mistakes B/ shyness C/ Lack of confidence

Table 16

Factors Influencing Students' Pronunciation

Options	Frequency	%
A	09	45
B	06	30
C	04	20
A+C	01	05
Total	20	100

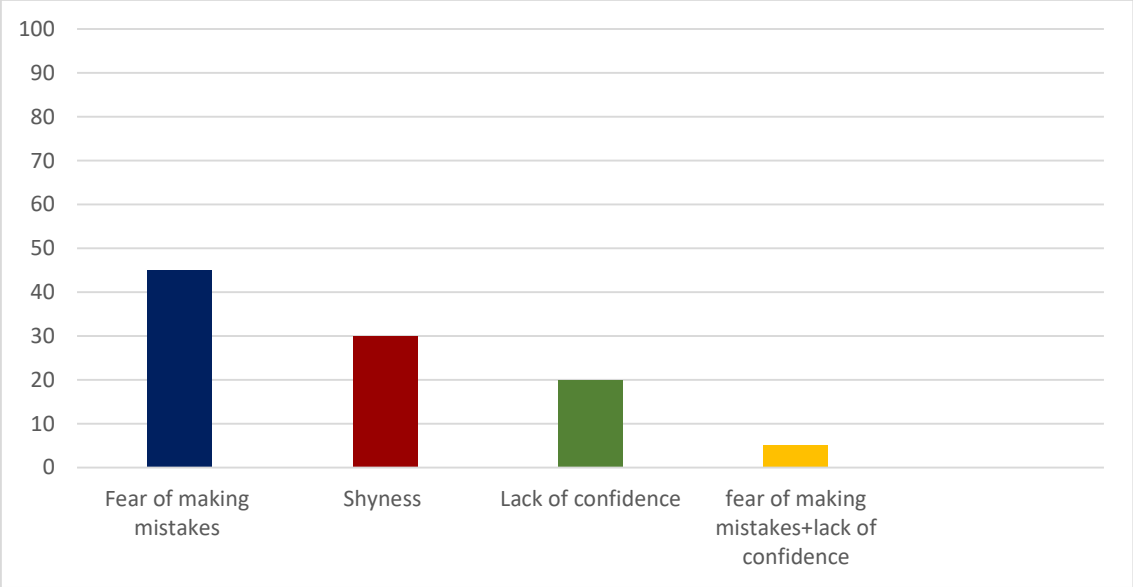

Figure 18: Factors Influencing Students' Pronunciation

Table (16) and figure (18) showed that almost the half of the students (45%) reported that the fear of making mistakes is the major factor that influences their pronunciation, while (30%) chose shyness and (20%) selected lack of confidence. These results indicated that the psychological factor (especially the fear of making mistakes) is a barrier for the oral production and a demotivator as well.

Question 15: Feel free to suggest some solutions in order to improve pronunciation

This question is a free space for students to suggest techniques and strategies for improving their English pronunciation skills. The majority of the students' responses indicated that they prefer to develop their English pronunciation by watching English movies and series as well as following some youtubers, while the minority preferred to communicate with their mates. These findings show that students are more motivated to learn English pronunciation by having contact and interacting with native speakers in different ways rather than communicating with their peers or following the teacher's rules.

2.4.2. Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

Section One: General Information of the Teachers

Question 01: Your educational qualification is:

A/Bachelor's degree B/ Magister C/PHD

Table 17

Teacher's Educational Qualifications

Options	Frequency	%
A	00	00
B	07	70
C	03	30
Total	10	100

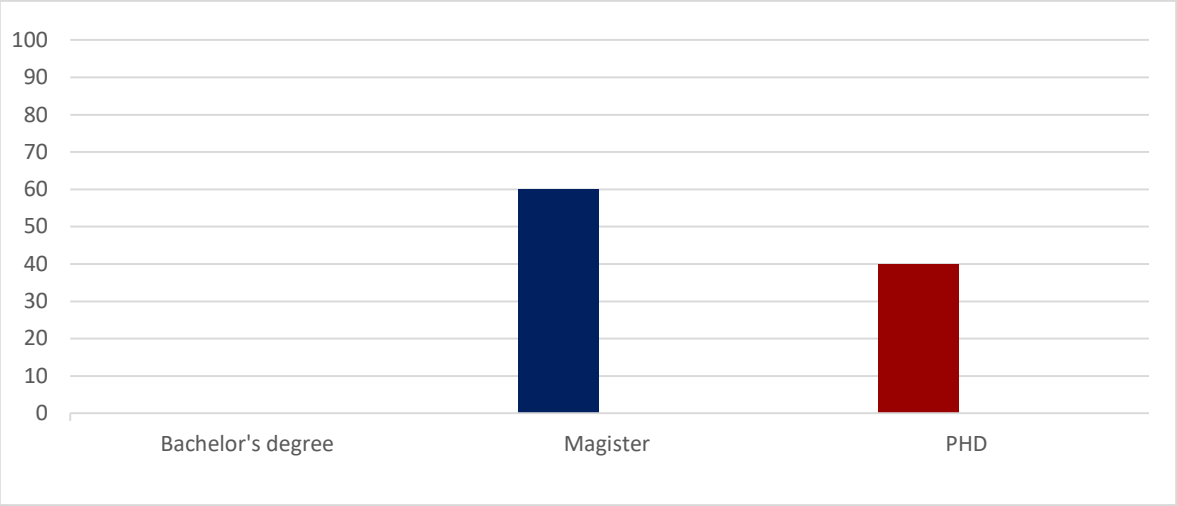

Figure 19: Teacher's Educational Qualifications

According to table (17) and and figure (19) , more than half of the teachers (70%) hold Magister degrees ,while (30%) of the teachers hold PHD degree .This indicates that the majority of teachers of Chadli bendjid university are qualified to teach EFL students.

Question 02: For how many years have you taught English?

A/Less than five years B/ from five to ten years C/More than ten years

Table 18

Years of English Teaching

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	01	10
B	04	40
C	05	50
Total	10	100

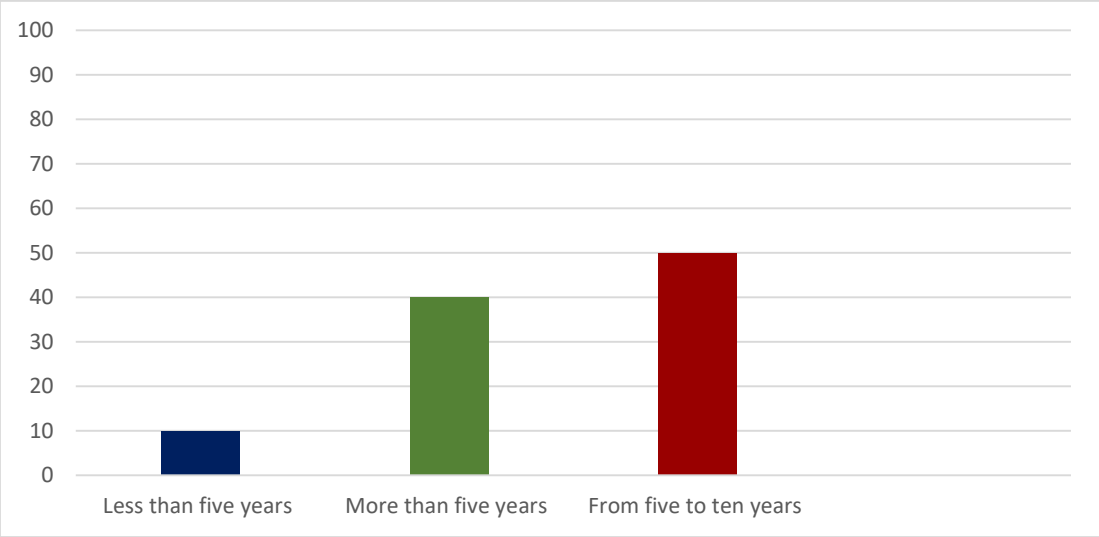

Figure 20: Years of English Teaching

Table (18) and figure (20) showed the teachers' responses as follows; (50%) of the teachers taught English for more than ten years, while (40%) of them taught English from five to ten years, and only (10%) have less than five years of experience in English teaching. This means that the majority of teachers at Chadli BenDjedid University are not novice teachers. And with the degrees they hold, they will undoubtedly impart reliable and effective knowledge about oral expression and pronunciation.

Question 03: Have you ever taught oral expression at the university? A/Yes B/No

Table 19

Teacher's Experience with Teaching Oral Expression

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	10	100
B	00	00
Total	10	100

Table (19) clearly indicates that all the teachers (100%) who answered the questionnaires have already taught oral pronunciation which means that their experiences in teaching oral expression will positively contribute to achieving the main purpose of this

research which is to provide the best solutions that may help EFL learners overcome pronunciation problems.

Section 02: Teacher's Perceptions towards Pronunciation Errors

Question 01: According to you, what are the objectives of teaching oral expression course in the first year?

In this question, teachers provided different and interesting objectives of OE teaching in the first year, such as; to accustom learners with the foreign language sounds and structure; to prepare students to use the language and make them fluent; and to improve the students' ability to speak and understand spoken English without fear and anxiety. We can deduce from their suggestions that teachers' goal behind teaching OE is not only to enable students to use short expressions but also to make them take care of their pronunciation and fluency in addition to making them speak and understand one another, this latter cannot be reached without having an understandable and good pronunciation.

Question 02: How fluent is your students' pronunciation in class?

A/Very fluent B/Quite fluent C/ Not fluent

Table 20

Teachers Opinions about Students' Fluency

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	01	10
B	04	40
C	05	50
Total	10	100

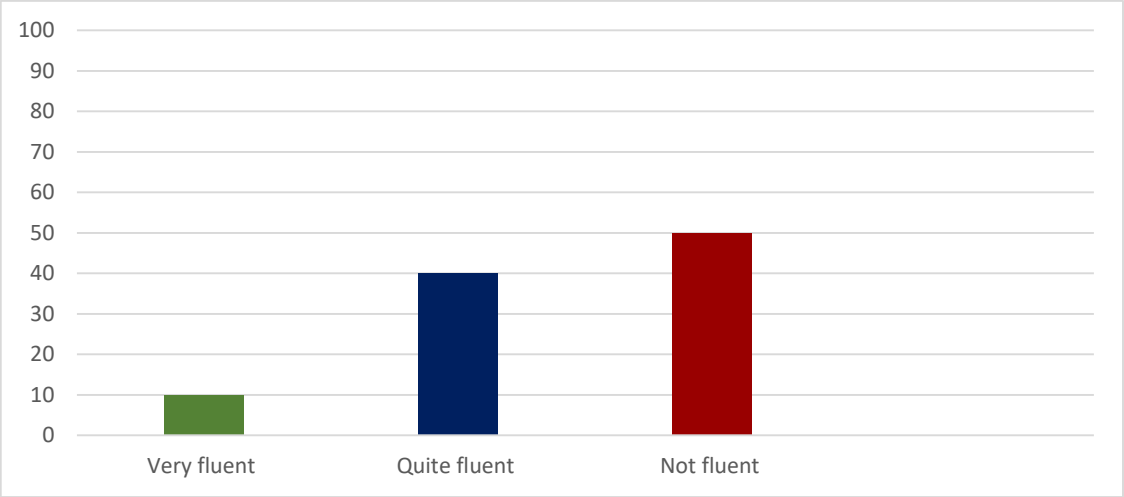

Figure 21: Teachers' opinions about Student's Fluency

As shown in table (20) and figure (22), teachers reported that half (50%) of their students are quite fluent, while (40%) of them are not fluent .And only (10%) of them are very fluent. These findings reveal that the teachers are not satisfied with the level of their students' fluency and with their oral production and pronunciation accordingly.

