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**An Assessment of the Pronunciation Errors among the 4<sup>th</sup> Year Students'  
English Department**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for MA  
Degree in Applied Linguistics**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to investigate the common pronunciation errors made by Libyan students and the reasons behind these errors. Three data collection methods are used to collect the data. They are written and oral pronunciation tests, and classroom observation. Thirty students of 4<sup>th</sup> year of English Department attended both tests. To get appropriate results, four teachers were visited for 10 lectures. Last, interviews of four teachers who were observed, in order to investigate the reasons behind these errors as well as to identify difficulties that they face to improve students' pronunciation. The research findings show that there were pronunciation errors and the Microsoft Office Excel 2007 program was used to analyse the data gained from both tests.

The findings of the study revealed that students at Zawia University have difficulties in pronouncing English consonants that does not exist in Arabic such as /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ŋ/ and /r/. In addition, they have problems with /θ/ and /ð/, although these sounds exist in Arabic. They also confused between certain pairs of vowels: /ʊ/-/ʊ/, /əʊ/-/ʊə/, and /eə/-/ɪə/. Fortunately, students do not have problems in pronouncing /v/ although it is not exist in Arabic. As for suprasegmental features, the students committed many errors with the words stress, sentence stress and the intonation. The most common mispronunciation reason is the interference of mother tongue pronunciation on English pronunciation. Another reason for these errors is that the current curriculum is not sufficient to teach the pronunciation accurately, and time allocated for teaching pronunciation is not enough.

## **DEDICATION**

To the most encouraging protecting and devoting... my father

To the endless love support and passion... my mother

To the model, advice and passion... my brothers

To the most beautiful... my sisters

To patience and love in my life... my husband

To the hope of my life... my daughter

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## **List of Abbreviations**

L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter addresses the rationale for conducting this study. It starts with the background of the study and the problem statement. It also describes the aims of the study and the research questions. It states the significance of the study and the research methodology used. Moreover, the structure of the dissertation is finally presented.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Most English learners receive instruction with the objective of improving their speaking proficiency. These instructions typically include vocabulary, grammar, formulaic expressions, and pronunciation. However, the particular contribution of each of these elements to overall speaking ability on test scores is unknown (Kang, 2013). The current study focuses on examining one of these factors, pronunciation, and its weight in determining overall speaking proficiency ratings. As Burns (2003) conceded, despite minor inaccuracies in vocabulary and grammar, learners are more likely to communicate effectively when they have good pronunciation and intonation. The accuracy of spoken language can be judged by the accuracy of pronunciation. Papp and Rixon (2018: p.362) explain that "Pronunciation refers to the candidate's ability to produce intelligible utterances. It includes the ability to use stress, rhythm and intonation as well as individual sounds".

In other words, it is the act of uttering with the articulation and giving the proper sounds. According to Lynda (2009), pronunciation refers to how people produce the sounds that someone uses to make meaning when someone speaks. It means as the way of people speak which also conveys something about themselves to the other. Christensen and Warnick (2006) mention that one of the reasons students learn language is to "develop relationships with members of the target culture. If we are able to 'communicate,' but our speech is full of mistakes and poor pronunciation, it is less likely that native speakers will be eager to spend time with us. Conversely, when we speak and act as much as possible like the natives of the target culture, they

will be more at ease and more likely to want to develop and continue the relationship” (p. 95).

Moreover, at English language classes in Libya some students' expectation and fears are often similar to those of studying any other subject. They aim to master new skills and are afraid of failing, so they consider pronunciation like any other skill. They tend to drill and memorise the given pronunciation information rather than practise it. Ur (1996, p. 263) conceded, “the aim of pronunciation is not to achieve a perfect imitation of native accent, but to get the learner to pronounce accurately”. The aim of teaching pronunciation is to sound words correctly.

English segments (also known as individual sounds) include vowels and consonants. These sounds of English language are frequently explained and taught through English phonetics materials (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010; Gilbert, 2012). Segmental learning in second language acquisition has been studied for decades.

Furthermore, Tushyeh (1996) explained that Arabic language has more of a one-to-one correspondence sound system where Arabic letters correspond closely to phonemes; differently from English that has about 85% of its words in regular spelling. The definition of pronunciation corresponds with Gilbert’s view (2008), which includes individual sounds and sound patterning beyond individual sounds. In the end of this section, the two dimensions of pronunciation, i.e. segmental and suprasegmental were discussed, and the pronunciation features studied in this research were summarized at the end.

In addition, Flege (1995) and his colleagues developed a speech learning model to account for age-related issues in achieving native-like pronunciation. They proposed that adult English learners had difficulties producing segmental in a native-like manner when they had to master a vowel system more complex than the one in their native language.

Similarly, learners also struggled with unfamiliar consonants. Hence, learners need to have long term memory of all those sounds and train their articulators to be able to pronounce a combination of those sounds in speech. It is proposed that the greater the difference between English and the learners’ L1s, the easier they acquire it (Flege, 1995). For those sounds, learners may perceive them as new sounds so they

may develop new habits of producing them. On the other hand, for sounds that are similar to sounds in their L1, learners may perceive those sounds as the same as those in their L1.

On the other hand, suprasegmental features are an integral part of communication (Pennington & Richards, 1986; Morley, 1991; McNerney & Mendelsohn, 1992; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Some studies demonstrated that it can be challenging for learners to pay attention to and utilise suprasegmental properties. Thus, this study aims to measure the pronunciation of students via testing procedure. It is supposed that the use of a single type of English pronunciation may not provide reliable assessment of students' performance. Moreover, the classroom observation explores the reality of teaching English at classroom.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It was noted that the fourth-year students at English Department, Azzawya University, have problems with pronouncing some sounds and using stress and intonation. These errors are obvious when they use English language inside the classroom, for this reason the present study assesses the practice of the phonological rules in order to discover the common pronunciation errors that students make. There were many studies about assessment of English pronunciation, but this study is used for 4<sup>th</sup> year student as the most advanced level at Zawia University. This study dealt with the problems in these areas:

- Vowels and diphthongs sounds.
- Consonant sounds.
- Stress patterns.
- Intonation patterns.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study aims to:

- 1 Discover the common errors of pronunciation that 4<sup>th</sup> year students of English Department make.
- 2 Investigate the reasons behind the pronunciation errors of 4<sup>th</sup> year students of English Department.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

To achieve the objectives, the present study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the common errors of pronunciation that 4<sup>th</sup> year students at Azzawia University make?
- What are the reasons behind the pronunciation errors made by 4<sup>th</sup> year student at Zawia University?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study highlights the guideline for teachers to become aware of the students problems when producing English segments and suprasegments. In addition, it helps them to improve students' English pronunciation in general and phonology in particular. The study also helps English teachers to choose the suitable teaching methods to teach English pronunciation. It is beneficial to syllabus designers and materials developers to choose the appropriate material that suits the students' levels. This study also offers some recommendations to deal with students' errors.

#### **1.6 Research Methodology**

The research design of a study outlines the basic approach that researchers use to answer their research questions (Polit & Beck, 2010). Therefore, to achieve the aims of this study, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used in this research. This design was used because it allows the researcher to be more confident of the findings, and helps to investigate the real results in their setting. The test was used as quantitative method to identify the common pronunciation errors that the 4<sup>th</sup> year students at English Department, Azzawia University make. The data collected from thirty students studying English pronunciation was used to examine the most prevalent pronunciation errors. Moreover, classroom observations were also conducted by visiting four teachers to gain in-depth information about the students' pronunciation difficulties. Teachers' interviews were employed as qualitative methods to determine the cause of pronunciation errors. After collecting the data, it was transcribed, managed, coded and analysed (see section 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4). The findings of the study were then compared with previous studies. All the processes

involved in the methodology are presented and justified in detail in chapter three. For further details see Chapter Three).

### **1.7 Outlining of the Study**

This dissertation consists of five chapters. **Chapter One** introduces the background of the study, the statement of the problem, aims, research questions, significance and brief methodology section used in the study. **Chapter Two** provides a theoretical framework for the current study based on a review of related literature; as well as examines various relevant empirical studies that have been conducted in the field of teaching and learning English pronunciation. **Chapter Three** describes the methodology (data collection, sampling and data collection procedures) used in the study. **Chapter Four** provides the process of data analysis and discusses the main findings of the study. Finally, **Chapter Five** outlines the conclusions and limitations of the study, and offers some recommendations and suggestions for further research based on the findings.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation are presented. Segments represent consonants, vowels and diphthong sounds, while, suprasegments represent intonation and word stress and sentence stress. A number of previous studies related to this topic are reviewed and reported in this chapter.

#### **2.1 Definition of Pronunciation**

Pronunciation refers to how people produce sounds to convey meaning when they speak. It refers to the way people communicate and convey information about themselves (Lynda, 2009). Pronunciation is considered as the way in which language is spoken, the way in which a person speaks the word of language. Thus, speaking accurate pronunciation is more likely to be understood by others. It also includes attention to the particular sounds of language and aspects of speech beyond individual sounds, such as; intonation, stress, rhythm, vowel and consonants. Ur (1991. p.47) described the concept of “pronunciation” as the following:

- a. The sounds of the language or phonology.
- b. Stress and rhythm.
- c. Intonation.

Furthermore, pronunciation should be mastered by EFL learners to show that they can communicate. Lynda and Beth (2009) pointed out that pronunciation deals with the result of complex process and there is continues movement of such organ at the time, the volume such as the soft palate, lips, and the lungs. It implies that if students do not know how to pronounce words correctly, they might not understand each other. In contrast, mispronouncing does not lead actually misunderstanding especially if students belong to the same class.

On the other hand, Dalton (1998) stated that pronunciation is the production of significant sound in two senses. First, the sound is significant because it is used as a part of a code of a particular language. Second, the sound is significant because it is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use. From these definitions, it can be concluded that pronunciation is the key to making languages sound meaningful. Most



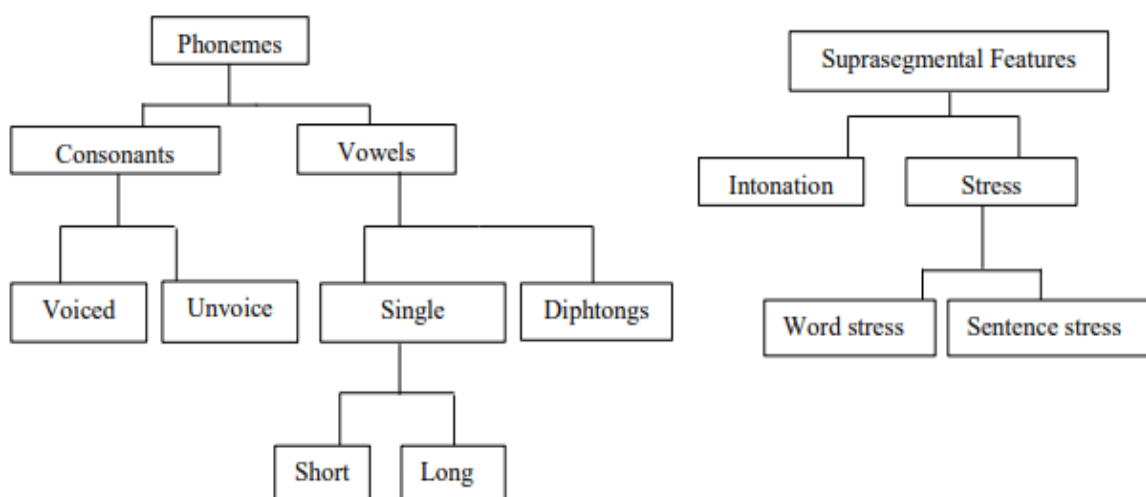
of students as non-native speakers of English have learnt English as a part of their formal education, and as a result, all of them are literates - they are able to write and read. This is really different from the condition found in English speaking countries. They first learn the pronunciation of words, and then they learn the orthography.

Although the non-native speakers of English are literate enough; however, it does not mean that they are good enough in English language. EFL learners also need to learn how to pronounce English words accurately. Harmer (2010) stated that teaching pronunciation not only makes students aware of different sounds and sound features, but can also improve their speaking immeasurably. Focusing on sounds, showing where they are made in the mouth, making the students aware of where words should be stressed –all these things give them extra information about spoken English and help them. This study wishes to clarify the definition of pronunciation and how sounds are produced.

## 2.2 Components of Pronunciation

There are two types of speech component or features. According to Gerald (2000, p.1) pronunciation include phonemes features and suprasegmental features. The following diagram shows a breakdown of main features of pronunciation.

Figure 2.1 Features of pronunciation



Adopted from Gerald (2000)

## 2.2.1 Consonants

Consonants can be classified according to three dimensions: voicing, place of articulation, manner of articulation. These dimensions are explained in the following sections.

### 2.2.1.1 Place of articulation

There are six seven places of articulation in producing English consonants.

**1. Bilabial** sounds formed using upper and lower lips. There are three bilabials in English /b/, /p/, and /m/ as in *pat*, *bat*, and *mat*.

