

Difficulties Facing Native Arabic Speaking in Pronouncing English Phonemes at Elobeid Secondary Schools, Sudan

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Abstract: *The current study was conducted in Elobeid secondary schools during 2014-2015. The objective of the study was to investigate the pronunciation difficulties facing native Arabic speaking students in Elobeid secondary schools. Study problem was the difficulties in pronouncing English phonemes facing native Arabic speaking in Elobeid secondary schools. The primary data were collected via questionnaires were distributed to 40 lecturers of long lectures careers, also recorded test to 40 students at some of Elobeid secondary schools. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis, and results presentation. Study found that: all the lecturers indicated that students pronounce /f/ instead of /v/, /b/ instead of /p/, /s/ instead of /θ/ and /z/ instead of /ð/, this related to the interference of students' mother tongue (Arabic language) in the target language (English language). Study recommended that: the teachers should focus in their teaching on the phonemes which have not equivalents in Arabic language.*

Keywords: *Phonemes, Native, Pronunciation, Descriptive statistics.*

I. INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language Learners are faced with a problem: how they pronounce the English word in correct way? English sounds are confusing, since there are no specific logical to decode the sequence of sounds or ethnographically represented in words. In the sentence "the silly amoeba stole the key to the machine", the sound /i:/ is represented by the e, y, and i and other eight combinations: ie, ae, ee, eo, ei, oe, and ey. With an aim of minimizing the difference between spelling and sounds. The International Phonetic Alphabet "IPA" was developed in 1888 to provide a universal code that could represent the exact pronunciation of the sound exist in all languages. However, most EFL students are not familiar with the IPA, and even though the phonetic transcription is present in bilingual's dictionaries, many students are unable to decide the symbols and end up feeling puzzled by the unsystematic way words are represented by orthography. The objectives of this study is to show how the students can start paying more attention to the sounds they hear in order to improve the accuracy of the sounds they produce. The English Phonological System has vowels more than the Arabic one. The situation that supposed many English vowel sounds have no counterparts in

Arabic. This situation causes another difficulty for the students in pronouncing these phonemes. Also, the consonantal systems of Arabic and English are contrasted because many English consonants have no counterparts in Arabic, which raise again the problems of pronunciation. These problems have infested the researcher since it pours on the students' interests and represents the priorities in learning a foreign language. Pronunciation difficulties of English phonemes the issues. Peter Roach (2000: 40) stated that "An abstract set of units as the basis of our speech, these units are called phonemes". It is in this sense that the phoneme /t/ is described as a sound type of which all the different spoken versions of [t] are tokens. J.D. O'Connor (1980: 9-10) stated that: "each sound represented by one letter of the phonetic alphabet, are called phoneme." A.E. Derbyshire (1968:14) illustrated that: "general conceptions of the sounds of a language are called phonemes. Phoneme is the smallest units of speech distinguishes one word (or word element) from another, as the element /p/ in "tap" which separates that word from "tap" and "tan". A phoneme may have more than one variant, called allophone which functions as a single sound; for example, the /p/'s of "pat", "spat" and "tap" differ slightly phonetically but that difference, determined by context, has no significance in English. Phonemes are based on spoken language and maybe recorded with special symbols such as those of the International Phonetic Alphabet. In transcriptions, linguists conventionally place symbols for phonemes between slash marks: /p/. The term phoneme is usually restricted to vowels and consonants, but some linguists extend its application to cover phonologically relevant differences of pitch, stress and rhythm. Nowadays phoneme often has a less central place in phonological theory than it used to have, especially in American linguistics. Many linguists regard the phoneme as a set of simultaneous distinctive feature rather than as an unanalyzable unit

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To accomplish the objective of the study, both secondary and primary data were collected using various tools. Survey questionnaire was conducted to collect field

primary data and recorded test for students. The study was conducted in EIObed secondary schools during 2016-2018. Study sample were 40 English language teachers with long careers in secondary schools in EIObed town and 40 students second class. Descriptive statistic was used for data analysis and results presentation. Study was an investigation of pronunciation difficulties of English phonemes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table (1) showed that (82.5%) of respondents pronounced the phoneme /dʒ/ in the word 'jar' incorrect, this refer to the interference of their mother tongue because this phoneme doesn't have equivalent in Arabic language and they pronounced it /gær/, and (17.5%) pronounce it correctly. the Chi-square value was 42.26 and the critical value was 26.51 which indicated that there was a difference between those who pronounced /dʒ/ correctly and those who did not at 0.05 level of significance.