Question 03: Do you take into account the differentiation in the learners' capacities while they learn phonetics? A/ Yes B/ No C/ Other please justify your answer?

Table 21

Considering Learners' Differences when learning Phonetics

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	05	50
B	03	30
C	02	20
Total	10	05

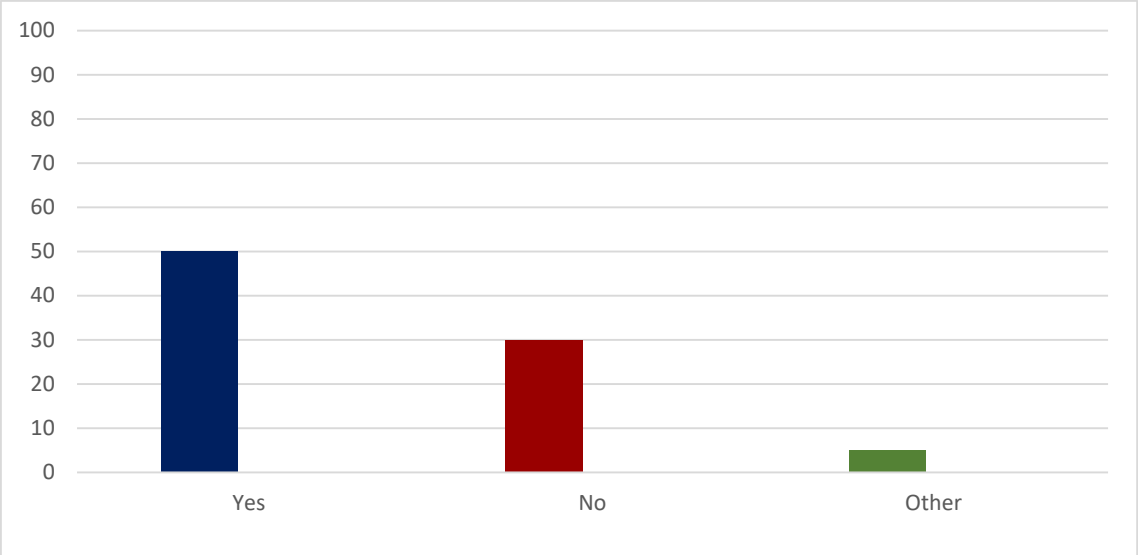

Figure 22: Considering Learners' Differences when learning Phonetics

From table (21) and figure (23), we can deduce that half of the teachers (50%) take into account the students' capacities while learning phonetics, while (40%) do not. When justifying their answers, the majority (50%) agreed that the process must be equal, i.e., teachers have to focus more on lower level students while taking into consideration the time to continue their syllabus. On the other hand, students have to put their efforts to improve their pronunciation too. The other teachers (40%) commented that they do not always take into consideration the learners' capacities because of the time factor, since they have not enough time to train and assess every student. This implies that Chadli Bendjeid University English teachers respect the students' level and they are aware of the importance of the differentiation in their capacities while teaching phonetics.

Question 04: How did the learners' weaknesses manifest itself in the phonetics module?

The answers of the selected teachers were not limited. Some of them said by violating the phonological rules, especially those related to stress, tones, syllables etc. Others revealed that they usually notice their students repeating the same errors unconsciously.

Section 03: Pronunciation Problematic Areas

Question 01: Is it difficult for your students to apply the rules of stress?

A/Yes all the time B/ Yes, sometimes C/ No, they can apply them

Table 22

Difficulties in Applying the Rules of Stress

Options	Frequency	%
A	03	30
B	07	70
C	00	00
Total	10	100

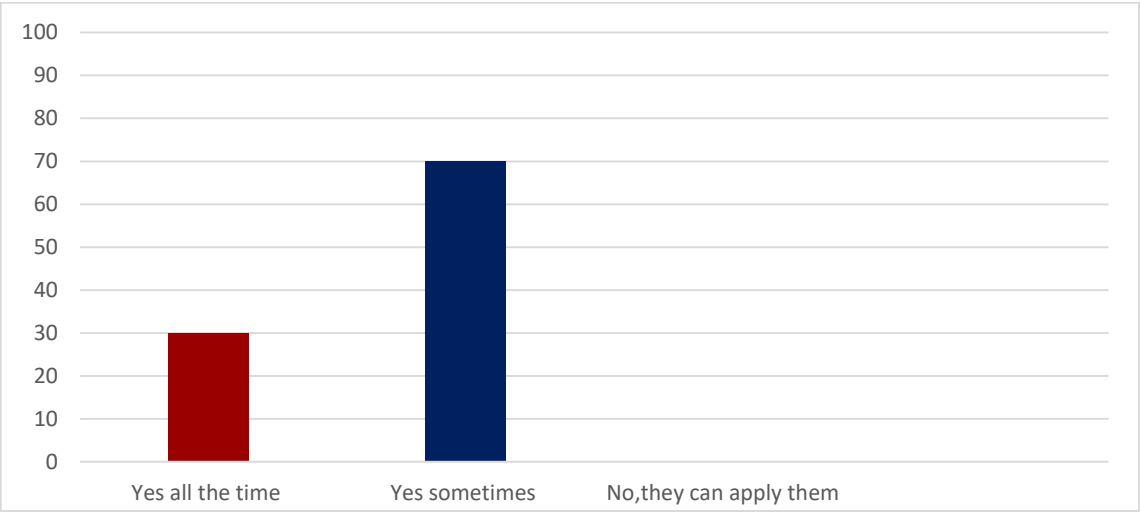

Figure 23: Difficulties in Applying the Rules of Stress

As Table (22) and figure (23) illustrated, the great majority of teachers (70%) reported that their students sometimes face difficulties applying the rules of stress while (30%) do not apply the stress rules at all. These results clearly demonstrate that the teachers observed their students' lack of knowledge of the stress rules.

Question 02: Do you think that time is sufficient to cover all the pronunciation aspects?

A/ Yes, it is B/No, it is not

Table 23

The Time Factor

Options	Frequency	%
A	01	10
B	09	90
Total	10	100

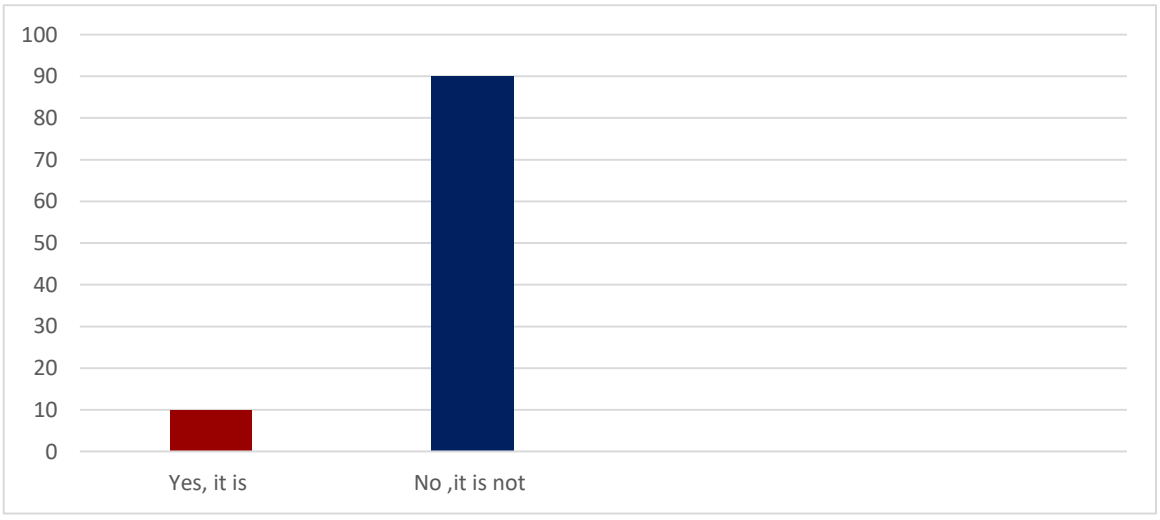

Figure 24: The Time Factor

The results displayed in table (23) and figure (24) showed that almost all the participant teachers (90%) reported that time is not sufficient to cover all pronunciation aspects. However,

only 10% selected the other (No) option. The aforementioned statistics give proof that sufficient time is not the only factor that must contribute to teaching pronunciation. Moreover, as it was mentioned in the questionnaire analysis, time constraints are one of the factors that impact negatively on teaching practise.

Question 03: Do you agree on the fact that second language interference leads to pronunciation errors? A/Yes, it is B/ No, it is not

Table 24

Effect of L2 Interference on Pronunciation Errors

Options	Frequency	%
A	08	80
B	02	20
Total	10	100

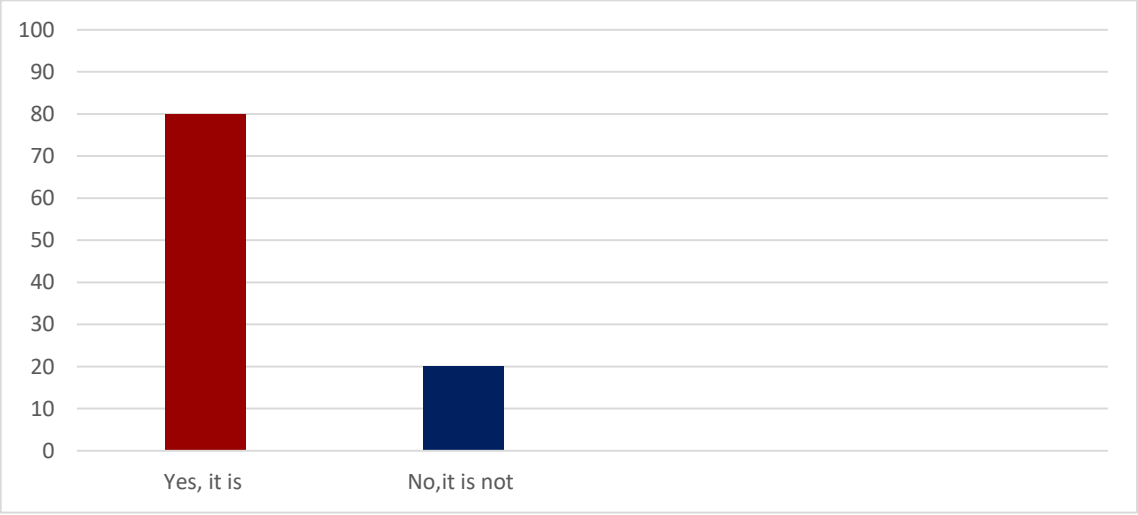

Figure 25: Effect of L2 Interference on Pronunciation Errors

From Table (24) and figure (25), we figured out that the highest percentage of the participant teachers (80%) agreed that second language interference leads to pronunciation

errors, and just (20%) declared the opposite. This means that teachers believe that L2 has a great impact on students' pronunciation; this aligns with the results provided by students when they mentioned that L2 is one of the major obstacles in learning English. Therefore, teachers need to consider this and find solutions to make an end to this problem.