**2. Labiodentals** are produced by lips and teeth as Yule (1985, p.28) specified: "These sounds are formed with the upper teeth and the lower lip. The initial sounds of the words *fat* and *vat*, and the final sounds of the words *safe* and *save* are labiodentals". When pronouncing /f/, and /v/, there is an air obstruction when the bottom lip and the top teeth come together and touch.

**3. Dentals** are sounds made by the tongue-tip against or close to the front teeth (Collins & Mees, 2003). The sound /θ/ in the word *three* is represented by the symbol /θ/, and the sound /ð/ in the word *there* is represented by the symbol /ð/. Some authors refer to them as interdental because the tongue is placed between (inter) the teeth (dental) (Avey & Ehrlich, 1992). /θ/and /ð/ generate some erroneous realizations in some words among Libyan students, where both sounds are replaced by /t/ and /d/ respectively. An example of this is the pronunciation of /θ/ as /t/, as in the word "*wealthy*" which is sometimes mispronounced as /welθɪ/ instead of /welθɪ/.

**4. Alveolar sounds** are made with the tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth just behind the upper teeth. Yule (1985:28) defines alveolars as sounds formed with the front part of the tongue on the alveolar ridge, which is the rough bony ridge immediately behind and above the upper teeth. Alveolars include /t/, /d/, /n/, /l/, /s/, /z/, and /r/. Avery and Ehrlich (1992:15) added that in languages such as French, Italian, and Spanish these sounds are made with a slight difference than the English; the tongue does not touch the tooth ridge but rather behind the teeth. It might sound trivial difference; however, it causes what is known as "foreign accent."

**5. Alveo-palatal** sounds are made with the blade of the tongue approaching the hard palate just behind the tooth ridge. Avery and Ehrlich (1992:15) indicated, “This place of articulation is referred to as alveo-palatal. Sounds that are produced this way are /ʃ/ as in *fish* and /ʒ/ as the final sound in the word as *beige*. Two other sounds that are produced by the blade of the tongue at the hard palate are /tʃ/ as in *beach*, and /dʒ/ as in *judge*. The sounds: /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/ are called alveopalatal sounds as the tongue is behind the alveolar ridge and the hard palate when they are produced. One of the common pronunciation errors is the confusion between the sounds: /tʃ/ and /ʃ/, /dʒ/, and /ʒ/ as in *choose* and *job*.

**6. Velar** sounds are produced with the back of the tongue against the back part of the mouth. Yule (1985) mentioned that this place of articulation is referred to as velar. Sounds that are produced this way are /k/ as in the word *take*, /g/ as *goal*, and /ŋ/ as the final sound in the word *raining*. In general, it is difficult for students to become aware of the airstream obstruction that occurs at the back of the mouth. Thus, it may represent a difficulty for teachers to make their students aware of how to pronounce these sounds correctly. The sound /ŋ/ represents some pronunciation difficulties for language learners. Some learners have difficulty in pronouncing /ŋ/ in *-ing*, thus, they substitute it with /ŋg/ or even /n/. One may think that this substitution represents a trivial error; however, such an error may change the meaning of the sentence completely. For example, a student, who has a problem with pronouncing /ŋ/, might pronounce the word *sing* as /sin/, which suggests another different word *sin*. A teacher who wants to correct such an error needs to explain to students how to pronounce /ŋ/ according to its place of articulation; the movement of the tongue (backward) towards the soft palate.

**7. Glottal** is a sound that is produced without the active use of the tongue and the other parts of the mouth. It is the sound /h/, which occurs at the beginning of the word *have* and *house* and for most speakers as the first sound in *who* and *whose*. Yule (1985:29) /h/ is a strong voiceless version of the following vowel; thus, /h/ is made differently depending on the vowel that follows. It is voiceless because there is no vibration of the vocal cords as in vowels.

Table 2.1 summarized the places of articulation for the different consonant sounds as suggested by Avery and Ehrlich (1992).

**Table 2.1 Classification of consonants according to articulations (Avery,P & Ehrlich 1992:15)**

Bilabial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Velar
p			t		k
b			d		g
	f	θ	s	ʃ	
	v	ð	z	ʒ	
				tʃ	
				dʒ	
m			n		ŋ
			l		
			r		

### 2.2.1.2 Manner of articulation

Manner of articulation refers to the interaction made between the airstream and the articulators. Consonants involve at least two articulators. When the articulators are brought closer together, the flow of air between them changes: for instance, it can be stopped or made turbulent. The channels between any two articulators govern the pressure and flow of air through the vocal tract, and in turn, this affects the kinds of sound that come out. The way a sound is made (rather than where it is made) is called manner of articulation. Most manners of articulation are combinable with most places of articulation (Ogden,2009). There are six classification of manner of articulation:

#### 1. Plosives

Plosives are often called stops in some phonetics books (O'Connor 1967:51). In plosives, the airstream coming out from the lungs can completely be stopped if the lips or the tongue touches the upper part of the mouth. Thus, a complete closure is made somewhere in the vocal tract increasing the air pressure and then releasing it in an explosive manner. Plosives include the sounds: /p/, as in *paper*, /b/ as in *bird*, /t/ as in *ten*, /d/ as in *dream*, /k/ as in *king*, and /g/ as in *goal*. The air stream is blocked completely somewhere in the mouth, air pressure builds up, and then it is released, like a tiny explosion.

2. **Fricatives:** Roach (2009: 48) defines fricatives as “consonants that are produced with the air escaping through a small passage and makes a hissing sound”. Fricatives are continuant consonants, meaning you can continue making them without an interruption as long as you have enough air in your lungs. According to Fromkin (1988), English fricative consists of nine sounds; they are /f/ as in *fly*, /v/ as in *variety*, /θ/ as in *think*, /ð/ as in *thus*, /s/ as in *sound*, /z/ as in *zoo*, /ʃ/ as in *fish*, and /ʒ/ as in *beige*.
3. **Affricates:** are produced when the airstream is blocked somewhere in the mouth; there is usually some degree of air turbulence and hence a friction at the release of the stop. Clark and Yallop (1995) claimed that there are two affricates in English: /tʃ/ as in *rich* and /dʒ/ as in *judge*. They often represent the two complex sounds in English.
4. **Nasals:** the sounds that we have stated previously are made by the air passage through the mouth; however, nasals are sounds in which the air passes through the nose. Nasals are consonants in which the velum is lowered and there is a closure in the oral cavity somewhere in front of the velic opening. Hence, air from the lungs is directed out through the nasal passage alone (Ladefoged & Maddieson, 1996). Nasals are /m/ as in *mother*, /n/ as in *nurse*, and /ŋ/ as in *sing*. The sounds /m/, /n/ rarely challenging for language learners; however, the sound /ŋ/ may cause problems because many languages do not have it (Teschner & Whitley, 2004).
5. **Lateral:** Roach (2009) defined a lateral as a consonant in which the passage of the air through the mouth does not go in the usual way along the centre of the tongue. There is a complete closure between the centre of the tongue and the part of the roof of the mouth where contact is to be made. Lateral sound is /l/ as in *life*. For some English speakers, the /l/ is made with air passing through the mouth over only one side of the tongue (Carr, 1999).
6. **Approximants:** they are defined as sounds that are produced when two articulators move close to each other; however, there is no close enough to stop the air or cause a friction (Kelly, 2000:53). Approximants are /r/ as in *red*, /j/ as in *yes*, and /w/ as in *wood*. Approximants are often called semi vowels because unlike the other consonants, they are made without a restriction of the airflow. Therefore, approximants fall between [fricatives](#), which do produce a turbulent airstream, and [vowels](#), which produce no turbulence.

### 2.2.1.3 Voicing

After the place and the manner of articulation which make consonants differ from each other, there is a third way to distinguish between consonants which is voicing. The term “voicing” is used to refer to the vibration of the vocal folds (Jones, 2003). It is indicated by the presence of low frequency spectral energy or periodicity in the speech signal; whereas in voiceless sounds there is no such periodicity (Eimas & Miller, 1981). Voicing can be best understood through comparing between pairs of sounds which have the same place and manner of articulation; however, they differ in terms of voicing since one is voiced and the other is voiceless. Among all the plosives, the fricatives, and the affricates that have been discussed, there are pairs of voiced and voiceless consonants. Nasals, lateral, and approximants are all voiced. Table 2.2 below displayed the voiced and voiceless sounds as suggested by Avery and Ehrlich (1992:25).

**Table 2.2 voiced and voiceless consonants (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992:25)**

Place of articulation	Voiceless	Voiced
Labiodental	/f/ as in <i>fish</i>	/v/ as in <i>very</i>
Interdental	/θ/ as in <i>think</i>	/ð/ as in <i>these</i>
Alveolar	/s/ as in <i>scale</i> , /t/ as in <i>tell</i> ,	/z/ as in <i>zone</i> , /d/ as in <i>day</i>
Alveopalatal	/ʃ/ as in <i>pressure</i> , /tʃ/ as in <i>child</i>	/ʒ/ as in <i>pleasure</i> , /dʒ/ as in <i>jug</i>
Bilabial	/p/ as in <i>pay</i>	/b/ as in <i>buy</i>
Velar	/k/ as in <i>cat</i>	/g/ as in <i>go</i>

Al-Saidat (2010) studied the difficulties encountered by Arab speakers when pronouncing English consonants. Al-Saidat found eight English consonants, namely, /ŋ/, /p/, /v/, /d/, /l/, /dʒ/, /ð/, and /r/ are problematic ones for Arab speakers. According to Al-saidat, mother tongue interference was the main cause which was responsible for pronunciation problems. These problems could vary from one Arab speaker to another depending on the colloquial variety of Arabic they use.

Consonant sounds are classified according to the criteria of voicing into: voiced and voiceless: 1)Voiced: when the sound is articulated with the vibration of the adducted vocal cords in the larynx. In English, the following fifteen consonants are voiced: /b, d, g, v, ð , z, ʒ, l, r, j, w, dʒ, n, m, ŋ/ (Roach, 1998). 2)Voiceless (unvoiced): when the sound is produced without vibration of the seized vocal cords in the larynx. The following nine consonants are unvoiced: /p, t, k, f, θ, s, ʃ, h, tʃ/.

### 2.2.2 Vowels

A vowel is defined in English pronouncing dictionary (2003:583) as the class of sound, which makes the least obstruction to the flow of the air. Vowels are usually found at the centre of a syllable, and it is rare to find any sound other than a vowel that is able to stand alone as a whole syllable. What differentiates vowels from consonants is the opening of the mouth while the air passes from the lungs out of the mouth. This means that there is little blockage of the air as compared to the consonants. In the pronunciation of the normal vowel sounds, it is usually the front, the back, or the centre of the tongue, which is highest. O'Connor (1973:50) classified vowels according to the tongue position as follows:

**Table 2.4 Classification of vowels**

	<b>Front</b>	<b>central</b>	<b>back</b>
<b>Close</b>	/i:/	/ə/	/u/
<b>Intermediate</b>	/e/	ɜ:/	/ɒ
<b>Open</b>	/æ/	/ʌ/	/ɑ:

Vowels can be single or a combination of two-vowel sounds (diphthongs). they are described below in detail.

When producing vowel sounds, lips can take three main positions:

- **Rounded:** lips are pushed forward making a circle, as the sound /u/ in *book*.
- **Spread:** both sides of lips are moving from each other in a form of smile, as the sound /i:/ in *read*.
- **Neutral:** lips are neither spread not rounded, they are just normal, as the sound /ə/ in *about*.

Some vowels in several languages have a longer temporal duration than others. This is true of English, where a distinction is often made between short and long vowels, e.g. *bid* versus *bead*, and *hut* versus *hurt* (Kang, Thomson & Murphy, 2018). Single vowels can be divided into two types; short and long vowels:

### 2.2.2.1 Short vowels

According to O'Connor (1973), English has seven short vowels:

/ɪ/: lips are spread loosely, the tongue more relaxed, and the tongue sides may just touch the upper molars, as in: *kit*, *mountain*, *busy*, and *women*.

/ʊ/: lips are rounded but loosely, while the tongue is relatively relaxed, and the part of the tongue just behind the centre is raised, as in *look*, *push*, and *woman*.

/e/: lips are loosely spread, the front of the tongue is between half open and half-close positions, and the sides of the tongue may touch the upper molars, as in *bed*, *dress*, and *many*.

/ə/: lips are relaxed, and neutrally spread. The centre of tongue is between the half-closed and half-open positions, as in: *about*, *common*, and *banana*.

/æ/: lips are neutrally open, and the front of the tongue is raised just below the half-open position, as in *cat*, and *attract*.

/ʌ/: lips are neutrally open, and the centre of the tongue is raised to just above the fully open position, as in *up*, *run*, and *uncle*.

/ɒ/: lips are lightly rounded, and the back of the tongue is in the fully open position, as in *lot*, *wash*, and *cough*.

### 2.2.2.2 Long vowels

There are five long vowel sounds in English:

/i:/ lips are spread, the front of the sides of the tongue touches the upper molars, as in: *peace*, *green*, and *machine*.

/u:/ the back of the tongue is raised, the lips are rounded, and the tongue is tense, as in: *foot*, *two*, and *blue*.