Table (1) pronunciation of /dʒ/ in 'jar'.

	Frequency	Percent
Correct	7	17.5%
Incorrect	33	82.5
Total	40	100%

Study survey 2017

Table (2) showed that, Thirty-three of the students pronounced the sound /v/ incorrectly in the word *van*, which represent (82.5%), they pronounced it /f/ and only seven of them pronounced it correctly, which represent (17.5%), the Chi-square value was 42.26 and the critical value was 26.51 which indicated that there was a difference between those who pronounced /v/ correctly and those who did not at 0.05 level of significance It's clear that they have a problem in such phoneme have not equivalent in their mother tongue (Arabic language).

Table (2) pronunciation of /v/ in the word 'van'.

	Frequency	Percent
Correct	7	17.5%
Incorrect	33	82.5
Total	40	100%

Study survey 2017

Table (3) showed that (85.0%) of therespondents pronounced the phoneme /θ/ in the word 'thank' incorrectly, and they pronounced it as /s/, this referred to the interference of their mother tongue (Arabic language) and (15.0%) pronounced it in the correct way, the Chi-square value was 81 and the critical value was 26.51 which showed that there was difference between those who

pronounced /θ/ correctly and those who did not at 0.05 level of significance

Table (3) pronunciation of /θ/ in the word 'thank'

	Frequency	Percent
Correct	6	15%
Incorrect	34	85%
Total	40	100%

Study survey 2017

Table (4) showed that, (87.5%) of the respondents pronounced the phoneme /ð/ in the word 'that' incorrectly, and they pronounced it as /z/, this referred to the interference of their mother tongue (Arabic language) and (12.5%) pronounced it in the correct way, the Chi-square value was 56.25 and the critical value was 26.51 which indicated that there was a difference between those who pronounced /ð/ correctly and those who did not at 0.05 level of significance.

Pronunciation of the/ð/ in the word 'that'.

	Frequency	Percent
Correct	5	12.5%
Incorrect	35	87.5%
Total	40	100%

Study survey 2017

Table (5) shows that; the majority of the teachers (70.0%) responded that sometimes Students pronounced /f/ instead of /v/ in words like "have", "van", and "marvel", because /v/ do not exist in their mother tongue, and the minority (30.0%) responded that, always pronounce /f/ instead of /v/.

Table (5) students pronounced /f/ instead of /v/ in words like "have", "van", and "marvel".

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	12	30.00%
Sometimes	28	70.00%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	40	100.00%

Study survey 2017

Table (6) showed that, the vast majority of the teachers (90.0%) responded that always students pronounce /s/ instead of /θ/ like "think", "math", this refer to the interference of their first language (Sudanese spoken Arabic), and the minority (04.0%) responded that,

sometimes pronounce /s/ instead of /θ/.

Table (6) students pronounced /s/ instead of /θ/ like "think", "math".

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	36	90.00%
Sometimes	04	10.00%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	40	100.00%

Study survey 2017

Table (7) showed that;the majority of the teachers (75.0%) responded that students always pronounced/z/ instead of /ð/ in words like "then", "weather",the least minority (15.0%) responded, it happens sometimes, this refer to the interference of (Sudanese spoken Arabic), andother least minority (10.0%) responded that it done rarely.

Table (7) students pronounced /z/ instead of /ð/ like "then", "weather".

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Always	30	75.00%
Sometimes	06	15.00%
Rarely	04	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	40	100.00%

Study survey 2017

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that, the student's difficulties in pronunciation came from:

- 1- The interference of their native language, (Arabic language).
- 2-The differences of the English and Arabic phonological systems,
- 3-Ignoring the rules of pronunciations.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teaching should focus on both recognition and production i.e. teachers should recognize the pronunciation difficulties, and teach the students how to pronounce these phonemes correctly.

2. There should be the audio-visual materials to help both teachers and students to practice the oral skills in a native speaker's accent.

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