Question 04: According to you, what is the main factor that leads to mispronunciation?

A/Student's imitation of teacher's pronunciation B/ Student's ignorance of the rules of pronunciation C/ Spelling- pronunciation inconsistency

Table 25

Factors Leading to Mispronunciation

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	00	00
B	03	30
C	06	60
A+B	01	10
Total	10	100

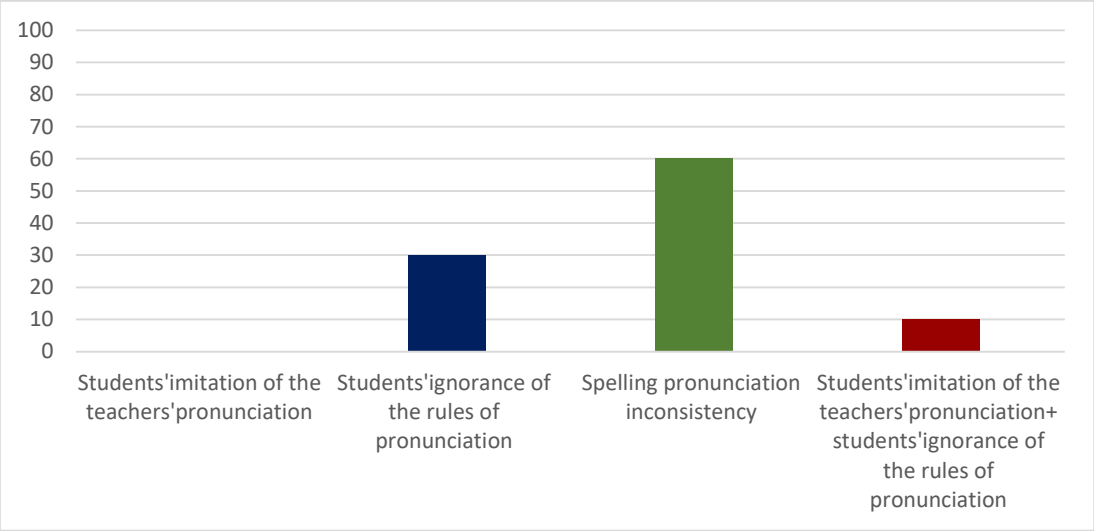

Figure 26: Factors Leading to Mispronunciation

The results showed that (60%) of the teachers selected spelling-pronunciation inconsistency as the main factor who leads to mispronunciation. While (30%) of the teachers selected students' ignorance of the rules of pronunciation. These results may reveal that teachers focused on the spelling pronunciation inconsistency as the prominent one.

Question 05: Which of the following common errors that hinder first year students?

A/ Mispronouncing the 'Th' sound B/ Mispronouncing the 'Schwa' sound C/Mispronouncing the short 'i' sound D/ Pronouncing a silent consonant

Table 26

Common Errors hindering First Year Students

Options	Frequency	%
A	00	00
B	03	30
C	01	10
D	02	20
B+D	04	40
Total	10	100

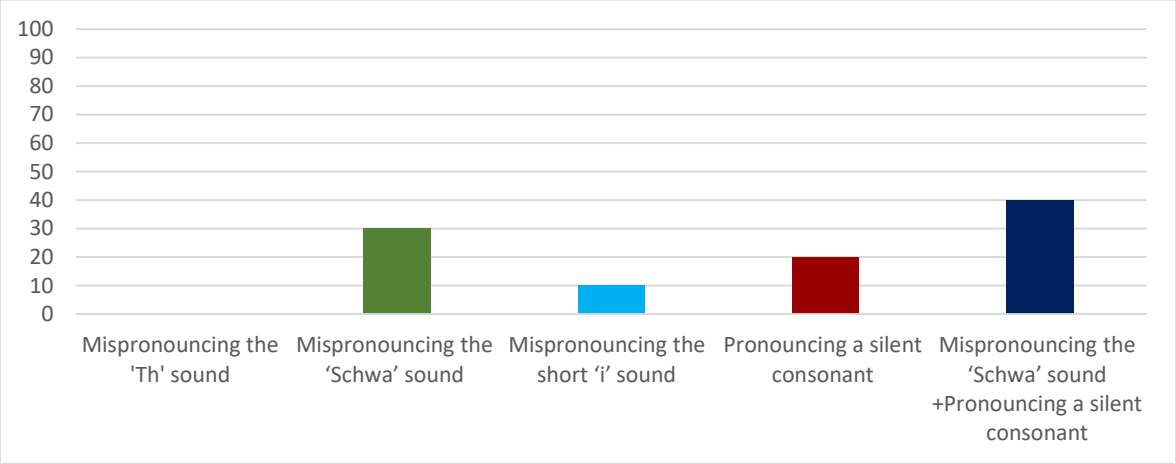

Figure 27: Common Errors hindering First Year Students

According to the statistics displayed in table (26) and figure (27), almost half of the teachers (40%) chose both mispronouncing the 'schwa' sound and pronouncing a silent consonant as most the common errors that hinder first year English Students .While (20%) chose mispronouncing the short 'I' sound. This indicates that teachers of English at Chadli Bendjedid University are aware of their students' difficulties with sounds especially with silent letters and the 'schwa 'sound which got the highest percentages in the students' questionnaire too.

Question 06: Do your students encounter difficulties with the initial consonant cluster?

A/ Yes, they do B/No, they do not

Table 27

Students Difficulties with the Initial Consonant Cluster

Options	Frequency	%
A	08	80
B	02	20
Total	10	100

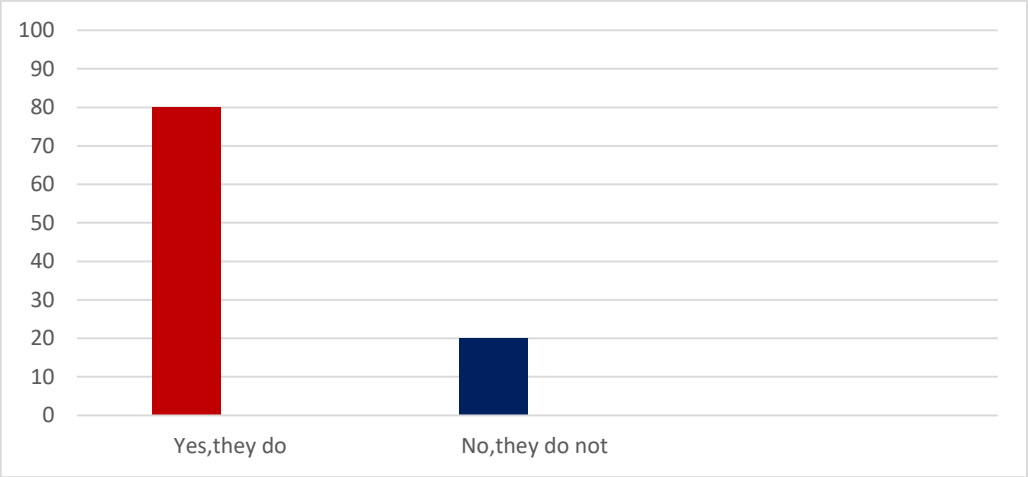

Figure 28: Students Difficulties with the Initial Consonant Cluster

From table (28) and figure (29), we can see that the majority (80%) of the participant teachers reported that students have difficulties with the initial consonant cluster. This results match the students 'questionnaire analysis. Thus, teachers of Chadli Bendjedid University need to take into account this problem.

Question 07: Do your students face problems with contrastive vowel length?

A/ Yes, they do B/ Sometimes C/No

Table 28

Students' Problems with Contrastive Vowel Length

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	07	70
B	03	30
C	00	00
Total	10	100

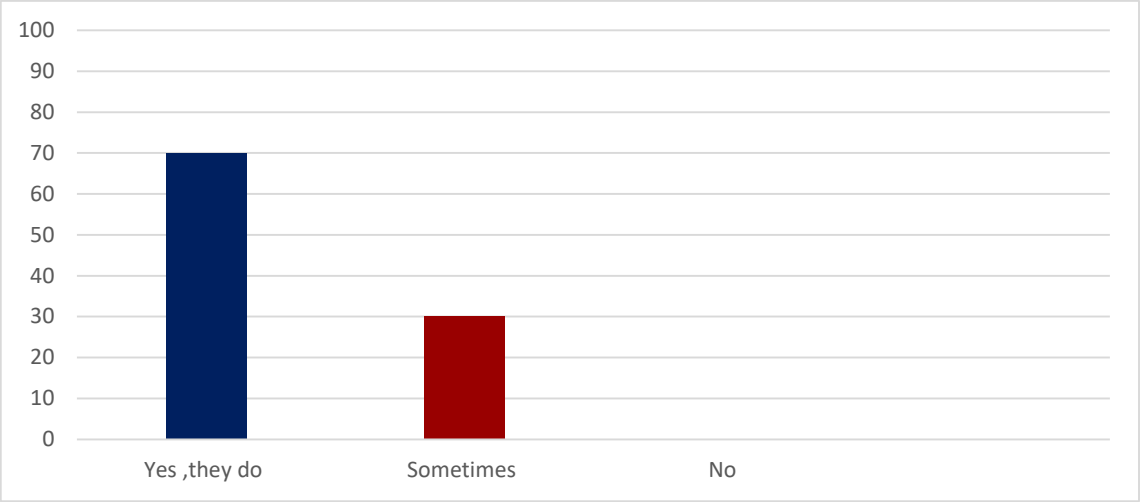

Figure 29: Student's Problems with Contrastive Vowel Length

As presented in table (27) and figure (28) respectively, (70%) of the participant teachers reported that their students have difficulties with contrastive vowel length, whereas only (30%) of teachers selected the "sometimes" option. This finding means that students struggle with the phonetic module since they are not capable of dividing the syllabi. Therefore, teachers at Chadli Bendjedid University need to consider this.

Question 08: Do your students have difficulties with the division of syllables?