/ɜ:/ lips are relaxed, and neutrally spread. The centre of the tongue is between the half-close and half-open positions. As in: "nurse", "learn", and "pearl".



/ɔ:/: lips are loosely rounded, and the back of the tongue is raised to between the half-open and half-closed positions, as in *law*, *thought*, and *all*.

/ɑ:/: lips are neutrally open, and the tongue is between the centre and the back in the fully open position, as in *start*, *class*, *arm* (O'Connor, 1973).

### 2.2.2.3 Diphthongs

According to Jones (2003:152), a diphthong is a sound in which there is a glide from one vowel quality to another. A diphthong is also defined as a combination of vowel sounds that acts like long simple vowels in one syllable.

Kelly (2000:35-36) identified the diphthongs as follows:

- Centring diphthongs: these are glides to the sort of /ə/ sound, and found in final positions. They are:

/ɪə/: the lips are neutral, with small movement from spread to open. The glide is from /ɪ/ moving down and back towards /ə/, as in *here*, *idea*, and *really*.

/ʊə/ the lips are loosely rounded, becoming neutrally spread. The glide is from /ʊ/, moving forward and down towards /ə/, as in *pure*, *poor*, and *tourism*.

/eə/ the lips remain neutrally open. The glide is from /e/ moving back towards /ə/, as in: *square*, *fair*, and *wear*.

- Closing diphthongs ending in /ɪ/: these diphthongs all end in /ɪ/, gliding smoothly from /e/, /a/, and /ɔ/ and making the soundless loud as the glide progresses. They are:

/eɪ/ the lips are spread and the glide begins in the position of /e/ moving slightly back towards /ɪ/, as in: *safe*, *they*, and *vein*.

/ɔɪ/ the lips are open and rounded then neutral, and the sound glides starting from a position of /ɔ:/: moving up towards /ɪ/, as in: *joy*, *choice*, and *boy*.

/aɪ/ the lips are neutral then they move forward to loosely spread. The glide starts in an open position moving up towards /ɪ/, as in: *high*, *try*, and *eye*.

- Closing diphthongs ending in /ʊ/: these two diphthongs all end in /ʊ/, starting from the vowels /ə/, and /a/. They are:

/əʊ/ it starts from /ə/ gliding away to /ʊ/, the lips are slightly rounded, and the sound gets less loud as it progresses, as in: *snow*, *boat*, *though*, and *close*.

/aʊ/ it starts with /ʌ/ moving up towards /ʊ/, the lips start neutral then they move loosely to rounded, as in: *now*, *loud*, and *row*.

Khurma and Hajjaj (1989) investigated the difficulties that Arab students of English encounter at the initial stages of learning English. The study showed four major areas of difficulty. First, they found that Arab learners confused certain pairs of English consonant sounds. Second, learners use epenthesis (insert a short vowel to break down the long consonant clusters). Third, certain diphthongs are replaced by other sounds due to L1 interference. Lastly, Arab learners are generally confused and cannot distinguish between certain pairs of vowels. Arab ESL learners' often struggle with correct English pronunciation.

Furthermore, Jalal (2011) investigated the difficulties, which Saudi students meet when pronouncing certain English consonant sounds. He randomly selected eight students for the study from a Saudi Arabian university. Recording samples of consonant sounds were taken from the research participants and four words were selected for possible consonant sound problems using initial, medial, and final word positions. An English native speaker identified the problem sounds from the participants' speech recordings. According to Jalal (2011), the results show that the participants had major difficulties in pronouncing specific consonant sounds such as /p/, /d/ /v/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ŋ/. The findings of the study indicate that when students speak a second or foreign language, they will tend to produce the sounds, which are closest to the sounds that exist in their mother tongue that lead to pronunciation errors. Arab students face difficulties in pronouncing other sounds such as /ð/, /θ/, /dʒ/, /j/ and /r/.

In addition, Al-Saidat's (2010) study results demonstrated that Arab EFL learners unintentionally insert an aptyctic vowel (a short vowel between consonants) at the beginning as well as in the end of certain English syllables. The findings suggested that certain English syllables are difficult to learn for Arab learners of English and this leads to pronunciation problems.

Na'ama (2011) results showed that the most frequent errors by Arab ESL learners occurred in their pronunciation of three and four-final-consonant cluster English words. According to Na'ama (2011), this is a major cause of interlingual phonological errors for Arabic English speakers. As example of this, the word *spring* is pronounced /sɪprɪŋ/ instead of /sprɪŋ/.

Al Taha (1995) found that the most common speaking errors were English phonemes being replaced by Arabic phonemes. According to the researcher, these

errors can in part be attributed to first language (L1) interference where certain sounds in English do not exist in Arabic. They pronounce /p/ as /b/ and /f/ as /v/.

### **2.2.3 Stress**

Stress is defined as a property of syllables, which makes them stand out more noticeable than others (Jones, 2003:511). It can be also defined as a stronger muscular effort both respiratory and articulatory, which we can feel in relation with some syllables as opposed to others. Stress, as an integral part of word shape, is the key of the pronunciation of a word and its localization should always be learnt within the word itself. Stressed syllables tend to be longer, louder, and produced with greater effort than unstressed syllables. Hewings and Goldstein (1999:62). Stress is very important because its position can change the meaning or the function of the words.

- **Stress words in the sentence**

Since there are no firm rules regarding the placement of stress because there are always exceptions, students should learn every word with its stress (Fraser, 2001). However, there are still some common points to take into consideration when placing stress and they are often useful for language learners. Collins and Mess (2013:135) listed two types of words: function words and content words. Function words are not stressed; they are words that have little or no meaning in themselves, they are used to express grammatical ideas. Function words include:

-Articles (a, an, and the).

-Prepositions (in, at, and on).

-Personal pronouns (I, she, and he).

-Possessive pronouns (his, her, and its).

-Relative pronouns (who, which, and whose).

-Common conjunctions ( and, then, and as)

-Model verbs and auxiliaries are usually unstressed unless they are used in tag questions or at the end of the sentence.

-Content words are words that carry meaning in themselves, and they are usually stressed except monosyllabic words, unless we stress them purposefully to call attention on them (Collins & Mess, 2013:135)

- Nouns (e.g. school, station, train)
- Normal verbs (e.g. run, work, speak)
- Adjectives (e.g. beautiful, tall, friendly)
- Adverbs (e.g. quickly, noisily, badly)

Even if the listener does not hear some quickly pronounced function words, the meaning of the whole sentence should be clear. This is how native speakers of English communicate. Emphasis is put on the most important words (Roach, 2009:90, 91), for example: *Would you **like** a **cup** of **tea**?*

It is a general rule of English that when there is a sequence of equal stresses, the last stressed word should be the strongest, or the loudest - which in the above case would be **tea**.

- **Word Stress**

Roach (2009:73) defined stress as the degree of force used in the pronunciation of a certain syllable. In English, one syllable in a word is stressed, so sound is louder than others. Kelly (2000:68-69) summarized the rules of word stress as follows:

- **Prefixes and suffixes:** It is useful to know that English prefixes and suffixes are usually unstressed. Thus, words including prefixes or suffixes are not usually stressed on the syllable containing the prefixes or suffixes, for example, QUIetly, deFEctive, and EVitable. There are some exceptions as: BIcycle, DISlocate.
- **Core vocabulary:** A lot of two-syllable nouns and adjectives tend to be stressed on the first syllable, for example: MOther, SIsTer, TAble, WAter, and COFfee.
- **Compound words:** Gimson (1989:231) mentioned that one word of the compound has primary stress, while the other word(s) normally carries (carry) the secondary stress. Stress is often regular in compound words; usually the first word in the compound word is stressed. Whether it is written as one word or separated, this does not affect the stress placement on compound words, for example: DRUG store, CLASsroom, HAIRcut, and AIRplane.
- **Words with two grammatical functions:** There is more variation in stressing nouns and the stress pattern is less predictable compared with verbs. Generally, disyllabic nouns are stressed on the initial syllable, and shifting stress forward in a loan word is what Kreidler (1987) called an integrative change. Stress may be shifted forward for a number of different reasons, such as grammatical, rhythmic

or semantic ones; 'offence and offence are both nouns, but their meanings differ. Some words can be used as verb and noun. Here, it is the stress that determines which is the verb and which is the noun. Nouns can be stressed on the first syllable, while verbs are stressed on the last syllable, for example, INcrease (n), inCREASE (v).IMport (n), imPORT (v).TRANSfer (n), transFER (v).

Though the rules of stress placement have exceptions, it is always useful for students to get used to them. When they get familiar with them, they will save time to memorize the stress placement of many vocabulary items. Thus, teachers are advised to make sure that their students master the major stress placements.

Hahn (2004) investigated the primary stress on intelligibility for non-native speakers. The participants in her study were native Korean speakers who spoke English as their second language. Native English speakers were used as listeners to evaluate the utterances of non-native speakers. From the findings of her study on incorrect stress placement, she concluded that suprasegmental features were very important for second language learners. While a number of these types of research studies investigating supersegmentals have been undertaken in various countries, they have not been undertaken to date in Arab countries. This may well reflect the lack of importance attached to this particular pronunciation teaching approach in these countries.

#### **2.2.4 Intonation**

Wells (2006) defined intonation as the melody of speech. In studying intonation, we study how the pitch of the voice rises and falls. Levis (1999) provided a comprehensive definition of intonation as he views intonation as “*the quality of language that includes both rhythm and melody, and is produced by tonal height and depth along with stress, volume and varying length of pause*” (p.37).

For Cruttenden (1997:7), intonation involved the occurrence of recurring speech patterns, each of which is used with a set of relatively consistent meanings, either on single words or on groups of words of varying length. The importance of intonation is discussed in the next section.

Roach (2001: 33-35) summarized the importance of intonation as follows:

1. Intonation can indicate different types of utterance, such as statement and question. For example, a fall-rise of voice means a yes or no question, and the falls only means it is a statement.
2. Intonation gives the listener a lot of information about what is being said. It can indicate politeness, as in: *Can you lend me some money?* When the voice falls in the last word *money*, this indicates politeness.
3. Intonation indicates the attitudes and emotions of the speaker; a sentence as *I think it is time to go now* can be said in three different ways, happily, angrily, or sadly.

According to English for ESL learners' website, there are two basic patterns of intonation in English: falling intonation (↘) and rising intonation (↗). In falling intonation (↘), the pitch of the voice falls at the end of the sentence. It is the most common intonation pattern in English. It is commonly found in statements, commands, wh-questions (information questions), and confirmatory question tags and exclamations. (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992).

#### **Statements**

- Nice to meet ↘you.
- I'll be back in a↘minute.
- Dad wants to change his↘car.

#### **• Exclamations**

- How nice of↘ you!
- What a beautiful↘ voice!
- That's a ↘surprise!

#### **• Wh- questions** (requesting information.)

(questions beginning with 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where', 'when', 'which', and 'how')

- What country do you come↘from?
- Where do you↘work?
- Which of them do you ↘prefer?

- **Rising Intonation** ( ↗ )

(The pitch of the voice rises at the end of a sentence.)

Rising intonation invites the speaker to continue talking.

It is normally used with yes/no questions, and question tags that are real questions.

• **Yes/no Questions**

(Questions that can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'.)

- Do you like your new ↗ teacher?
- Have you finished ↗ already?
- May I borrow your ↗ dictionary?

• **Questions tags**

- We've met already, ↗ haven't we?
- You like fish, ↗ don't you?

- **Rise-Fall Intonation** ( ↗ ↘ )

(The intonation rises and then falls.)

We use rise-fall intonation for choices, lists, unfinished thoughts and conditional sentences.

• **Choices** (alternative questions.)

- Are you having ↗ soup or ↘ salad?
- Is John leaving on ↗ Thursday or ↘ Friday?
- Does he speak ↗ German or ↘ French?

• **Lists** (rising, rising, rising, falling)

Intonation falls on the last item to show that the list is finished.

- We've got ↗ apples, pears, bananas and ↘ oranges
- The sweater comes in ↗ blue, white pink and ↘ black
- I like ↗ football, tennis, basketball and ↘ volleyball.

- **Conditional sentences**

(The tone rises in the first clause and falls gradually in the second clause.)

- If he ↗ calls, ask him to leave a ↘ message.
- Unless he ↗ insists, I'm not going to ↘ go.
- If you have any ↗ problems, just ↘ contact us.

One of the main problems found is the lack of confidence among teachers as how to teach pronunciation, stemming from their own lack of training in this area. Yet, many teachers really wish to be able to help learners with this crucial aspect of language" (Fraser, 2001). Some teachers think that intonation cannot be taught because it operates at a deep level of consciousness, thus it is acquired in the long run through a wide exposure to the second language. On the other hand, other teachers claim that since we can analyse patterns in grammar and lexis, then we can analyse intonation patterns as well. According to Gilakjani (2016), individuals who have good intonation or at least acceptable intonation can easily improve their language skills better than those who have weak intonation. However, English teachers often ask questions such as, are there any methods or techniques for teaching intonation? If yes, what are the best ones to teach it?

According to Kelly (2004:87), it is really a question of taking time to listen out for intonation yourself, gaining an understanding on how it works. While for Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), it is virtually impossible to provide hard and fast rules to teach intonation because it is related to the speaker's attitude, which is unpredictable. Since intonation is related to individual attitudes, it is almost impossible to isolate it out for teaching. Teaching intonation primarily focuses on the melodic element of language, specifically the way a human would speak, taking note of pitch, and the rising and falling pattern of the voice (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010). The most common errors that are committed by L2 learners is pronouncing all type of utterance with the same intonation.

As a result, intonation needs to be taught explicitly in the classroom and can be integrated in almost all work such as in teaching listening, speaking, grammar, and learners need to be aware of it at a receptive and productive levels.



### 2.3 Previous studies

The pronunciation has always been a serious topic to be discussed by learners of English. Many previous studies have been concerned with teaching and learning pronunciation, identifying the most common pronunciation problems among students of various nationalities such as Korean, Saudi, Palestinian, and other Arab nationalities. These studies have tried to categorize pronunciation problems, to discover the reasons that hinder non-native students from pronouncing foreign sounds correctly, and to offer some recommendations on how to fix these problems among EFL students.

Gilbert (2008) stated that there are two main reasons why English pronunciation is ignored in EFL classes. The first reason is that many EFL teachers lack sufficient time in their pronunciation classes. If they have enough time, more attention should be paid to drills that disappoint both learners and teachers to learn and teach English pronunciation. In this study, it was clear that students and even teachers concentrate on grammar and vocabulary rather pronunciation. The second reason deals with psychological factors that have a key role in learning pronunciation because learners are not certain about their English pronunciation as they are about their grammar and lexis knowledge. For this reason, students do not have opportunity to improve their utterance.

Hassan (2014) investigated the problems that Sudanese students of English language at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUTC) encounter. The researcher used his own observation in order to obtain enough information about the errors that students have. The study results indicated that the participants were confusing /s/ with /θ/, /z/ with /ð/, /p/ with /b/, /v/ with /f/, and /ʃ/ with /tʃ/. He believed that these errors refer to how much local dialect affects the way that they interact in English. According to Ramelan (2003:4), “it has been deeply implanted in him as part of his habits.” Moreover, he says, “it will be difficult for learner to change the habit of moving speech organs in such a way as to produce the foreign sounds. This study is strongly agreed with Ramelan (2003) view, that most of students of Zawia University were affected with their mother tongue pronunciation.

The phonological analysis of English phonotactics is identified by (Al-Saidat, 2010). The researcher explains some factors that affect Jordanians' English

pronunciation, such as age, mother tongue interference, and personality. The researcher aimed at identifying, classifying, and analysing errors of hypotheses made by Jordanian Arab learners of English in the area of pronunciation. The researcher concludes that English syllables are difficult to learn for Arab learners of English because Arab speakers sometimes follow the phonological system of Arabic in their English pronunciation. The researcher added that teachers should introduce the syllable pattern of both Arabic and English, so students can know where their mistakes exactly are.

Bayoumi and Elhawary (2013) studied the common pronunciation errors of 40 undergraduate students of the English Language and Literature Department at Ain Shams University. Different tools, mainly recordings and questionnaires, are employed to collect information. The results indicated that the main problematic sounds for Egyptians included /ŋ/, /ð/, /t/ and /θ/. They also find that students were not aware of the pronunciation errors they make. The researchers recommend that more courses in teaching pronunciation must be added because they think that the courses that students take do not help them improve their pronunciation. This study indicated Bayoumi and Elhawary results that some Libyan students confused the sounds /ŋ/, /ð/ and /θ/; although they are existed in their mother tongue. They replaced /ð/ and /θ/ with /t/ and /d/ this because those sounds in Arabic language are separate letters while in English language are "t+h". In contrast, they pronounced the sound /ŋ/ as/ŋg/, thus it considered one sound.

Khurma and Hajjaj (1989) investigated the difficulties that Arab students of English encounter at the initial stages of learning English and showed four major areas of difficulty. First, they found that Arab learners confused certain pairs of English consonant sounds. Al Taha (1995) found that the most common speaking errors were English phonemes being replaced by Arabic phonemes. According to the researcher, these errors can in part be attributed to first language (L1) interference where certain sounds in English do not exist in Arabic. They pronounce/p/ as /b/ and /f/ as/v/. This occurs if a sound is not exist in mother tongue language. Second, learners insert a short vowel to break down the long consonant clusters. Consonant cluster seems to be difficult task with non- native speakers of English, so they tend to insert a vowel sound to decrease the stress of the cluster of more than two consonants. Third, certain diphthongs are replaced by other sounds due to L1 interference. Most

learners replace diphthongs with single sounds, because it is difficult to pronounce two vowels together in terms of diphthongs. Lastly, Arab learners are generally confused and cannot distinguish between certain pairs of vowels. In Arabic, there is no much variation of vowels, like in English, therefore they speak English as well as speak Arabic.

The voiceless post-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ and its different realizations for Saudi learners of English as a foreign language are fully investigated by Alqarni (2013). The researcher stated that the sound /tʃ/ does not exist in the phonemic system of Arabic, so it would be problematic for Arab speakers of English to pronounce /tʃ/ as an independent phoneme. Furthermore, Alqarni (2013) stated that the sound /tʃ/ does exist in some dialects of Arabic. The instrument used to conduct this study included 16 words containing the sound /tʃ/ in different word positions. Data is recorded and analyzed using both Speech Analyser and SPSS software. The results showed that Najdi EFL learners encounter difficulties in pronouncing the investigated sound /tʃ/, as they replaced the sound /tʃ/ with /ʃ/. Besides, word-final position posed more pronunciation difficulties than word-initial position.

Elmahdi and Khan (2015) further stated that the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ seem to be problematic for most Arab speakers of English because of the absence of /tʃ/ in Arabic, while the English sound /dʒ/, which exists in Arabic, have different phonetic comprehensions among Arab speakers. The participants tended to pronounce them as /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ as these sounds are found in Arabic. Ahmed (2011) investigated the difficulties that Saudi students meet when pronouncing certain English consonant sounds. The participants faced difficulties in pronouncing other sounds such as /ð/, /θ/, /dʒ/, /j/ and /r/. The results indicated that students tended to produce the sounds similar to those exist in their mother tongue. The pronunciation errors may refer to the negative interference of their origin language.

Ramadan (2021) stated that there is an overlap between what is usually considered a high vowel /u/ with the mid vowel /ɔ:/, and an overlap between the mid vowel /ʌ/ and the low vowel /æ/. There is no “p” sound in Arabic, so Arab ESL students will often substitute a “b” sound. parking becomes barking and pepper becomes bepper. There is also no “v” sound in Arabic, and Arab ESL students can end up using an “f” sound instead of “v”, so voice becomes foice. On the other side,

Arab ESL students tend to use a narrower range of intonation and voice stress resulting in a very monotone way of speaking. Questions sound like statements and misuse of stress pattern.

Shamallakh (2018) conducted a study to examine problems facing EFL students in pronouncing English vowels. The sample of his study was limited to 71 male university students at the Islamic University-Gaza (IUG). The researcher used two tools to achieve the goals of the study. First, he used a questionnaire to examine students' attitude towards pronouncing English vowels. Second, he used interviews that included a word list (test) to be pronounced by the interviewed students. The test involved 12 monophthongs and 8 diphthongs. He found that the most problematic monophthong sounds are: /æ/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/ and /i:/. Moreover, the most problematic diphthong sounds are: /ʊə/, /ɪə/, /əʊ/, /eə/, /eɪ/ and /aʊ/. Based on the finding of the research, he recommended paying attention to speaking skills including pronunciation. Bauman-Waengler (2009) states that vowel errors are the most common among Arab learners because Arabic has only six monophthongs /a/, /i/, /u/, /a:/, /i:/, /u:/, while English contains more than twenty vowels (depending of the variety of English.) Mustikareni (2013) found that the diphthongs /ɪə /, /eə /, and /ʊə/ are problematic diphthongs. One of the reasons behind this could be phonological differences between the two languages, and the learner already has problems with /ɪ/, /e/ and /ə/ as well.

Maghrabi (2021) explored the difficulties Saudi ESL learners face in English pronunciation. It experimented English word stress pronunciation and showed how prosodic transfer of Arabic could cause such errors. Although stress patterns are responsible for most of the rhythmic structure, words stress rules of English and Arabic are quite different. In Saudi Arabia, stress is dependent on syllable quantity and therefore could be predictable. Saudi learners of English tended to misplace stress and use the strong-weak pattern in disyllable words and weak-strong pattern in compound words. Because English stress plays an important role in comprehensibility, it deserves much attention in English classes. Therefore, communicative methods of pronunciation skills should be integrated with other skills such as listening and speaking.

Hahn (2004) investigated primary stress on intelligibility for non-native speakers. From the findings of her study on incorrect stress placement, she concluded

that suprasegmental features were very important for second language learners. In contrast, a number of these types of research studies investigating suprasegmentals have been undertaken in various countries, they have not been undertaken to date in Arab countries. This may well reflect the lack of importance attached to this particular pronunciation teaching approach in these countries. Therefore, when students speak English without using word stress face at least two problems. First, they find it difficult to understand any English speakers, especially those who speak fast. Second, the listener may find it difficult to understand them.

Although the general definition of pronunciation includes both features as integral parts of spoken language (Bian, 2013), less attention is given to suprasegmental features of English and much focus is given to segmental features. This is because English teachers may assume that learning and pronouncing English phonemes correctly enables them to pronounce words fluently. In this study, most of the teachers admitted that segmental features is more important than suprasegmental features. In contrast, suprasegmental features is important too, because there are differences in meaning when the stress is placed on different syllables. However, being aware of the phonological differences between L1 and L2 could be more useful to avoid pronunciation errors.

Armstrong and Ward (1926) in Cruttenden (1980) stated some universal patterns related to ordinary statements and questions or requests; the falling tone is common for statements, while the rising tone is used for yes/no questions, requests, statements with implications» (Cruttenden, 1980, p. 78).

In regards to what it has been stated, intonation may be difficult to teach because EFL learners are not always aware of the uses and meanings of prosody even in their own language (Busa & Stella, 2015, p. 16). In addition, it is known that intonation as part of prosody is the key for successful communication since intonation patterns reflect the grammatical and discourse functions of an utterance (Murcia et al., 2010, p. 184). In this study, the results of teacher interview showed that teachers responded that the segmental elements are more important than the suprasegmental; hence, it is neglected in teaching pronunciation. In fact, Collins and Mess (2013) state "The pronunciation errors that second language learners make are not just random attempts to produce unfamiliar sounds. Rather, they reflect the sound inventory, rules of combination, and the stress and intonation patterns of the native language." (p.

259). In this study, the students were affected with the stress and intonation of their native language and were not care about the errors that they commit when they speak English.

Khalifa (2020) stated in his book, *Errors in English Pronunciation among Arabic Speakers*, guided by my experience in teaching English to Arab students for twenty years, I noticed that there are many errors in their English pronunciation. This is due to many reasons such as: (a) Most Arab countries consider English as a ‘school subject’ rather than a means of communication. In addition, English is taught through Arabic. (b) Pronunciation is completely neglected as most teachers are neither phonetically trained nor in possession of the skill to teach spoken English. Thus, learners are eye-minded rather than ear-minded. (c) Examinations test the student’s knowledge of facts about the language and his ability to memorize but not his ability to use and understand English. (d) The lack of discussing pronunciation errors are related to interference between Arabic and English. (e) Arabic and English have different sound and orthography systems, syllable structures, stress patterns, and different cultural background.

#### **2.4 Summary of the Chapter**

In sum, this literature review includes a number of studies which discuss English pronunciation problems by speakers of different Arabic dialects. It has been shown that Arab speakers who speak different dialects of Arabic have similar problems in pronouncing some English sounds such as /r/, /p/,/v/ and /ŋ/. However, some other sounds might not be as problematic to some regions as other regions. For example, the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ do exist in some Arabic spoken-dialects like Saudi and Iraqi but as allophones not phonemes; therefore, speakers of those dialects are able to pronounce those sounds correctly, but they may have trouble in their distribution. The study of Palestinian Arabic is meant to be part of the series of research that study problems in pronunciation by Arab speakers who speak different dialects.

The production of English consonants has been discussed according to three features that determine the way we pronounce them. First is the place of articulation, second is the manner of articulation, and third whether they are voiced or voiceless. Through the descriptions stated above, we aimed to show how it is very common to

any language learner to make an error attempting to produce one sound. As for teachers, given they know the three different ways that determine a certain pronunciation, it will be easy for them to determine the nature of the error and thus correct it.

When students have enough knowledge about the place, the manner and the position of producing sounds, it becomes easier for them to understand the errors they make, and thus they will know the proper way to deal with them. Thus, it is very important for teachers to make sure at the beginning that students are aware of the way sounds are produced in all aspects, because correction becomes easier when errors are made.