A/ Yes, they have B/ Yes, sometimes C/ Not at all

Table 29

Student's Problems with Syllabification

Options	**Frequency**	**%**
A	04	40
B	06	60
C	00	00
Total	10	100

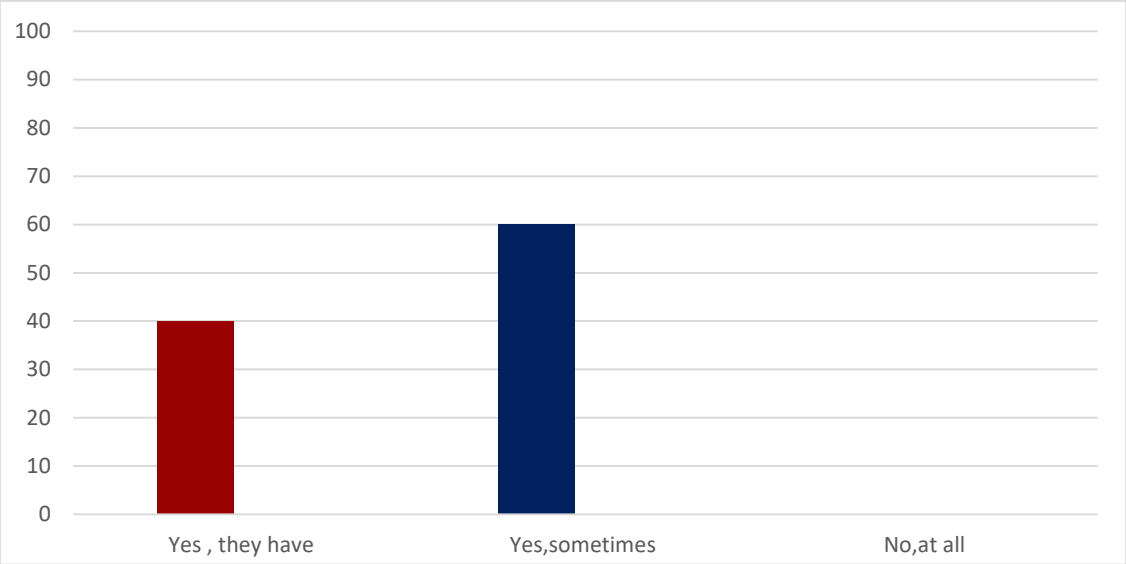

Figure 30: Student's Problems with Syllabification

From table (28) and figure (29), we can notice that more than half of the teachers (60%) think that students have difficulties with syllabification, unlike (40%) of them who reported the opposite. This indicates that teachers are conscious of this problem.

Question 09: According to you, what is the most effective and successful way for learners to reach fluency in pronunciation?

A/Repetition of words B/ Audio /visual aids C/ Dictionary use D/Imitating the teacher

Please feel free to add further suggestions or comments

Table 30

Effective Ways for attaining Fluency in Pronunciation

Options	Frequency	%
A	00	00
B	02	40
C	00	00
D	00	00
A+B+C+D	06	60
B+C	01	10
Total	10	100

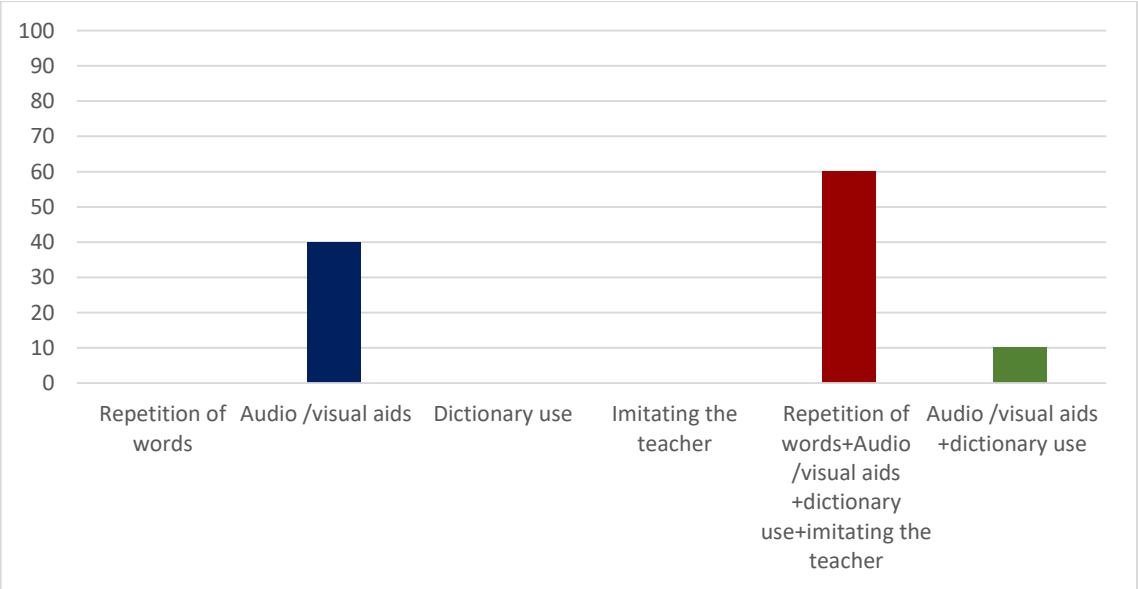

Figure 31: Effective Ways for Attaining Fluency in Pronunciation

According to table (29) and figure (30), we can observe that the great majority of teachers (60%) chose repetition of words, audio/visual aids, dictionary use, and imitation of the teacher as the most effective and successful ways for learners to attain fluency in pronunciation. As we can also see, the focus of the teacher was on the choice 'B', which was the audio/visual aids.

Perhaps the teacher prioritised this latter as it enables the teacher to present the lessons easily and in an effective way and in a short period. From these findings, we can deduce that teachers want students to be eclectic and to try all the techniques in order to improve their pronunciation

In the suggestions' section, teachers focused on exposure to the target language as the best tool to achieve fluency in pronunciation. That is to say, learners should try and err, and practise English intensively in order to overcome the problem of pronunciation. Making errors is the most important part in learning any language, so students should spot their errors and be aware of them in order to improve their pronunciation and speaking skills.

2.4.3. Classroom Observation Analysis

Observation was the second tool used in this study. The researchers observed oral classes in order to collect data on pronunciation errors. Two groups of first-year EFL students were chosen by the researchers. The majority of the students were enthusiastic and willing to express themselves in English, whereas others were hesitant and not really interested. The researchers were attentively noting the pronunciation errors as they went through a checklist.

The checklist contained two sections; the first one dealt with teachers' attitudes towards their students, as well as whether or not they motivate them to speak and interact, in addition to the techniques they use to improve students' speaking skills, the second one covered phonological and articulation difficulties, and participation, as well as the various types of pronunciation errors made by students.

Section One: Teachers' Attitudes in the Classroom

Group One

The teacher established a comfortable and encouraging environment for his students. The teacher motivated them to participate in the discussion by asking them to share their

thoughts freely or speak about any topic they want to present .He also pushed them to overcome their shyness by requiring some students to give an oral presentation because they do not participate in class. Because of time constraints, the teacher used certain limited techniques; topic discussions were dominant in most of the sessions, another technique that he used was oral delivery for those who do not engage regularly if never. His objective was monitoring his students in the classroom.

Group Two

The teacher was very stimulating in the classroom, and she helped the students feel more comfortable. The teacher made a concerted effort to engage them to speak and interact; she asked them to select a free topic for each session to discuss in class, and she involved them to participate in a debate to overcome their shyness. Due to the obvious time limits, one hour was not enough to strengthen their speaking skills, therefore she employed classroom discussions and debates, as well as oral delivery about any topic they wanted in addition to some speaking games. Overall, both teachers were quite supportive and did not interrupt or underestimate any of their students' abilities, even if they were not fluent.

Section two: Students' Phonological, Articulation Problems, and Participation

Element one: students' mispronunciation of sounds in classroom

Group One

During the observation, it was noticed that just a few of the students, whom the teachers referred to as "the class leaders," spoke extensively. They were able to create fluent utterances despite grammatical errors. Others had problems with the stress rules while presenting. For example, one student pronounced the word "encourage" /ɪnˈkʌrɪdʒ/ as /ɪnkʌˈreɪdʒ/ she stressed on the third syllable which is incorrect the stress occurs on the second syllable. Another problem that has occurred is that they were not aware of the vowel length of words; for example, one of

the students said she was leaving, she pronounced it as /lıvıŋ/ (living); the correct pronunciation is /liːvıŋ/ a long vowel so we deduce that they also have problems with the short"i" as in the word "gift" /gıft/ they say / gi:ft/. We also noticed that students had few problems with the consonant clusters difficulties; for example, instead of saying "difference"/ dıfrəns/, they say /dıferəns / with a vowel in between. They also make errors in pronouncing silent letters as in these words: "talkative", "doubtless" where they pronounced the "l" and "b" sounds. Moreover, the big problem that this group faced is the French phonological interference in the English pronunciation. We noticed that a lot of sounds were pronounced in a French manner, for example:

- Instead of pronouncing "internet" as / ıntərnet/; they pronounced it as /entərnet/.
- Instead of pronouncing "also"/ ɔːlsəʊ/ they pronounced it as /ælsəʊ/,
- Instead of pronouncing the word "important" as ….. They pronounce the "r" sound as "**ʁ"** (ġ).

Group Two

This group observation only lasted three sessions since they were so fluent and accurate, only a few times they have mispronounced some words; for example, one of the students kept repeating the word "helps" as "halps" until she was corrected by the teacher. Others were confident speakers who were not shy at all and only a few of them were poor speakers as they did not utter a word during the observations. In conclusion, we found no phonological or articulation errors.

Element two: Learners' Participation and Interaction

Group One

Most of this group was passive students who hardly participated if never, choosing to stay silent, and did not interact with their teacher or classmates; basically, they did not

participate in the classroom. One of the primary causes which we believe is significant is the psychological aspect that we noted during the observation which was a lack of self-confidence; some students were hesitant to participate; they usually felt nervous and shy. They even avoided making eye contact with their teacher while he asked questions because they were afraid of giving incorrect responses and being underestimated by their teacher or classmates. Without forgetting the class leaders (as referred to by their teacher) who actually engaged and interacted in the classroom and proved that they are confident enough to speak.

Group Two

The majority of this group was really talkative and spoke all along the session, they were really motivated; they engaged with the teacher and interacted with each other by asking questions and giving answers, sharing comments, and suggesting ideas. As a result, those students were eager to improve their speaking and communication skills.

2.4.4. Audio Recording Analysis

In this section, the researchers analysed the data they collected after the participants have read a series of words that were chosen with the belief that they are hard to pronounce to a first year EFL student. The gathered data is displayed in figures that show the percentage of correct and incorrect articulations of the specified words. As a result, there are ten figures, each of which deals with a single word and displays the participants' pronunciations of it. Each graph is followed by a detailed analysis and explanation of how each sound was articulated.

What follows is the list of words that were used for the recording, along with their analysis.