When training students to produce a fluent and correct English pronunciation, we need to work hard on all pronunciation features vowels, consonants, stress, and intonation, which had been discussed. Introducing these features to learners will be of a great benefit in all cases. When students are aware of the presence of these features, they will be aware of how the sound system in English works; hence, they will pay more attention to them, which will improve their pronunciation of English gradually. It is very important for teachers of ESL to introduce all these features in the classroom. In order to improve students' pronunciation of English and increase their fluency and comprehensibility.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study. It provides a thorough description of the necessary data and research design to conduct the study. Hence, it presents a detailed discussion of the data collection instruments, their validity, reliability and the process of the pilot study. After the process of data collection along with the sampling methods used and some ethical issues are discussed.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The research design is considered as the overall strategy that researchers choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way (Cohen et al., 2007). A mixed research approach was used in this study to investigate the problems that encounter Libyan students to learn English pronunciation and find answers for research questions. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources (Dornyei, 2007). In this regard, written and oral tests were used to collect the quantitative research data, whereas classroom observations were used to collect the qualitative research data, which aimed to having a detailed picture on the students' problems they face. The rationale for the methodology in this research was based on the precept that a full understanding of the research focus can be obtained if it is investigated from different perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). The qualitative data of the study gave the researcher the opportunity to analyse the data in terms of investigation of the common pronunciation errors in detail. Therefore, all of the possible common errors and the elimination methods were presented by means of the teachers' opinions that they declared in the interviews.

#### **3.2 Data Collection Instruments**

This study attempted to find the answers to the research questions through different tools of collecting data. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data collection. Being more explicit, the data of this study was collected through tests,



classroom observations and teachers' interviews. Cohen and Manion defined triangulation technique as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (1994: 233). Triangulation is important in order to obtain reliability and validity in research data, because each method has strengths and limitations. These methods are explained thoroughly in the following sub-sections.

### **3.2.1 Test**

As data gathering devices, tests are among the most useful tools of scientific research, as they provide the data for most experimental and descriptive studies (Cohen et al., 2007). Tests assess varieties of human abilities, potentials, and achievements. They possess different degrees of validity, reliability and applicability (Robson, 2002). The test instrument was designed in this study to describe and measure a sample of aspects of human behaviour. The tests provide broader scope and higher objectivity; they allow the typical mistakes and difficulties of the students to be discovered. Besides, they present the opportunity for self-study and self-evaluation; they allow the student programs and methods of teaching to be improved and much more. On the other hand, the test method has disadvantages: they show the final answer, omitting the mind process of the students that led to this solution; the personal abilities and attitudes of every student cannot become evident from the test alone since the test stresses only on certain characteristics. The pronunciation test is one of the instruments used in this study that aims to see whether the selected sample suffer from pronunciation problems. The students are asked to read sentences aloud while they are voice-recorded. The test is by no means difficult for the students to read, as no word is new or unfamiliar to them. The researcher analysed the recorded material to see whether the participants are mixing up with vowels and diphthongs sounds. Other problems are related to mispronounce consonant sounds when the letter differs from the sound. Another common problem is the confusion of use stress of words and sentences that may confuse the listener. In addition, some problems are related to intonation and rhythm that affect the skill of pronouncing English sounds.

As for the written test, it includes eleven of a hundred point questions, which cover all aspects of pronunciation. Each question includes chosen words, which are not difficult for the participants, and they are familiar with.

### 3.2.2 Observation

Observation can be defined as “the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviour, and artefacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.107). The main goal of the classroom observation in this study is to get more information about the teachers’ role in teaching pronunciation, activities, and techniques used by those teachers. Moreover, observation helps to discover if teachers practise the phonological rules to determine the weak points of students’ pronunciation. The main advantage of observation is its directness in collecting data at the time they occur. In addition, data describes the observed phenomena as they occur in their natural settings. In contrast, problems of the past cannot be studied by means of observation and it involves a lot of time, as one has to wait for an event to happen to study that particular event. Besides, complete answer to any problem or any issue cannot be obtained by observation alone. Unstructured observation is the process enabling researchers to learn more about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing (Schmuck, 1997). It provides researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determines who interacts with whom, and grasps how participants communicate with each other.

Furthermore, Demunck and Sobo (1998) provided several advantages of using observation over other methods of data collection. They include the fact that observation “enables researchers to learn about the activities of the study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities”. In this study, four Libyan teachers were visited for three times. The duration of the observation took place over the span of three weeks in 2022. In preparing the observation, the researcher provided a checklist to write notes during the class lessons. The data collected are presented in five tabular forms as follows:

- The teachers' use of classroom pronunciation activities.
- Evaluation of the student's pronunciation and teachers care about students' pronunciation.
- The method teachers use to correct the students' mistakes.
- Discover the common pronunciation mistakes of students when they pronounce sounds that are not exist in Arabic.

In addition, the major problem with the observational methods is that the researcher has little control over the situation that is interesting to observe. In the natural settings, too many extraneous factors influence the phenomenon. As a result, it is difficult to assess what causes or determines the behaviours or researcher's interest (Bell, 1993). In many cases, the observer has to wait until the appropriate event takes place. The reliability and validity of the observation were considered. Qualitative validity can be assessed in many ways, and “might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness, and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, [and] the extent of triangulation” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.133). Good validity in the observation ensures that the observation instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Gardner (1983) argued “it is important to note that reliability of a measure sets limits on its validity” (p.188). In other words, without a valid observation, the reliability of the measurement tool is not useful.

### **3.2.3 Teachers Interview**

The third data collection tool in this study is an interview with teachers. “Interview occurs when the writer asks one or more participants general, open-ended questions and records their answers” (Creswel, 2012, p.217). It means that by interviewing the participants, the researcher can realize their experiences better and is not constrained by the researcher views or past research findings. The interview used in this research is semi-structured interviews those are in which respondents have a list of questions, but they are free to ask further, differentiated questions based on the responses given. This allows more flexibility than the structured interview yet more structure than the informal interview. The interview would be beneficial that sufficient information can be collected through the [interview](#) process, because the interviewer can ask any question to the interviewee. Moreover, interview helps researchers to understand the body language, facial expressions, personal opinions, beliefs, and values of the participants.

On the other hand, preparation of the interview, taking interviews and interpretation of the responses required much time, which makes the interview method time-consuming. Otherwise, researchers have little control over how respondents answer the questions, which can lead to inconsistent or unreliable data. The findings and results of the interview will be qualitative in their nature thus, it will

be used to discuss and interpret the descriptive and qualitative part of this study. After the data collection process of the 30 students completed, four English teachers who had been teaching English for fourth year students at English department were interviewed. All the English teachers who have participated in the interviews have at least six years of experience in teaching English at Zawia University. The teachers who are interviewed were observed as well and they were selected according to how they interact with the students in their lectures.

### **3.3 Pilot Study**

Pilot study was conducted in order to give the researcher opportunity to check the reliability and validity of the tools that are used in this study. Fortunately, it was found that there were some points that had not been considered before conducting the pilot study of the tests, observation, and the interview. First, written and oral tests gave the researcher opportunity to identify the errors of pronunciation made by the students and reflected the real level of the students. Second, visiting four classes in advance was beneficial in breaking down any barriers between the researcher and students who attended the tests, thus it was clear how they use English inside the classroom. Another benefit is that the researcher was familiar with the important criteria of the checklist that serves the study. Finally, teachers' interviews make the researcher familiar with the reasons behind errors of students' pronunciation.

### **3.4 Population and Sampling**

A sample is defined as “a group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 96). Simple random sampling is used to refer to the basic sampling technique where a group of subjects is selected for a study from a large group, which is called a population. The study is conducted through investigating a sample of fourth year students of English Department at Zawia University. Only thirty students were chosen to answer the test according to their teachers' views and from different English pronunciation levels. Unfortunately, many students refused to attend the tests. Moreover, the purposive sampling technique was also used to choose only 4 experienced teachers to be involved in the classroom observations. The teachers were chosen according to how much they interact in English with their students inside the classroom. Moreover, the same teachers that were observed were interviewed as well.

### 3.5 Procedures of Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher asked permission from the head of English Department and the teachers of the class in order to collect the data. First, both tests are held in a quiet room. The written test took half an hour, after doing written test the oral test was done. Every student took about 2 minutes to read 18 sentences and was recorded. Second, about 10 lectures were attended of different subjects and they were recorded in order to obtain good results. The last tool was teachers' interviews and the four teachers who were observed were interviewed as well. They were asked about their methods, the common pronunciation errors of students, and their suggestion to improve students' pronunciation.

### 3.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues should be considered in every research because the participants "may be faced with situations that cause stress or anxiety" (Robson, 2004, p.65). The participants in this study were volunteer freely. They were assured that their personal information is confidential, so it is not necessary to provide their names. However, they were provided codes (S1, S2, S3,...) to identify them in both tests and the data are used for academic purposes only, so no part of their data would be used for other purposes. The teachers were also given codes (T1, T2, T3, T4) during the observation to represent them.

### 3.7 Procedures of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the written test was analysed with the use of percentage procedure. The score of written test was out of 82 as a total mark. The formula used for finding out the percentage score is:

$$\frac{\text{The sum } X \text{ } 100}{\text{The total score of test}}$$

(Depdikbud, 2006)

For example, student 1 scores 65 accurate answers out of 82, the percentage score of the accurate pronunciation of the subject is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{65}{82} \times 100 = 79\%$$

To classify the students' scores, there are seven classifications as follows:

**Table 3.1 Classification of Score**

Score	Classification
96-100	Excellent
86-95	Very Good
76-85	Good
66-75	Fairly Good
56-65	Fair
36-55	Poor
0-35	Very Poor

(Depdikbud, 2006:6)

The results of the oral test for each student are calculated out of 25 according to the following table sample:

S.N	consonant	vowel	intonation	Word stress	Sentence stress	Score/25	Score%

Each pronunciation aspect represents 5 marks, then was collected to get the total score (out of 25). Later, the percentage (%) of each student's score is calculated.

Second, qualitative results are presented according the checklist criteria. There were two checklists, one for teacher's role and the other for student's role in the classroom.

In preparing the observation, the researcher provided a checklist to write notes during the class lessons. The collected data are presented in five tabular forms as follows:

Teacher's Role:

- The way teachers act at the beginning of their pronunciation lessons.
- The teachers speak Arabic during the lecture.
- Evaluation whether the teachers pronounce words enough to be understood.
- Evaluation whether teachers use correct pronunciation.
- Are teachers affected with mother tongue pronunciation?

- Do teachers correct the students' mistakes?
- Do teacher give students opportunity to share the lesson?

#### Student's Role

- Do students interact in English with teacher?
- Do students speak Arabic in the lecture?
- mispronounce /p/ and /v/ sounds?
- Do students mispronounce/θ/ and /ð/sounds?
- Do students mispronounce /tʃ/and /dʒ/ sound?
- Do students always pronounce the sound /r/?
- Do students pronounce /ŋ/ as /ŋg/? Confuse between /ʊ/ and /ʊ/?
- Do students confuse between /ɔ:/ and /u:/?
- Do students stress the wrong syllable in the words?
- Do students stress the wrong word in the sentence?
- Do students misuse the intonation?
- Are students affected with mother tongue sounds?
- Do students confuse between /ɪə/ and /eə/?

The interview questions were prepared to collect information about the reasons for the common pronunciation errors among the students and ways to eliminate these errors. The interview questions list included 10 questions (see Appendix 3 for the interview questions).

### **3.8 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter described the research design of the study. The research methodology and data collection tools were presented and described. Moreover, the pilot study, the sample of the study, and procedure of data collection were defined. In addition, the ethical issues were stated in this study. After that, the procedures of data analysis were provided. The next chapter presents the analysed data and results of the study based on the data gathered using the two research methods (written and oral tests, a classroom observation and teachers interview).

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data that were collected through the quantitative and qualitative instruments. The quantitative data were obtained from the students' written and oral tests and the classroom observation. The qualitative data were derived from the teachers' interviews. The results of the quantitative data obtained from the written and oral tests and the results of the qualitative data obtained from the class observation were presented below in this chapter. These research instruments evaluate the pronunciation errors of sounds, stress, and intonation committed by students of English department at University of Zawia.

#### 4.1 Results of Written Test

The data gained from the written test showed that about 30 students attended the test that included nine questions out of eighty two points which covered all aspects of pronunciation. The results of the written test are analyzed by Excel Microsoft (C) and showed on a table then are presented on a diagram. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 presented the total score out of 82, and the percentage (%) of each student score.