1. Gorgeous
2. Thoroughly
3. Variety
4. Whistle
5. Island
6. Shrimp

7. Appliance
8. Adjective
9. Though
10. praise

The word gorgeous**:**

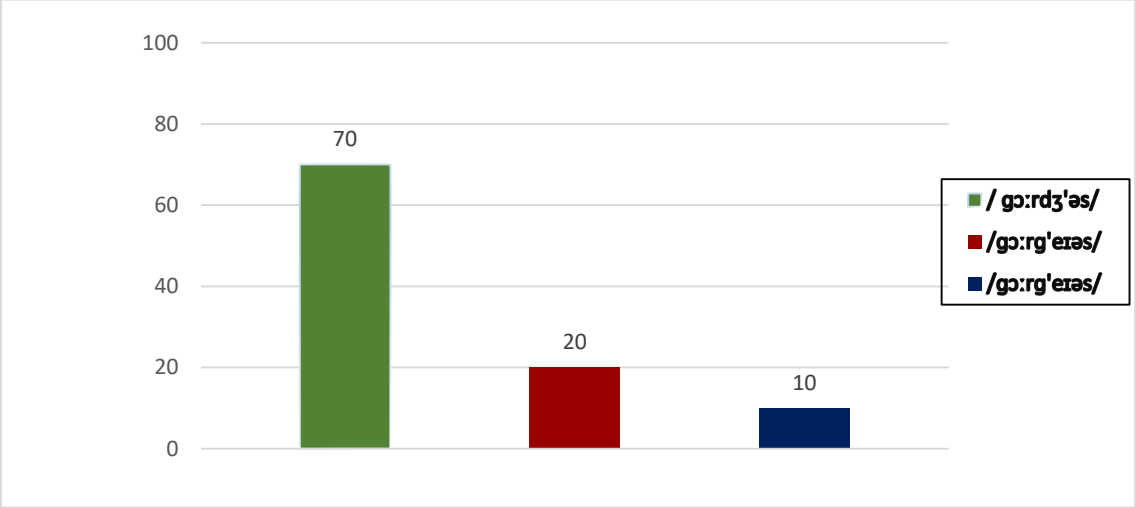

Figure 32: Participants' Articulations of the Word "gorgeous"

The word gorgeous was mispronounced by three (3) of the participants, standing for 30% of them; 10% pronounced it as /gɔ:rg'eɪəs /, while the rest 70% pronounced it as /ˈgɔ:rdʒeɪəs /. Only 20% have correctly pronounced it as /ˈgɔ:rdʒəs/. Therefore, whereas the "eous" sound should be pronounced as a schwa, seven(7) of them have difficulty distinguishing between thriphthongs and schwas because of their phonetics rules ignorance , however, the other participant was unaware of the rules of pronouncing the /g/ sound according to what comes after it.

The word thoroughly:

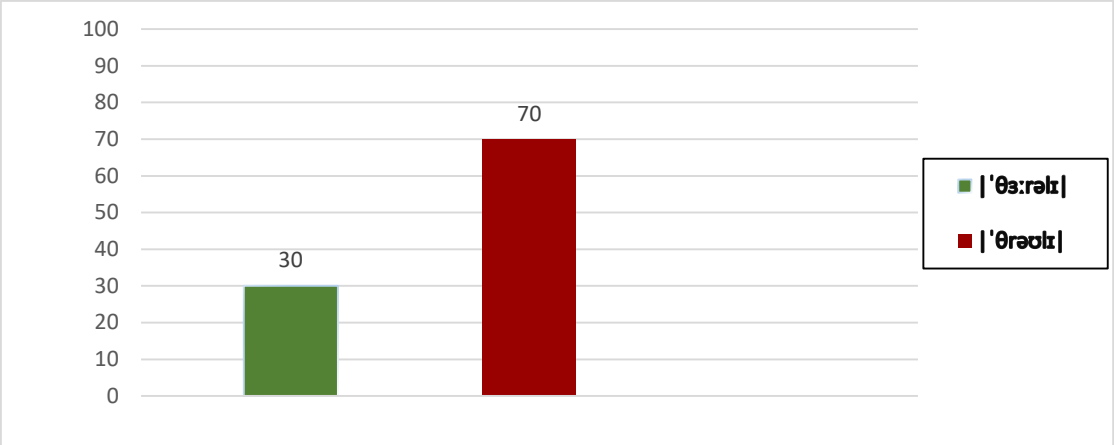

Figure 33: Participants' Articulations of the Word "thoroughly"

Seven participants (70%) mispronounced the term thoroughly. They pronounced it as /ˈərəʊlɪ/ rather than /ˈəɜːrəlɪ/ by removing the long schwa and adding the diphthong (əʊ). The others (30%) have succeeded in articulating the word thoroughly correctly; thus, incorrect articulations of this term are mainly due to the ignorance of phonetics rules, more precisely the rule of diphthongs (schwa and another vowel). As it is proven by the student questionnaire analysis, half of the participants have significant difficulties with the vowel schwa.

The word variety:

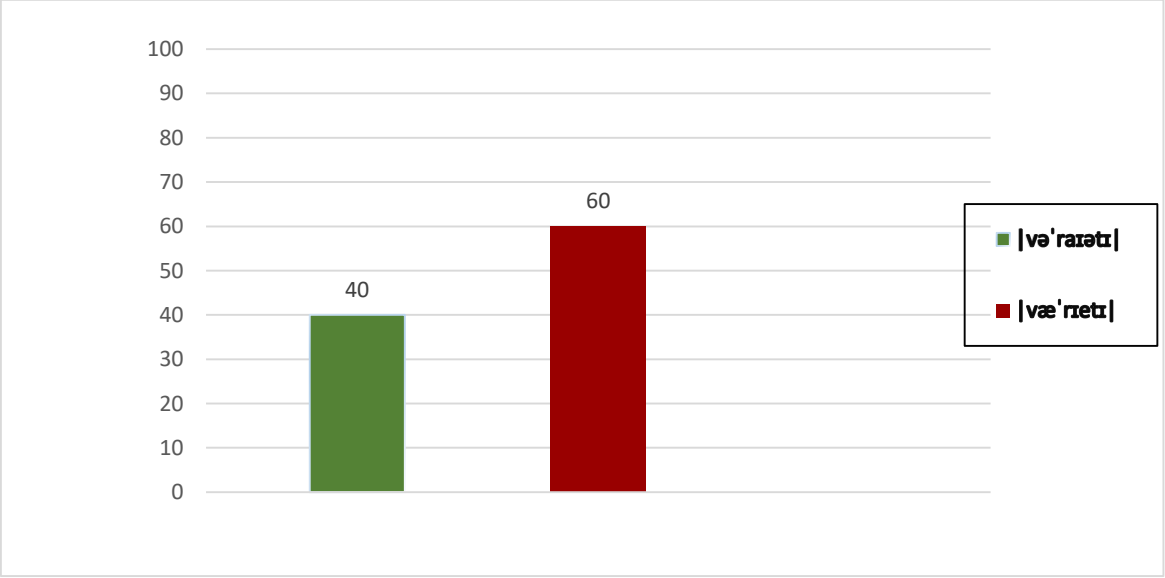

Figure 34: Participants' Articulation of the Word "variety"

For the word variety, three (30%) of the participants pronounced it as /væˈrɪetɪ/ while the remaining seven (70%) pronounced it correctly as /vəˈraɪətɪ/. There are two reasons behind this error; the first is, as previously stated, a lack of knowledge of schwa rules; the second reason is the SL interference so the schwa "ə" is pronounced as short "œ" because it is similar to the French word "variété". As a result, the pronunciations of such terms can be extremely perplexing for these participants or a first-year EFL learner.

The word whistle:

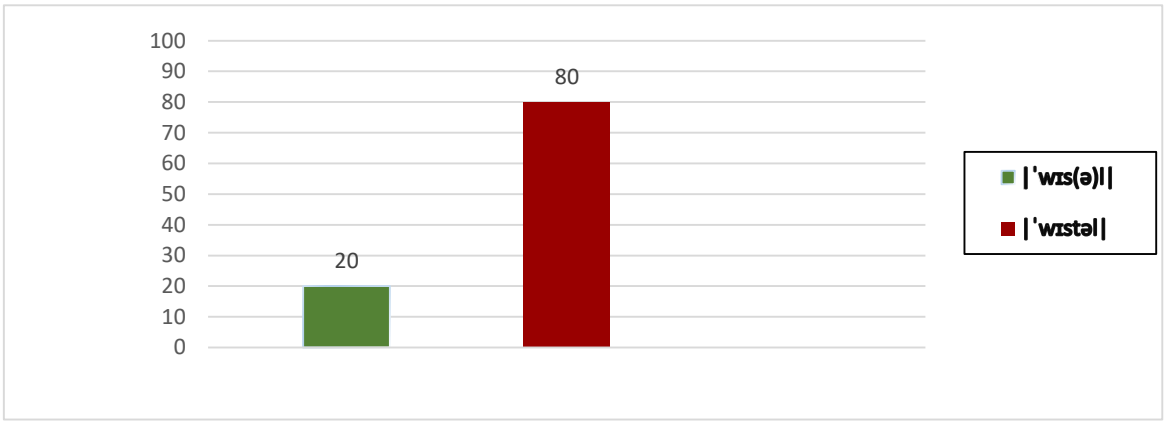

Figure 35: Participants' Articulation of the Word "whistle"

The graph shows that the majority (80%) of the participants that were recorded have articulated the word whistle incorrectly. The error occurred on the second syllable (tle) more precisely on the silent letter (t), so instead of pronouncing it as /ˈwɪs(ə)l/ they pronounced it as /ˈwɪstəl/. The rest of the participants (20%) have pronounced it correctly. Thus, this kind of errors is committed because of students' ignorance of the importance of the silent letters in words as it can change the entire meaning, for example the word "rate" for where the "e" is silent /reɪt/ and comparing it with the pronunciation of the word "rat" /ræt/; we end up having a whole different pronunciation with a whole different meaning, that is how important silent letters are in English.

The word island:

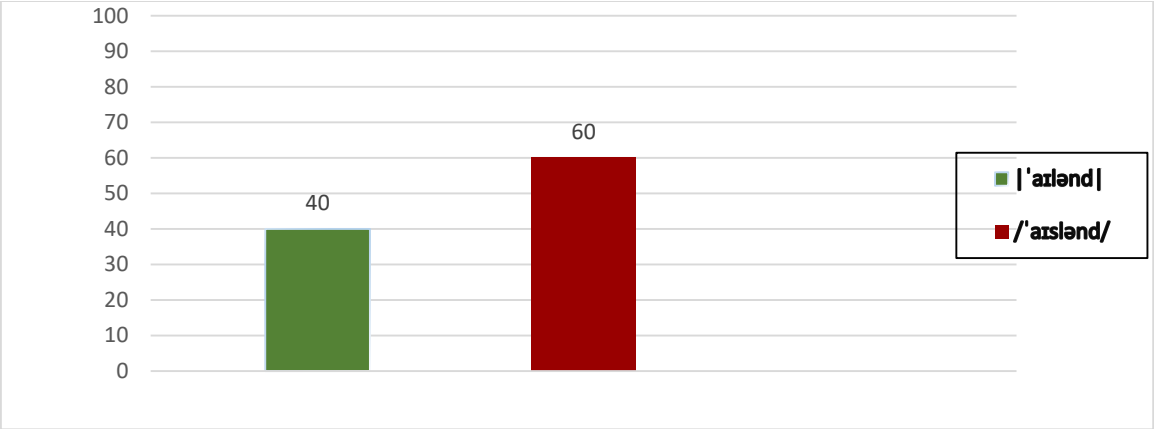

Figure 36: Participant Articulations of the word island

The word island has been articulated in two different ways. (40%) of the participants have correctly articulated it as /ˈaɪlənd/. However, the rest of the participants which take (60%) have wrongly articulated it as /ˈaɪsləndˈ/, they mispronounced the second syllable that consists of the silent letter (l). As a result, it is confirmed as previously said that these types of errors are due to the participants' ignorance of the silent letters' importance in pronunciation and the overgeneralisation of phonetics' rules.

The word shrimp:

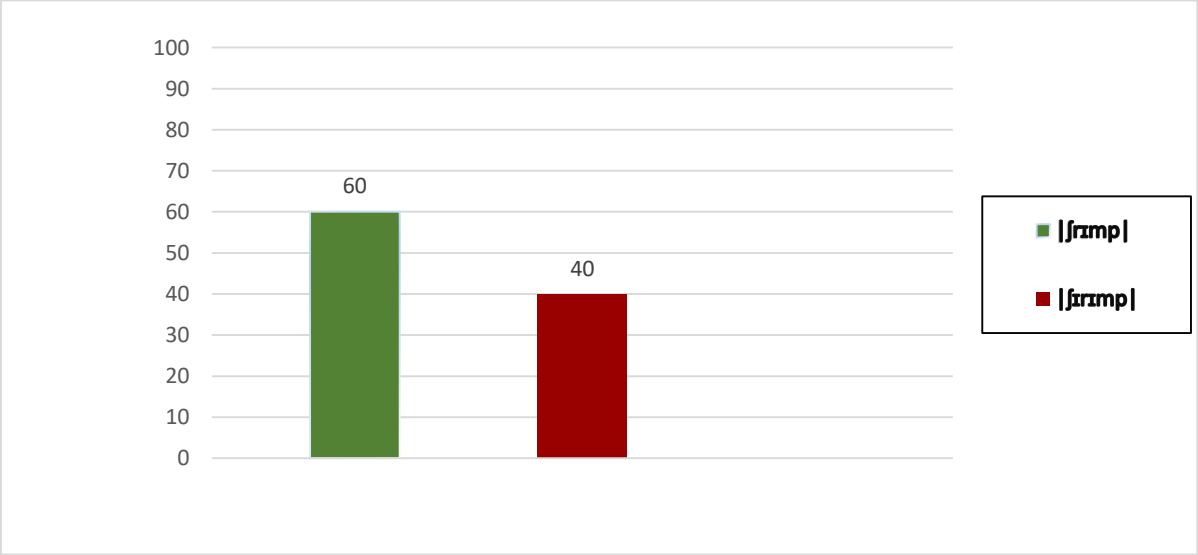

Figure 37: Participants' Articulations of the word shrimp

The word shrimp contains an initial consonant cluster (blend) which is “shr” this type of word can be difficult to pronounce, so (60%) of the participants pronounced it correctly as /ʃrɪmp/, while the other (40%) have added a vowel to split the /ʃ/ sound and the /r/ sound so they pronounced it as /ʃɪrɪmp/ which is an incorrect pronunciation. In conclusion, it can be said that this error occurs because it is physically hard for them to articulate this “shr” due to the lips position when pronouncing the /ʃ/ sound is flared while it changes the position when pronouncing the /r/ sound.

The word appliance:

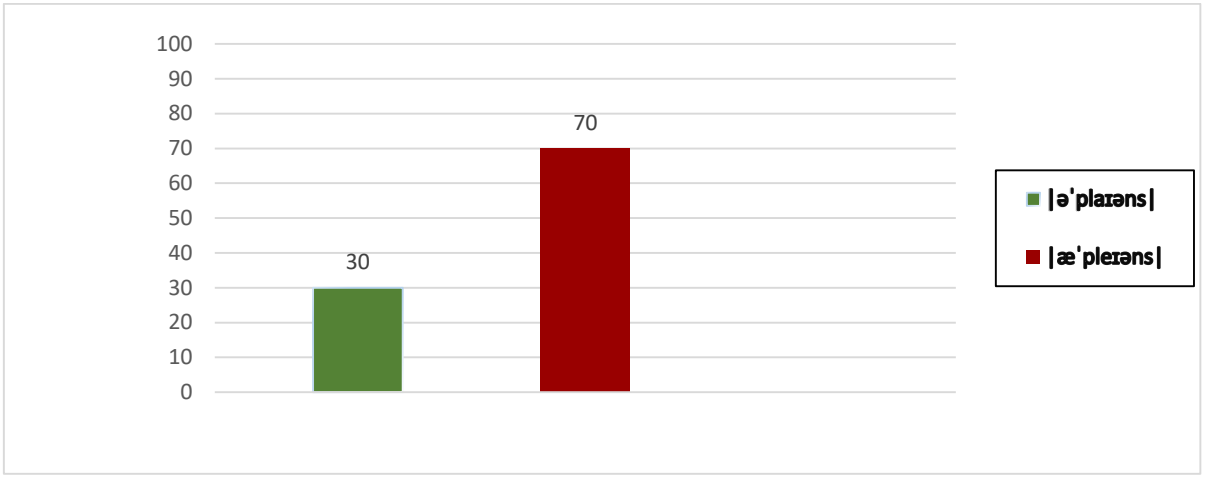

Figure 38: Participants’ Articulation of the word appliance

The word appliance was pronounced as /æˈpleɪəns/ by (70%) of the participants, the first error occurred at the beginning of the word; at the schwa level /ə/ they replaced it with an /æ/. The second error occurred in the second syllable “li”, they mispronounced the diphthong /aɪ/ by producing it as /eɪ/ .whereas, the other (30%) have correctly pronounced it as /əˈplaɪəns As a result, these two errors are the side effect of French interference; these participants were exposed to French before English, hence they commit such errors.

The word adjective:

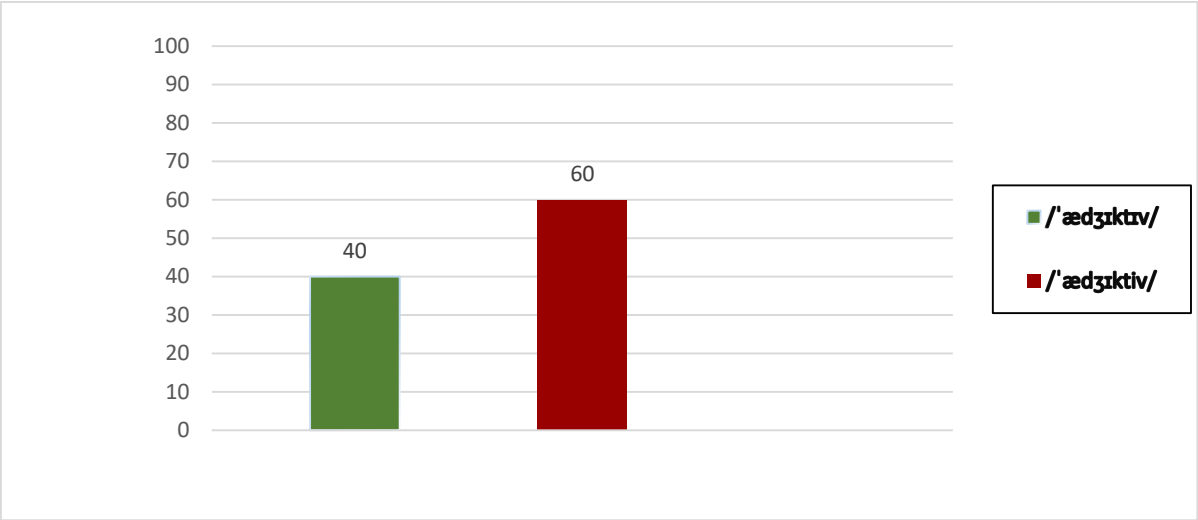

Figure 39: Participants' Articulations of the word adjective

The word adjective consists of three syllables, it was pronounced correctly as /'ædʒɪktɪv/ by (40%) of the participants, while the other (60%) pronounced it as /'ædʒɪktiv/ which is incorrect; in this articulation the participants replaced the short "ɪ" with a long "i". this failure in pronouncing this word is due to two factors; the first one is that they are influenced by the French pronunciation because it is similar to the word "adjective" /'ædʒɪktiv/, same as the wrong pronunciation in this word. The second reason, is a lack of knowledge about vowel length rules.

The word though:

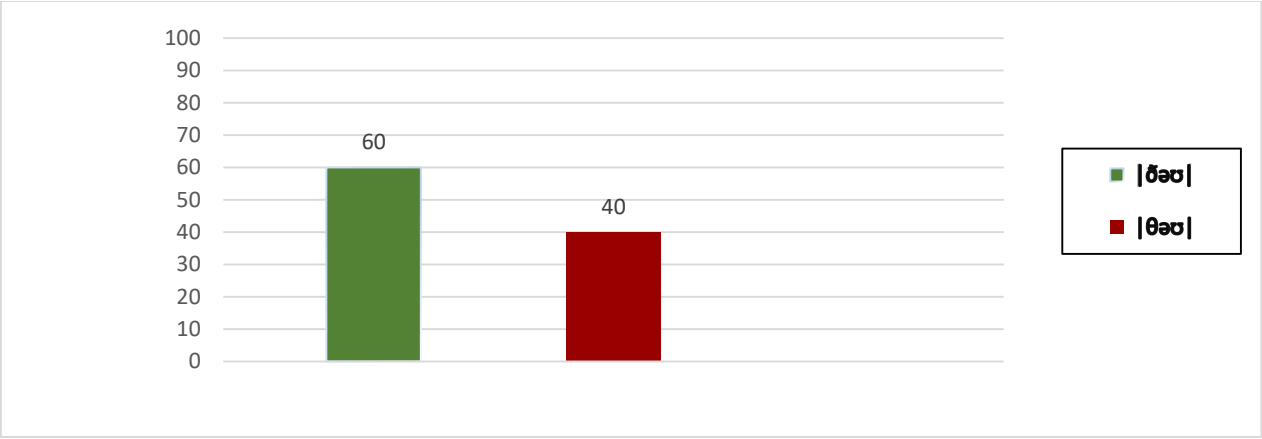

Figure 40: Participants' Articulation of the word though

More than half of the participants (60%) have succeeded in pronouncing the word though as /ðəʊ/. However, the rest (40%) of the participants have mispronounced it as / θəʊ/, they uttered the "th" sound incorrectly because they confused between the voiced "and unvoiced "θ" sound, and how to pronounce the 'th" at the beginning of a word. The mispronunciation of the word "though" is most certainly due to the participants' ignorance of "th" sound rules.