**Table 4.1 Results of written test**

Student Code	Score/82	Score %
S1	56	68%
S2	63	76%
S3	80	97%
S4	38	46%
S5	61	74%
S6	50	60%
S7	63	76%
S8	49	59%
S9	52	63%
S10	77	93%



Student Code	Score/82	Score %
S11	41	50%
S12	54	65%
S13	33	40%
S14	44	53%
S15	39	47%
S16	47	57%
S17	38	46%
S18	43	52%
S19	38	46%
S20	45	54%
S21	58	70%
S22	81	98%
S23	30	36%
S24	36	43%
S25	43	52%
S26	29	35%
S27	56	68%
S28	49	59%
S29	32	39%
S30	27	32%

Table 4.1 showed that the highest score was 81/82 scored by the student 22 (hence, S22), indicating that about 98% of his/her pronunciation is accurate. Even the score of the participant 3 (S3) is very high (80/82), which revealed that 97% of pronunciation is accurate. In contrast, the lowest score was for the participant 30 (S30), that was 27/82, representing approximately 32% of his/her pronunciation is accurate. In addition, S26 score is low 29/82 about 35% of pronunciation is accurate. S10 has a high score 77/82 about 93%. Both S2 and S7 have good scores 63/82 about 76% of their pronunciation is accurate. S5 has 61/82 about 74% of pronunciation is

accurate. S21 got 58/82 about 70% while S1 and S27 got 56/82 about 68%. S6, S8, S9, S12, S16 and S28 have between 54 and 47/82 between about 57% and 65% of is accurate. S4, S11, S14, S15, S17, S18, S19, S20, and S25 have between 45 and 38/82, suggesting that 54% and 46% of their pronunciation is accurate. S13, S23, S24, and S29 have between 36 and 29/82, which demonstrated that about 43% and 35% of pronunciation is accurate.

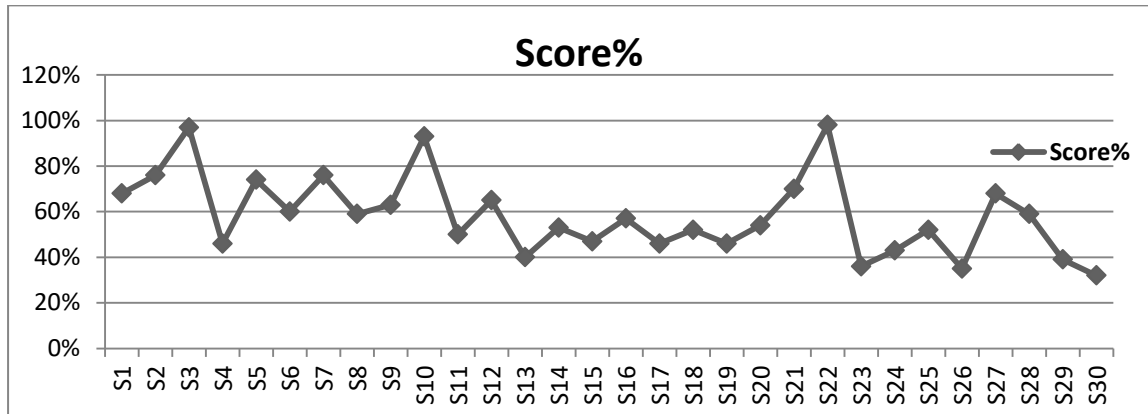


Figure 4.1 The scores of written test

According to the results of the written test scores that were shown in (Figure 4.1), the scores are classified as:

Table 4.2. The classification of written test scores

Student Number	Classification
S3,S22	Excellent
S10	Very Good
S2,S7	Good
S1,S5, S21,S27	Fairly Good
S6,S8,S9,S12,S16,S28	Fair
S4,S11,S13,S14,S15,S17,S18,S19,S20,S23,S24,S25,S29	Poor
S26,S30	Very Poor

Table 4.2 showed that all the students who attended the test have some errors in their written test pronunciation. About eight students have excellent to good pronunciation, while 14 students have fair to poor pronunciation. Fortunately, there is no student has very poor pronunciation.

## 4.2 Results of oral test

When the participants finished the written test, they directly did the oral exam. The students read 18 sentences consisted of all aspects of phonetics. These aspects are consonant, vowels, intonation, word stress and sentences stress. The results of oral test are analyzed and presented in Table 4.3. Each phonetic element aspect is presented by 5 marks; hence the total score is out of 25. In addition, the percentage (%) of the total mark is calculated. The results of the written and oral tests were displayed in a line graph in order to compare between the two tests.

## 4.2 Results of Oral Test

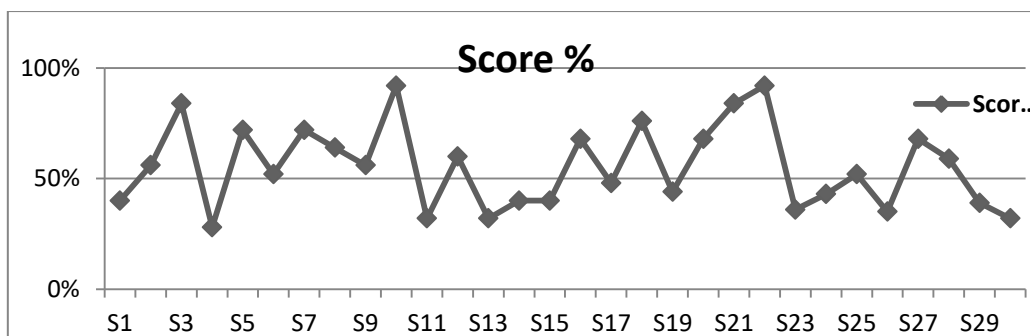
Table 4.3 below presents the results of the oral test.

**4.3. Table of the oral test**

S.N	Consonants	Vowels	Intonation	Word Stress	Sentence Stress	S/25	S%
S1	2	2	3	2	1	10	40%
S2	3	3	4	2	2	14	56%
S3	4	4	5	4	4	21	84%
S4	2	2	1	1	1	7	28%
S5	3	4	4	4	3	18	72%
S6	3	2	3	3	2	13	52%
S7	3	4	3	4	4	18	72%
S8	4	4	2	3	3	16	64%
S9	3	4	2	3	2	14	56%
S10	5	4	5	5	4	23	92%
S11	2	2	1	2	1	8	32%
S12	3	4	3	3	2	15	60%
S13	2	2	1	2	1	8	32%
S14	2	2	3	2	1	10	40%
S15	3	2	2	2	1	10	40%
S16	4	4	4	3	2	17	68%

S.N	Consonants	Vowels	Intonation	Word Stress	Sentence Stress	S/25	S%
S17	3	3	3	2	1	12	48%
S18	5	5	2	4	3	19	76%
S19	3	3	2	2	1	11	44%
S20	4	4	4	3	2	17	68%
S21	5	5	3	4	4	21	84%
S22	5	5	5	4	4	23	92%
S23	3	2	2	1	1	9	36%
S24	3	3	2	2	1	11	44%
S25	4	3	3	2	2	16	64%
S26	2	2	1	1	1	7	28%
S27	4	3	3	4	3	17	68%
S28	3	3	2	2	1	11	44%
S29	3	2	2	1	1	9	36%
S30	2	1	1	2	1	7	28%

The scores of S10 and S22 were the highest one (23/25). This score indicates that 92% of their pronunciation is accurate. Unfortunately, they are not classified excellent. In contrast, the lowest scores were that of S4, S26, S30, (7/25), indicating approximately 28% of their pronunciation is their accurate. S3, S18, and S21 have good score 19 and 21/25; about 76% and 84% of their pronunciation is accurate. S5, S7, S8, S16, S20, S25, and S27 have 16 and 19/25, suggesting that 64% and 76% of their pronunciation is accurate. S2, S6, S9, S12, S17, S18, S24, and S28 have between 15 and 11/25, which revealed that about 60% and 44% of their pronunciation is accurate. S1, S11, S13, S14, S15, S17, S23, and S29 have scores 10 and 8/25, suggesting that about 32% and 40% of their pronunciation is accurate.



**Figure 4.2 The scores of oral test**

Figure 4.2 shows the results of the oral test scores. The scores can be classified into the following categories:

**Table 4.4 The classification of oral test**

Student Number	Classification
None	Excellent
S10,S22	Very Good
S3,S18,S21	Good
S5,S7,S16,S20,S27	Fairly Good
S2,S8,S9,S12,S16,S25	Fair
S1,S6,S14,S15,S17,S19,S23,S24,S28,S29	Poor
S4,S11,S13,S26,S30	Very Poor

As can be observed from Table 4.4, the results of oral test differed from the results of written test. Unfortunately, none of the participants has excellent pronunciation; about nine students have very good to good pronunciation, while 11 students have fair to poor pronunciation. Three students have very poor pronunciation.

The average percentage of written test was between 40% and 98%; however, the students showed lower scores in the range score of oral test. The majority of their percentage ranges between 28% and 92%. These results showed that the students found the oral testing procedure more difficult than the written one. During the oral test, the majority of students were not confident as well as written test, which affected their performance.

### 4.3 Analysing the observation data

Four Libyan teachers were visited for an hour each and they teach different topics. They were represented by codes as following: (T1) syntax course, (T2) novel course, (T3) discourse analysis course, and (T4) drama course. The duration of the observation took place over the span of three weeks in 2022. In preparing the observation, the researcher provided a checklist to write notes during the classes.

#### 4.3.1 Teacher's Role

By attending the four classes, the researcher discovered that every teacher has a different style in the lecture, as presented in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5 Results of Teacher's role in the class**

Criteria	Yes	No
Ask students about previous lecture	T1,T2,T3,T4	/
Speak Arabic during the lecture	T2	T1,T3,T4
Pronounce words enough to be understood	T2,T4	T1,T3
Use correct pronunciation	T2,T3,T4	T1
Be affected with mother tongue pronunciation	T1	T2,T3,T4
Give students opportunity to share the lesson	T1,T2,T3,T4	/
Correct students' errors	T1,T2,T3	T4

Table 4.5 presented the results of teacher's role. It showed that the majority of teachers who are observed in the English Department in the Zawia University ask their student about previous lecture. It was noted that most of the teachers did not speak Arabic during the lecture and just one teacher speaks a little Arabic. The pronunciation of two teachers is very clear for the students, while the other teachers are not clear enough. Three teachers have accurate pronunciation. One teacher was affected by the mother tongue pronunciation; however, three teachers spoke native English to some extent. All teachers gave students opportunity to share the lesson and asked questions about the lesson. Three teachers are care about correcting students' errors, while one teacher did not correct the errors of pronunciation.

### 4.3.2 Students Role Results

Although the four teachers are teaching the same students, the results are different as shown in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6 Results of students' role in the class**

Criteria	T1	T2	T3	T4
Interact in English with teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speak Arabic in the lecture	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mispronounce /p/ and /v/ sounds	/p/✓	✗	✗	/p/✓
Mispronounce/θ/ and /ð/sounds	✗	✓	✗	✓
Mispronounce /tʃ/and /dʒ/ sound	✓	✓	✗	✓
Always pronounce the sound /r/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pronounce /ŋ/ as /ŋg/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Confuse between /ʊ/ and /ʊ/	✓	✗	✓	✓
Pronounce /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/	✓	✗	✓	✓
Pronounce /ʊə/ as /u:/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pronounce /eə/ as /ɜ:/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pronounce /ɪə/ as /i:/	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stress the wrong syllable in the words	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stress the wrong word in the sentence?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Misuse of intonation?	✗	✓	✓	✗
Are affected with mother tongue sounds	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 4.5 presented the results of student role in the class. The majority of the students interact in English with their teacher, in contrast, there was a small group speak Arabic in the lecture. The students group in the classes of T2 and T3 mispronounced the sound /p/, while the group in the classes of T1 and T4 pronounced it correctly. The students group in the classes of T1 and T3 pronounced /θ/ and /ð/ sounds incorrectly, however the group in the classes of T2 and T4 pronounce them correctly. The students group in the classes of T1, T2, and T4 pronounced /tʃ/and /dʒ/ sound correctly, while the group in the class of T3 pronounced it wrongly. All students groups pronounced the sound /r/ in all words, and pronounced /ŋ/ as /ŋg/.

The data also showed that only the students in the class of T2 did not confuse between /ʊ/ and /ɒ/, /ɔ:/ and /u:/, while the other groups in all classes confused between them. All the students groups pronounce /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/, /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/, /eə/ as /ɜ:/, and /ɪə/ as /i:/. All students stressed the wrong syllable in the words as well as stressed the wrong word in the sentence. The students groups in the class of T2, T3 misused of intonation; however, the other groups in the classes of T1, T3, and T4 used accurate intonation.

It was clear that all students groups were affected with mother tongue sounds (Libyan Accent). This refers to that English is studied as a foreign language and it is used in educational institutions only.

#### **4.4 Analysing Data Gained from the teachers' interview**

The interviews with five English teachers were evaluated qualitatively. In the first question, five teachers were asked “*Do you think that the current curriculum you follow allows you to teach the sound system of the target language?*” All the teachers unanimously agreed that the current curriculum is not sufficient to teach the sound system of the target language. Two teachers think that the two hour classes per week are considered not enough to complete the official curriculum, which is very intensive and the teachers cannot spare extra time to study the sound system. The four teachers claimed that their role not teaching pronunciation, because they should learn it in the early years in the university. Three of the teachers also think that insufficient emphasis is given by the curriculum makers and education planners and they decided to teach pronunciation in the first year only.

In the second question of the interview, the teachers were asked to tell *whether they could sufficiently focus on the pronunciation skills?* The four teachers answered no. The reason why the teachers can not focus on the pronunciation in class studies varies. One teacher pointed out that the listening, which is an important part of pronunciation requires technical tools (audio/video tools), which is itself insufficient. Therefore, even the teachers do not spend sufficient time to improve the oral skills of the students. Another teacher points out that official education system in Libya is in general based on the language skills (grammar, vocabulary, reading) other than pronunciation. One teacher honestly emphasize that even the teachers themselves are not very well educated in terms of pronunciation skills. He added that teaching



pronunciation that requires one to one interaction is even more difficult and time-consuming.

In question three, the teachers were asked *whether the students have common pronunciation errors or not*'. In fact, some teachers pointed out that the majority of the pronunciation errors of the students were not specify to a student but instead common between the students. Correcting such errors are more difficult than others, thus the most common ones are "word", "the".

In question four, the teachers were also asked *which one of the segmentals (consonants & vowels) and suprasegmental (stress) poses the most significant problem while the students produce language orally*. They generally replied that the segmental errors have been the priority in their classes. They usually focus on segmental errors. While one teacher pointed out that, the suprasegmental component of the pronunciation can only be achieved after achieving the segmental components.

In question five, the teachers were then asked *what they think is the main reason for such common mispronunciations*. The four teachers replied that the most dominant factor was the interference of the mother tongue. Differences between sound systems of the mother tongue and the foreign language plays an important factor for mispronunciation. Two of the teachers emphasized that the students have insufficient input in terms of foreign language and the time allocated for pronunciation is not sufficient. Two teachers also pointed out that the deliberate gravitation of other skills such as reading, writing, speaking and language areas such as grammar and vocabulary prevents sparing sufficient time for the pronunciation. The four teachers specifically stressed that there is a lack of technical audio-lingual infrastructure. While the teaching materials should include audio-lingual materials, the university does not have the sufficient technological infrastructure to apply.

In question six, the teachers were asked *what they suggest to eliminate these pronunciation errors*. All the teachers stressed the need for more pronunciation courses per week in the all stages. Another common shared by two teachers is the need to revise the pronunciation as to dedicate sufficient time to practice it. One teacher emphasized the attitude of the teacher. They put forward that the teachers should encourage the students to speak more in class. One teacher suggests that a training program focused on the pronunciation itself would be highly beneficial

for the teachers themselves. Temporary assignments and visits of teachers abroad will also seriously contribute to the language teaching in the university.

In question seven, if they operate at the segmental or suprasegmental level during pronunciation teaching, the majority of the teachers (three out of four) responded that the segmental elements are more important than the suprasegmental for the learners. They spent most of the time dedicated to pronunciation with segmental elements. One teacher thinks that they are equally important. In terms of vowels, consonants or stress, rhythm, intonation, four out of five teachers think that vowels, consonants or stress are the most crucial elements.

In question eight, the teachers were asked about their suggestions to eliminate the pronunciation errors. Three teachers responded that the segmental elements are more important than the suprasegmental for 4th years Students and they spent most of the time dedicated to pronunciation with segmental elements. One teacher thinks that they are equally important. In terms of vowels, consonants or stress, rhythm, intonation, four of them teachers think that vowels, consonants or stress are the most crucial elements.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

Many studies have reported that Arab learners of English have difficulties in learning the English sounds. The current study was designed to investigate the production of English sounds for Libyan EFL students and illustrates the results in the light of the reviewed literature. So far, accurate pronunciation of English sounds is considered as one of the most difficult tasks that EFL learners encounter when learning English. This research was conducted to evaluate the pronunciation of the students of English department at Zawia University. It was clear that the students' ability in pronouncing English words was influenced by three factors. First, the interference of the mother tongue language causes difficulties in pronouncing the sounds of English language. The students are accustomed with their phonological system and they are affected with their mother tongue language. When a baby listens to the sound of his mother, he/she will automatically imitate that sound, otherwise, he has been used to speaking his mother tongue since childhood. This finding is also seemed to agree with Ramelan (2003:4) "has been deeply implanted in him as part of his habits". Moreover, Ramelan says, "it will be difficult for him to change the habit

of moving his speech organs in such a way as to produce the foreign sounds". The second factor is phonological knowledge that the students had difficulties in the aspect of phonetic transcription, since they have to pronounce the English words correctly based on its phonetic transcription. It might be said that they forget the phonetic symbol and replace those sounds with the closest sounds they are familiar with. For example, the participants in this study tended to pronounce /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ as /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ respectively because /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are found in Arabic language. These findings correspond with Elmahdi and Khan (2015) who stated that the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ seem to be problematic for most Arab speakers of English because of the absence of /tʃ/ in Arabic, while the English /dʒ/, which exists in Arabic, does not pose difficulties for Arab speakers.

The third factor, which is the most important one, is that pronunciation is a neglected area and is taught in only in the first year. The results of teachers interviews showed that the current curriculum is not sufficient to teach the sound system of the target language. They think that the two hour classes per week is not enough to complete the official curriculum which is very intensive and the teachers cannot spare extra time to study the sound system. This study goes in line with Gilbert's view (2008) who stated that there are two main reasons why English pronunciation is ignored in EFL classes. The main reason is that many EFL teachers lack sufficient time in their pronunciation classes and if they have enough time more attention is paid to drills that disappoint both learners and teachers to learn and teach English pronunciation. In this study, it was clear that students and even teachers concentrate on grammar and vocabulary rather than pronunciation. The second reason deals with psychological factors that have a key role in learning pronunciation because learners are not certain about their English pronunciation as they are about their grammar and lexis knowledge. For this reason, the students do not have opportunity to improve their utterance. Unfortunately, English pronunciation does not have a good position in the curriculum design of many universities. This sentence does not express that English pronunciation is not so important, so many students think that accurate pronunciation of English sounds is one of the most difficult tasks that EFL learners encounter when learning English.

The students who attended this study have problems with consonants sounds; however, they do not confuse /s/ with /θ/, /z/ with /ð/and /d/. This could be attributed

to the fact that these sounds exist in Libyan accent. The results of this research are not consistent with Hassan (2014) who investigated the problems that Sudanese students of English language at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUTC) encounter. The researcher uses his own observation in order to obtain enough information about the errors that students have. The study results indicated that the Sudanese speakers confused /s/ with /θ/ and /z/ with /ð/. He believed that these errors refer to how much local dialect affects the way that they interact in English.

In this study, the results of oral tests and the observation indicated that most of students mispronounced the sound /ŋ/. These findings are in line with the findings of Bayoumi and Elhawary (2013) who studied common pronunciation errors at Ain Shams University. This study results indicated that the main problematic sounds for Egyptians included /ŋ/. They also find that the students were not aware of the pronunciation errors they make. In this study, many students thought that the sound /ŋ/ represents the "n" and "g" together.

Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) investigated the difficulties that Arab students of English encounter at the initial stages of learning English and showed four major areas of difficulty. First, they found that Arab learners confused certain pairs of English consonant sounds. The results of oral test presented that the students seem to pronounce /p/ as /b/. This study agree with Ramadan (2021) who stated that There is no “p” sound in Arabic, so Arab ESL students will often substitute a “b” sound. **parking** becomes **barking** and **pepper** becomes **bebber**. The results of this study that the participants of this study pronounce /v/ correctly, although it is not existed in their mother tongue language. This result took different view with Ramadan (2021) who proved that there is also no “v” sound in Arabic, and Arab ESL students can end up using an “f” sound instead of “v”, so **voice** becomes **foice**. Al Taha (1995) found that the most common speaking errors were English phonemes being replaced by Arabic phonemes. According to the researcher, these errors can in part be attributed to first language (L1) interference, where certain sounds in English do not exist in Arabic. They pronounce /p/ as /b/ and /f/ as/v/. Most of the students use sounds, as they are pronouncing in their origin language better than they cannot pronounce it.

Second, learners use epenthesis, which is the insertion of a short vowel to break down the long consonant clusters. In contrast, it argue with them that the results showed the student do not have problems with consonant cluster. This because Libyan

accent has consonant cluster in many words, such as the word /kbi:r/ which means "big". Third, certain diphthongs are replaced by other sounds due to L1 interference. This goes with Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) study that the participant of this research pronounced /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/, /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/, /eə/ as /ɜ:/, and /ɪə/ as /i:/as well. Lastly, Arab learners are generally confused and cannot distinguish between certain pairs of vowels. The results of this study showed that most of the students pronounce /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/, /əʊ/ as /ɔ:/, /eə/ as /ɜ:/, and /ɪə/ as /i:/as well. The results of this study agrees with Kharma and Hajjaj's(1989) investigation, therefore it was clear that can not differentiate short vowels and diphthongs.

The finding showed that the Libyan students mispronounce some English consonant sounds, including /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /r/, /ŋ/. This study agreed with Al-Saidat (2010) who studied the difficulties encountered by Arab speakers when pronouncing English consonants and he found eight English consonants, namely, /ŋ/, /p/, /v/, /d/, /l/, /dʒ/, /ð/, and /r/ are problematic ones for Arab speakers. According to Al-saidat, mother tongue interference was the main cause, which was responsible for pronunciation problems. These errors refer to that speakers are influenced by their own mother tongue. Therefore, they produce English sounds in an Arabic way; they choose the closest counterpart in their native language to produce each of the problematic sounds. The native language influence on the acquisition of the foreign language, because there is no opportunity of interaction with the native speakers to become aware of the accurate pronunciation.

Furthermore, another sound that was problematic for the participants in this study is /tʃ/. They replaced the sound /tʃ/ with /ʃ/. Word-final position posed more pronunciation difficulties than word-initial position. This result agreed with Alqarni (2013) who investigated the voiceless post-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ and its different realizations by Saudi EFL. It was found that the sound /tʃ/ does not exist in the phonemic system of Arabic, so it would be problematic for Arab speakers to pronounce the /tʃ/ as an independent phoneme. Furthermore, Alqarni (2013) stated that the sound /tʃ/ does exist in some Arabic dialects. The results of this study agreed with Alqarni's view that most the students confuse /tʃ/ with /ʃ/, because they have similar positions in general. In this study, the participants tended to pronounce /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ as /ʃ/and /ʒ/, as the later sounds are found in Arabic language. These results go in line with Elmahdi and Khan (2015) who stated that the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ seem to

be problematic for most Arab speakers because of the absence of /tʃ/ in Arabic, while the English sound /dʒ/, which exists in Arabic, has different phonetic comprehensions among Arab speakers. These errors could be influenced by mother tongue language.

Arab EFL learners' often struggle with correct English pronunciation. The results show that the participants have major difficulties in pronouncing specific consonant sounds such as /ð/ and /θ/. The findings of this study agree with Ahmed (2011) who investigated the difficulties, which Saudi students meet when pronouncing certain English consonant sounds. The participants of Ahmed's study faced difficulties in pronouncing other sounds such as /ð/, /θ/, /dʒ/, /j/ and /r/. The results indicated that when students speak a foreign language, they would tend to produce FL sounds in the same way they produce the closest L1 sounds. These pronunciation errors may refer to the negative interference of their origin language.

The results of this study showed that most of the students replaced /ɒ/ with /ʊ/ as in *could* /kʊd/ instead of /kʊd/, and /ɪ/ with /e/ as in *next* /nekst/ instead of /nekst/. This study is consistent with Shamallakh (2018) who conducted a study to examine problems facing EFL students in pronouncing English vowels at the Islamic University-Gaza (IUG). He found that the most problematic monophthong sounds are: /æ/, /ɒ/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/ and /i:/. In contrast, this study argued with Bauman-Waengler (2009) who states that vowel errors are the most common among Arab learners because Arabic has only six monophthongs /a/, /i/, /u/, /a:/, /i:/, /u:/ while English contains more than twenty vowels (depending of the variety of English).

Moreover, the results of this study showed that the students who attended both tests have problems with /ʌ/, /ʊ/ and /ɒ/. This study corresponds with Ramadan (2021) who stated that there is an overlap between what is usually considered a high vowel /ʊ/ with the mid vowel /ɒ/, and an overlap between the mid vowel /ʌ/ and the low vowel /æ/ unless vowel duration is used to help distinguish these. In other words, the learner may change the quality or the quantity of some sounds. Hassan (2014) agreed as well and stated that most of the Arab students pronounce the words *company* as /kɒmpəni/ and *among* as /əmpɒŋ/ instead of /kʌmpəni/, /əmlɒŋ/, respectively. Hence, these errors refer to the effect of Arabic language on the students pronunciation. In Arabic, there are only six vowels: three short vowels /æ/, /i/, /u/ and three long vowels /a:/, /i:/, /u:/, and there is no diphthongs. For this reason, Arab learners try to transfer

FL vowel sounds to the vowels in their native language, which cause pronunciation problems. The participants mispronounced most of the words that have diphthongs.

The results as a whole suggest that Libyan students have considerable problems in three English diphthongs: /ɪə /, /eə /, / and /əʊ/, while five diphthongs are not challenging for them: /aʊ/, /aɪ/ /eɪ/, /ʊə/, and /ɔɪ/. The most common mistakes that the participants of this study are replacing /əʊ / with /ɔ:/ as in *go* /gɔ:/ instead of /gəʊ/, /ɪə/with /eə/ as in *wear* /wɪə/ instead of /weə/. This study goes in line with Mustikareni's (2013) findings that indicated the difficult diphthongs are /ɪə/, /ʊə/, and /eə/. One of the reasons behind this could be phonological differences between the two languages.