The word stomach:

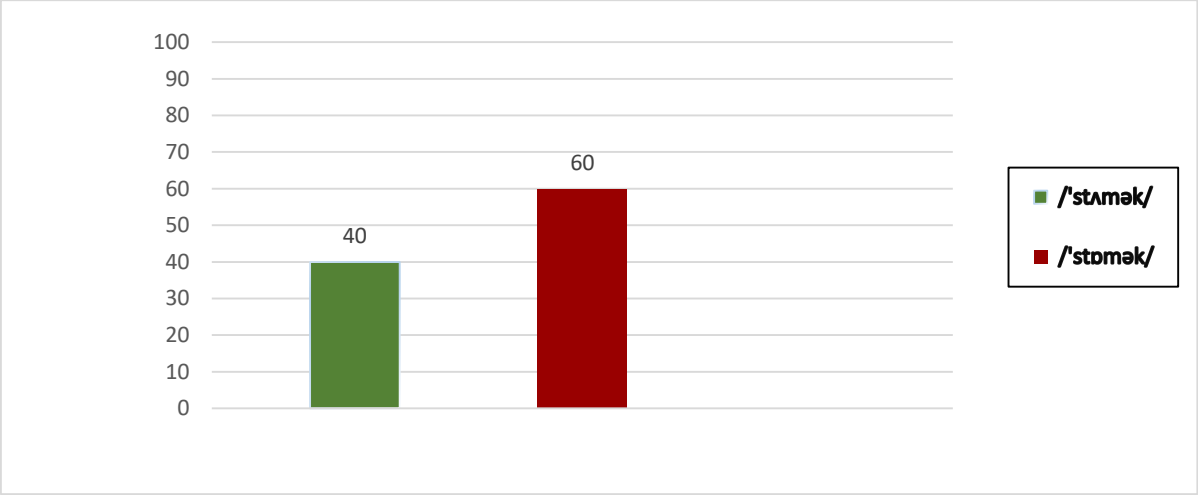

Figure 41: Participants' Articulation of the word stomach

As it is shown in figure (40), only (40%) i.e. four (4) of the participants have pronounced the word "stomach" correctly as / 'stʌmək/. while the other (60%) were not able to pronounce it correctly, so they pronounced it as / 'stɒmək/. As an outcome, it is noticeable that the interference of their second language, French, is what led the participants to produce the vowel /ɒ/ rather than /ʌ/, that is because of the French word "stomach". Thus, the participants were already exposed to the French word "stomach" before confronting the English word "stomach" so they used the French pronunciation and instead of the English one.

2.5. Discussion of the Results

In order to answer the research questions and to fulfil its aims, this study involoved three data gathering tools. So, first we used two questionnaires for both teachers and students, aiming to identify the pronunciation weaknesses, and the type of pronunciation errors committed by the learners and to confirm whether or not the results found in students' questionnaire matched those provided by the teachers. According to the STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE, the results showed that first-year EFL students had huge pronunciation problems due to several factors, the first of which is English pronunciation rule ignorance, particularly phonetics. Because most of the participants were unaware of these rules, they made errors such as mispronouncing some sounds; the "schwa", "th", "silent letters", short "i" and not recognising the vowel length of words. They also stated that they have issues with word stress and syllabification. The second aspect is French influence; this is the most significant problem that causes them to transfer the language incorrectly. The students also mentioned that they did not have enough time to master the pronunciation aspects and that they were afraid of making mistakes, they were shy, and not having enough self-confidence. Therefore, their problems cover all aspects of pronunciation, rules, and psychological variables, as well as French interference which affects their English pronunciation.

Furthermore, as stated in the teachers' questionnaire, all of the participant teachers have already taught OE, most of them stated that their students are not quite fluent in classroom, that is to say that they make a lot of pronunciation errors. The results of teachers' questionnaire were compatible with the students' answers at the level pronunciation errors, the majority of the participant teachers agreed that these errors occurred because of the students' ignorance of pronunciation and phonetics rules, and most likely because of the French interference. All in all, both teachers and students' questionnaires can be summarized by their suggestions of

successful and effective ways to improve students' pronunciation and avoid the already mentioned errors.

Among the suggested solutions: the students suggested to watch series and movies, practise the English language through interacting with native speakers rather than with their classmates, on the other hand the teachers suggested that students should learn by making some errors and correct themselves, and also to be more exposed to the language in order to attain fluency.

The second tool employed was classroom observation, and its data revealed various apparent pronunciation errors produced by the learners. Psychological factors was the first problem that really hindered their pronunciation in the classroom. The majority of them were shy and avoided speaking in front of their classmates and their teachers, unlike the others who spoke freely and without hesitation. The second problem that we found was that they having articulation problems with some sounds and especially vowels, also the French interference took part in this latter. In this results, the teacher played a significant role in getting their students to speak extensively, which was the case. So we have concluded that first-year EFL students were motivated by their teachers to speak and interact even though they were not fluent.

The third used tool was audio recording, it covered the participation of 10 first year EFL students, and they were given a list of ten words that contains a variety of pronunciation that may lead us to reach our research target, which is identifying the visible pronunciation errors. The first problem they faced was not knowing how to pronounce the "schwa" sound, this error occurred with these three words: "gorgeous, thoroughly, appliance", and that is due to the ignorance of phonetics rules. The second problem that affected their pronunciation was silent letters; most of them have mispronounced all the words that contain silent letters (whistle, island), we found that this happened because of not exposing that much to the language. The

third problem, which was found along all our research was the French interference, it is strongly noticed in these words: “variety, appliance, adjective, stomach”, they were pronounced as in the French language. Consequently, after analysing the audio recording, it was confirmed that these participant were highly influenced by the French pronunciation system.

On the other hand there are some other problems that they did not occur with high percentage, they were due to the overgeneralization of pronunciation rules. The word “shrimp” contains a consonant cluster was mispronounced, in addition to the word “though” that contains a “th” sound governed by a rule. Therefore, we can deduce that these errors happened for overgeneralizing the pronunciation rules.

All in all, these three gathering tools can be summarized as follows; they helped to identify the pronunciation errors that occurred among first year EFL students of Chadli Bendjedid -EL TARF-, and also to discover which techniques the teacher used to help enhancing their pronunciation in the classroom. So, our research aims were successfully fulfilled.

Conclusion

This research part, dealt with discovering the pronunciation errors that occur at Chadli Bendjedid University in an EFL classroom. The data were collected with mixed method from 30 EFL first-year students and a ten EFL teachers from the English department. In this chapter we covered the research design, the participants, the research instruments which we used to collect data, also the analysis of each collected data. In addition to the results discussion and interpretation.

Chapter 3

Discussion and Recommendations

Chapter Three

Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

In the light of the previously discussed results, the present chapter gives a complete explanation and a clear discussion of the research hypotheses that have been set to be proved or rejected by the sample after analysing the collected data. It also highlights a list of recommendations and guidelines for both teachers and students that can help Chadli Bendjedid University teachers to level up the teaching of English pronunciation in first-year EFL classrooms, and to encourage students improve their pronunciation.

3.1. Discussion of the Research Hypotheses

H1: First year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University have problems with certain sounds, this can be due to the lack of practise and the ignorance of the phonetic rules.

The results of our research work proved that this hypothesis is true. The lack of practise leads students to be unfamiliar with the correct manner of pronouncing sounds. Students do not notice the presence of some rules because they have not mastered them. Therefore, they commit errors with the sound system identification, such as mispronouncing ‘the schwa’ sound, ‘Th’ sound, and short ‘I’ sound.

Based on the data collection and results, one of the main reasons of students’ errors is their ignorance of the phonetic rules. Students will not be able to produce good spoken input if they do not pay attention to phonetic rules. Phonetics and pronunciation rules relate to sounds, so making a balance between the two is so important because they affect each other. This reason was also spotted in Roumane’study (2018) where he analysed EFL learners’ pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/, which he concluded that the overgeneralisation

of the pronunciation rules is a source of mispronunciation. That is to say students pronounce some vowels the way they are pronounced in other words.

H2: Second language interference, as well as psychological factors influence negatively on the oral production.

The research findings confirm our second hypothesis, French interference was strongly observed, particularly in the students' recordings. We noticed that they pronounce some words in a French manner. Although the two languages share many words that are spelled the same in both, the pronunciation of the utterances differs.

It is worth mentioning that the results indicated that the students' poor speaking performance is due to psychological factors, such as; shyness, lack of confidence, and the fear of making mistakes. This mainly confirms our second hypothesis. This problem was also highlighted by Attir (2016) in her study in investigating the main psychological factors affecting learners speaking performance. Her findings revealed that the main psychological factors have a negative influence on students' ability to speak English. She deduced that shyness and anxiety have an impact on students' willingness as they feel hesitant and stressed when having a conversation.

3.2. Recommendations

3.2.1. Recommendations for Teachers

Changes must start with the teachers because they are the role model in the classroom. As a result, they may employ specific strategies and techniques in order to increase the students' motivation to improve their pronunciation. Here are some suggestions for the problems encountered during our research study**.**

A) Silent Letters Problems

- Teachers need to inform their students about the existence of silent letters and provide a thorough explanation of the rules of their use because if they know the importance of

silent letters in serving a variety of functions in the English language; they will become more motivated to learn better pronunciation.

B) Negative Psychological Aspects

- Having a good relationship with the students is so fundamental, in order to create a relaxed atmosphere where the students can talk freely and without hesitation.
- The teachers 'attitudes toward their students is important to avoid the negative psychological aspects of students. Respecting and accepting the student's level will encourage him to speak confidently and without embarrassment.
- To avoid putting the student in awkward situations, teachers need to be skilful in managing the correction of the pronunciation errors; that is to say, he ought to know exactly what, how, and when the pronunciation errors should be corrected.
- OE teachers need to look for ways to engage introvert students in any classroom activity by asking them about activity feedback, grouping them, or creating a good work space.

One of the activities provided by Lackman (2010) , to engage introvert students in classroom called; random chain story, first, put students in small groups and assign them a topic on which all students can speak. One student begins the story and must speak without making pauses. When there is a pause or hesitation, another student can step in and finish the story.

C) Vowel Length Issue

- To solve the problem of vowel length, teachers need to exaggerate in the beginning so that students can hear the difference between the vowels more clearly. Competition is a way where students see who can hold the sound the longest. Over time, teachers make the vowels shorter and shorter until they are the appropriate length.

D) Students Ignorance of Phonetics Rules

- Encouraging the students to use the dictionaries like; WordReference.com, to check the phonetic transcription of new words and to learn how they pronounce words correctly.
- Engaging students in different activities to make them check-up and revise the phonetic rules and the correct pronunciation of utterances before their presentations. For instance, dialogues, role play, free topic discussion.

E) Stress Problems

- To overcome stress problems, there are different activities teachers can provide to the students. For example, dictating sentences or words and asking students to mark the words that are stressed or asking them to underline the stressed words in a dialogue. These kinds of activities lead the student to discover his errors while pronouncing each word.

F) Mispronouncing Sounds

Teachers need to provide EFL students with new and effective teaching OE strategies instead of the traditional methods such as:

- Encouraging students to get as much listening experience outside the classroom as possible (listening to music, podcast). As an extra step, assigning students different words to listen for and having them keep track of how often they hear these words while listening to the song or watching the TV show.
- Using technology to teach pronunciation, like; providing electronic devices, such as: recording which is a common way for students to find out pronunciation errors once they start listening to their recordings.

- OE Teachers need to improve students' listening skills by teaching them to respect each other's roles, avoid interruptions, and keep the entire class engaged on the topic.
- Reading improves pronunciation skills because when the students read, they will look for both the grammar and pronunciation of the words, as well as the familiarity that translates into students' daily conversation.

3.2.2. Recommendations for Students

A) The Sound System Identification

Students should seek out various sources to avoid mispronouncing sounds like;

- Listening to native speakers' audios or videos, imitating them, and memorising the correct pronunciation of English sounds.
- Reading out loud is a simple exercise for students that help mouth muscles working and creating sounds.
- Knowing how to link sounds by practising tongue twisters, which is a way of practising English pronunciation by reading the words out loud, focusing on the sounds and trying to read them over and over again without mispronouncing any word. If the student makes a mistake, he will start again.
- Pronunciation poems are a type of activity that helps the students know how two words or more spelled similarly can have completely different pronunciations. Such poems can be found on YouTube or Google.
- The "shadowing technique" is one of the effective techniques that helps the students learn the exact pronunciation by (hearing and imitating) not by (seeing and reading aloud). This strategy can be done by bringing a native speaker audio recording, listening to it, and then trying to repeat the phrase exactly (the same flow of the words).

- Trying to distinguish between the minimal pairs like; wide and wise, by knowing what sounds make up the word, and ignoring the word's spelling.

B) Psychological Remedies

- Practise makes perfect. The more students use the English language, the less anxious and nervous they will feel when speaking.
- Smiling while talking softens the students' pronunciation and helps them to gain more confidence and self-esteem.
- Students should remember that perfection is just a word. They are not obligated to have perfect pronunciation or to sound like a native speaker.

C) French Interference

- In order to activate some English sounds that are not present in L1 or L2. Students should practise and incorporate the English language into their daily lives.
- Students must try to think in English. They cannot have a good pronunciation if they are constantly thinking in their L1 or L2.

3.2.3. Future Researchers 'Recommendations

- It takes a long time to identify and analyse pronunciation errors, so having more time allows for the selection of a larger and more diverse strategies to work with the students
- Future researchers, working on the same research topic as the one at hand, should take into account the limitations that we encountered while conducting the current study.
- It is better for future researchers to gather as many participants as possible from different groups so that they can help you in your research.
- If future researchers used the same data collection methods and participants (first-year EFL students) as we did in our study, it is preferable to read and explain the

questionnaires to the students to ensure that they understand the questions, so that they can provide valid and reasonable answers.

- Choosing the right time and place to deal with the students is so important, students do not participate in your research when they have tests or exams.

Conclusion

This final chapter concludes with a clear discussion of the hypotheses and the results found.It proved that both of our assumptions were correct.Although many factors affect pronunciation negatively, there are always solutions to eradicate these pronunciation errors. We also offered a number of recommendations for teachers, students, and future researchers.

General Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate and explore the major pronunciation errors committed by first year EFL students at Chadli Benjdjedid University in addition to highlighting the reasons behind these errors. Acquiring correct pronunciation simplifies the process of covering other aspects of the English language such as vocabulary and syntax; however, mastering pronunciation is quite hard especially for novice learners. Since pronunciation is a big challenge for EFL students, it is necessary to take into account that language learning, like any individual learning is not devoid of errors.

The results of the analysis confirmed the research hypotheses; we found that first-year EFL students have different problems with pronunciation and the most prominent ones are those related to French interference, ignorance of phonetics' rules in addition to some psychological factors.

In order to achieve the research goals, we adopted the mixed method in that we involved three main data collection too represented in; two questionnaires (for both students, and teachers), classroom observation, and an audio recording. After analysing the data, we come up with the conclusion that the participant students have problems with English pronunciation, and the main factors were reported in the research.

The obtained results allowed to put forward some recommendations, some techniques for teachers like using technology for instruction such as providing electronic devices. Besides, some activities that may facilitate the learning process for students were suggested. With regard to the psychological problems, we also recommended a set of remedies to overcome anxiety, shyness, and fear of making mistakes. Moreover, we provided a number of suggestion for future researchers to overcome the limitation of the study.

Although we achieved some significant results by the end of this study, it is necessary to mention that the limitations we encountered hampered the overgeneralisations of the results

to the entire population of English students. Amongst which we mention the few number of the participants who accepted to participate in the study. Moreover, we were distracted by the first semester exams and thus we did not have enough time to extend the study. Due to these, we believe it is essential for future researchers to investigate this subject more experimentally in order to grant better results.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a tool for investigating "the common pronunciation errors committed by EFL learners at Chadli Bendjedid University and the factors leading to them". We will be very grateful if you provide us with full answers or tick the appropriate answer among the ones provided. Your answers will be kept anonymous and will only be used for a research purpose.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Section one: General Information

1. How old are you?

A/ Under 18 years old ☐ B/more than 18 years old ☐

2. What is your favorite module?

A/Oral ☐ B/ phonetics ☐ C/other module ☐

Section Two Common Struggles That You May /May Not Encounter

1. How often do you mispronounce certain sounds in English?

A/Always ☐ B/ sometimes ☐ C/Rarely ☐

2. How often do you have difficulties with consonants cluster?

A/ always ☐ B/ sometimes ☐ C/ Rarely ☐

3. How often do you find silent sounds confusing?

A/Always ☐ B/sometimes ☐ C/ Rarely ☐

4. Do you think insufficient time triggers pronunciation errors?

A/ Yes ☐ B/ No ☐

5. How often do you have difficulties with syllabification?

A/ always ☐ B/ never ☐ C/sometimes ☐

6. Which sounds do you usually struggle with?

A/ the “THz” sound. ☐ B/ the “schwa” sound ☐

C the short” I”. ☐ D/ pronouncing a silent consonant. ☐

7. How often do you encounter problems with contrastive vowel length?

A/ always ☐ B/ never ☐

8. Do you think that your pronunciation errors are due to the French sound system interference?

A/Yes ☐ B/No ☐ C/Sometimes ☐

9. - Do you know the pronunciation rules?

A/ yes ☐ B/ No ☐

10. Do you have problems with phonetic transcription?

A/ yes ☐ B/ No ☐

11. Do you imitate teacher’s pronunciation?

A/ yes ☐ B/ No ☐ C/ sometimes ☐

12. How often do you mix vowels?

☐

A/ Always ☐ B/ sometimes ☐ C/ rarely

13. Do you use dictionary to identify the phonemic transcription?

A/always ☐ B/ sometimes ☐ C/ rarely ☐

14. What is the factor that badly influences your pronunciation?

A/ fear of making mistakes ☐ B/ shyness ☐

C/ lack of confidence ☐

15. Feel free to suggest some solutions in order to improve pronunciation

……..

Appendix II

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is a tool for investigating "the common pronunciation errors committed by EFL learners at Chadli Bendjedid University and the factors leading to them". We will be very grateful if you provide us with full answers or tick the appropriate answer among the ones provided. Your answers will be kept anonymous and will only be used for a research purpose.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Section One: General Information

1- Your educational qualification is:

A- Bachelor's degree ☐ B- Magister ☐ C- PHD ☐

2- For how many years have you taught English?

A- Less than 5 years ☐ B-From 5 to10 years ☐ C- More than 10 years ☐

3- Have you ever taught oral expression at the university?

A-yes ☐ B-No ☐

Section 02: Teacher's Perceptions towards Pronunciation Errors

1- According to you, what are the objectives of teaching oral expression course in the first year?.....

.....

2- How fluent is your students' pronunciation in class?

A-Very fluent ☐ B-Quite fluent ☐ C-Not fluent ☐

3- Do you take into account the differentiation in the learners' capacities while they learn phonetics?

A-Yes ☐ B- No ☐ C-Other ☐

* Please, justify your answer: ……

……

4- How did the learners 'weaknesses manifest itself in the phonetics module?

……..

Section 03: Pronunciation Problematic Areas.

1-Is it difficult for your students to apply the rules of stress?

A- Yes, all the time ☐ B- Yes, sometimes. ☐ C- No, they can apply them ☐

2- Do you think that time is sufficient to cover all the pronunciation aspects?

A- Yes, it is ☐ B-No, it is not ☐

3- Do you agree on the fact that second language interference leads to pronunciation errors?

A- Strongly agree. ☐ B- Agree. ☐ C- Disagree ☐

4- According to you, what is the main factor that leads to mispronunciation?

A- Student's imitation of teacher's pronunciation. ☐ B- Student's ignorance of the rules of pronunciation ☐ C-Spelling-pronunciation inconsistency ☐

All of the above ☐

5- Which of the following common errors that hinder first year students?

A- Mispronouncing the “Th” sound. ☐ B-Mispronouncing the “schwa” sound. ☐

C- Mispronouncing the short” i”. ☐ D- Pronouncing a silent consonant. ☐

6- Do your students encounter difficulties with the initial consonant cluster?

A-yes, they do ☐ B- No, they do not ☐

7- Do your students face problems with contrastive vowel length?

A- Yes ☐ B-sometimes ☐ C-No ☐

8- Do your students have difficulties with the division of syllables?

A-yes, they have. ☐ B- Yes, sometimes. ☐ C-Not at all. ☐

9- According to you, what is the most effective and successful way for learners to reach fluency in pronunciation?

A- Repetition of words ☐ B- Audio / visual aids ☐

C- Dictionary use. ☐ D-Imitating the teacher. ☐

Please feel free to give any further suggestions or comments……

……

Appendix III

Checklist Observation

Title of the Research: Investigating EFL Pronunciation Errors.

Case of study: First Year LMD Students of English at University of Chadli Bendjedid –EL TARF-.

The observers: Boussebsi Amira and Djeffal Rania

The teacher: ……..…

Date of the observation: ……

Aim of the observation: …….

1. TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR STUDENTS

- The teacher motivates their students to speak ☐
- The teacher uses an effective techniques to improve his students speaking skills ☐

2. STUDENTS' PHONOLIGICAL, ARTICULATION PROBLEMS, and PARTICIPATION

- Students' mispronunciation of sounds in the classroom ☐
- Learners' participation and interaction ☐

Summary of the observation: ……

……