The results of this study presented that most of the students and observed had errors with sentence stress. They tended to stress questions as well as sentences. Maghrabi (2021) has explored the difficulties Saudi ESL learners face in English pronunciation in terms of stress. It experimented English word stress pronunciation and showed how prosodic transfer of Arabic could cause such errors. Although stress patterns are responsible for most of the rhythmic structure, words stress rules of English and Arabic are quite different. In Saudi Arabic, stress is dependent on syllable quantity and could be predictable, therefore, Saudi learners of English tended to misplace stress and use the strong-weak pattern in disyllable words and weak-strong pattern in compound words. Because English stress plays an important role in comprehensibility, it deserves much attention in English classes. On the other side, Arab EF students tend to use a narrower range of intonation and voice stress resulting in a very monotone way of speaking. This referred to the differences between Arabic stress and English stress.

The results of this study presented that most of the students and observed have errors with word stress. They confuse the place of stress. This study concurred with Hahn (2004) who investigated primary stress on intelligibility for non-native speakers. It was concluded that suprasegmental features were very important for second language learners. In contrast, a number of these types of research studies investigating suprasegmentals have been undertaken in various countries, they have not been undertaken to date in Arab countries. This may well reflect the lack of importance attached to this particular pronunciation teaching approach in these countries. Therefore, students who speak English without utilising word stress

consequently encounter at least two issues. First, they find it difficult to understand any English speakers, especially those who speak fast. Second, the listener may find it difficult to understand them.

In this study most of the teachers admitted that segmental features is more important than suprasegmental features. In contrast, suprasegmental features is very important too, because there are differences in meaning when the stress is placed on different syllables. However, being aware of the phonological differences between L1 and L2 could be more useful to avoid pronunciation errors. This study goes with (Bian, 2013), who stated that less attention is given to suprasegmental features of English when teaching it to learners and much focus is given to segmental features. This is because English teachers may assume that learning and pronouncing English phonemes correctly enables them to pronounce words fluently.

It was clear that most of the students do not stress any syllables of such words, because stress patterns of Arabic language is completely different. Therefore, one of the main reasons behind errors pronunciation that Libyan students suffer from is the interference of their mother tongue language. Although the general definition of pronunciation includes both features as integral parts of spoken language (Bian, 2013), less attention is given to suprasegmental features of English, and much focus is given to segmental features. This is because English teachers may assume that learning and pronouncing English phonemes correctly enables them to pronounce words fluently.

In this study, the results of tests showed that most of the students are struggling in using the intonation. In addition, most of the teachers who were interviewed responded that the segmental elements are more important than the suprasegmental. Intonation is the “music” of a language, and is perhaps the most important element of a good accent. Intonation (the rise and fall of pitch in our voice) plays a crucial role in expressing meaning. Poor intonation can cause misunderstanding and even produce an unfavourable impression of a person. The most common mistakes of intonation are no rising pitch and the use of the wrong pitch. Students often have more trouble imitating the rising than the falling intonation and they often do not use the right pitch to convey feelings. Armstrong and Ward (1926) in Cruttenden (1980) stated some universal patterns related to ordinary statements and questions or requests; the falling



tone is common in statements while «the rising tone is used for yes/no questions, requests, statements with implications» (Cruttenden, 1980, p. 78).

In regards to what it has been stated, intonation may be difficult to teach because EFL learners «are not always aware of the uses and meanings of prosody even in their own language» (Busa and Stella, 2015, p. 16). Furthermore, it is known that intonation, as a part of prosody is the key for successful communication since intonation patterns reflect the grammatical and discourse functions of an utterance (Murcia et al., 2010, p. 184). Intonation is neglected in teaching pronunciation, and the students do not pay attention for the intonation; hence, they misuse it. The present research also holds the idea that the L1 influences the production of the FL because it was found that there is a similar pattern between the intonation of yes, no questions and requests produced by the native English speakers and EFL students. Indeed, Busa and Stella (2015) stated that the L1 influences the perception and production of the L2 in terms of prosody features such as intonation. In contrast with the results of this study, *wh*- question intonation is rising as well in Libyan accent.

The results of teachers interviews showed that the majority of the pronunciation errors of the students were not specify to a student but instead common between the students. Correcting such errors are more difficult than others, thus the most common ones are *word* and *the*. These results agreed with Collins and Mess (2013, p.259) who stated that “The pronunciation errors that second language learners make are not just random attempts to produce unfamiliar sounds. Rather, they reflect the sound inventory, rules of combination, and the stress and intonation patterns of the native language”.

Khalifa (2020) stated that guided by my experience in teaching English to Arab students for twenty years, I noticed that there are many errors in their English pronunciation. This is due to many reasons such as: (a) most Arab countries consider English as a ‘school subject’ rather than a means of communication, in addition, English is taught through Arabic, (b) pronunciation is completely neglected as most teachers are neither phonetically trained nor in possession of the skill to teach spoken English, (c) examinations test the student’s knowledge of facts about the language and the ability to memorize but not the ability to use and understand English, (d) the lack of discussing pronunciation errors related to interference between Arabic and English,

(e) Arabic and English have different sound and orthography systems, syllable structures, stress patterns and different cultural background.

#### **4.6 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter presents the analysis of pronunciation errors made by Libyan students. It presents the results of the oral and written test as well as the results obtained from teachers' interview. The discussion of the obtained results was also provided on this chapter.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of this research. The pedagogical implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further research are also provided in this chapter.

#### 5.1 Conclusion of the Whole Study

This study investigates the problems of pronunciation that Libyan students suffer from when they produce English sounds. This chapter summarizes the results of the study. The problems that are expected to be found through the testing:

- Mixing up with vowels and diphthongs sounds.
- Mispronounce consonant sounds.
- Confusing of use stress of words and sentences.
- Misuse of intonation and rhythm.

It was clear that English language students at Zawia University have common and systematic problems regarding the pronunciation of a number of English consonants and vowels, as well as problems with stress and intonation. It was revealed that the participants tend to have lower scores in the oral tests than in the written tests. This is probably because pronunciation test which was conducted by oral tasks requires more natural and fast performance than in the written test. As well as the anxiety of committing mistakes affected their oral test performance. The common errors committed by the students are in the sounds that are not available in the Arabic phonological system. These sounds include /p/, /v/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ŋ/ because they do not exist in the Arabic phonological system or with sounds that differ of their mother tongue /ð/, /θ/ and /r/. The problem is that the students tend to replace these sounds with the nearest equivalents in their L1. They tend to replace the sounds mentioned above with the sounds from their language: /b/, /f/, /ʃ/, /z/, /t/, /d/ and /ŋ +g/. In addition, they pronounced /r/ sound in all positions.

The most problematic sounds for the English students at Zawia University are the vowel sounds, they confused between /ʊ/ and /ɒ/ that the letter "o" in the short vowels cases was mostly pronounced /ʊ/. Another problem was with diphthongs: /əʊ/ was pronounced as /ɔ:/, /ʊə/ as /u:/. /eə/ as /ɜ:/ and /ɪə/ as /i:/.

As for suprasegmental features, the students at Zawia committed many mistakes. They stressed the wrong syllable in the words such as, *student* by stressing second syllable. They also stressed the wrong word in the sentence such as conjunctions. This was due to the fact that stress in Arabic differs greatly from that in English. Another problem was with intonation, which was misused by most of the students, although it is similar to intonation in Arabic.

In the interview, the teachers presented their opinions about possible main reasons for the common pronunciation errors which are also one of the research questions of the study. Four teachers thought that the most dominant factor for the students' mispronunciation was the mother tongue interference. The teachers emphasized that the students try to form an analogy between Arabic and English. The difference between native and target language sound systems is the most crucial factor for the mispronunciation. There are several possible reasons for the pronunciation errors. The most crucial one, according to the teachers, that should be solved urgently is the insufficient course book and the insufficient curriculum content. The course book that includes only one part for the pronunciation makes it impossible to teach the pronunciation or to improve the existing level of the students or even to correct the fossilized errors. In addition, the pronunciation should be taught during the four years of university. Second, the teachers should be aware of the mother tongue interference. There are differences in the sound systems of the native and the target language in terms of both segmental and suprasegmental features. Therefore, the teachers should emphasize these differences by means of the specific exercises that are prepared according to the needs of the students. Third, there are insufficient English class hours, with only two hours each week in the first year. Finally, all of the possible reasons listed above clip the teachers' wings and they cannot teach the pronunciation because of these negative conditions surrounded them.

### **5.0 5.1 Implications of the Study**

Based on the results of the study relating to the common pronunciation errors by Libyan students, the following implications were drawn up for incorporating for English language teaching and learning. The current study investigated the most common errors of 4th year students. First, the students have difficulty with these consonant sounds: /p/, /v/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ŋ/, /ð/, /θ/ and /r/. In addition, the short vowel sounds /ʊ/, /ɒ/ and schwa /ə/ and with diphthongs, /əʊ/, /ɪə/, /ʊə/ and /eə/ are also problematic sounds. On the other hand, there were errors with stress and intonation. All these segmental and suprasegmental aspects represented in the study with their linguistic analysis have implications for both students and teachers. Teachers can recognize the common errors committed by their learners and their reasons as well. This information will make teachers to be more cautious about the pronunciation of the students and enable the teachers to eliminate the fossilized pronunciation errors of their students. Furthermore, when a teacher is fully aware of the pronunciation difficulties that learners may struggle, he/she will certainly be more careful about the difficult sounds. As stated in Mettler (1989), when the students behave cautiously about their pronunciation problems, this will improve their communications and help them by preventing the communication breakdown. Moreover, the linguistic analysis revealed that the segmental and suprasegmental common errors of the students mostly depend on the native language interference. At this point, teachers will prepare the materials for pronunciation exercises that meet these needs of the students. Therefore, the teachers can easily enjoy the benefit of the results of this research in terms of pronunciation teaching. On the other hand, the interview results that were conducted with four professional English teachers put forward the needs for improving the pronunciation education of English learners. Curriculum designers and material developers should take into consideration these needs while redesigning the curriculum.

### **5.2 Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the results, the researcher would like to provide the following suggestions:

### **For the Headmaster of English Department**

- The headmaster should support English learning process by preparing the facilities instruments of English learning .
- Time allocated for teaching pronunciation courses is not enough for teachers to deal with each student individually. Hence, headmaster should provide teachers with enough time for teaching pronunciation.

### **For English Teacher**

- English teacher should motivate students to be more active in English learning process and helping them to interact in English inside the classroom.
- English teacher should use media in order to help students to understanding the correct pronunciation in speaking.
- English teacher should give suggestions to students to enhance their ability to produce sounds accurately.
- Teachers should help their students to find out the pronunciation of new words from the dictionaries.

### **For Students**

- Students should enlarge knowledge about pronunciation in order to have good pronunciation.
- Students should check dictionary to know how new words are pronounced correctly.
- Students should try interact in English with their teachers and their colleges.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite the great efforts that the researcher spent in conducting the current study, there are various limitations regarding to the methodology of the research. First, because many students rejected to participate in the tests, data were collected from only thirty participants at the English Department. The number of students supposed to be sixty to get the sufficient results of this study.

Second, the data collection procedure was based on a controlled reading aloud technique. The students were unaware of the words that their pronunciations were tested; however, they could be excited and nervous when they realized that they were

recorded. The data would have been more natural and reliable if their speeches had been recorded spontaneously, during their regular routine.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

- Assessment of students' pronunciation through reading English conversation should be studied.
- There should be an investigation on interference of standard Arabic language on students' pronunciation at Zawia University.
- Further research should include the analysis of students' pronunciation of the sounds that are not existed in Arabic language.

#### **5.5 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter concluded the summary of the whole study. The pronunciation of 4<sup>th</sup> year students of English Department at Zawia University was evaluated and stated. The implications of the research were presented. The suggestions for the headmaster, teachers, the students were provided. In addition, the limitations of the study were specified. Finally, recommendations for further research were presented.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Pronunciation Tests

#### Written Test

Q1) Write the word with the same sound. Use (cut, bed, garden, hot, about, foot, sort, earth, shop, bed, cat, me, stone, sit)

e.g. : /b/ not hot

i:/ sea ..... /e/net..... /ʌ/ up .....

/ɪ/dig..... /ə/water ..... /ɜ:/bird.....

/æ/bank..... /u:/ blue..... /ɑ:/ dance.....

/ɒ/wash..... /ɔ:/ door..... /ʊ/ book.....

Q2) Choose the suitable stress sample for each word

e.g.: important (ooO - oOo)

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) Computer (ooO - oOo) | 5) increase (Oo - oO)   |
| 2) modern (Oo - oO)     | 6) shampoo (Oo - oO)    |
| 3) machine(Oo - oO)..   | 7) rubbish (Oo - oO)    |
| 4) Balcony (ooO- Ooo)   | 8) engineer (ooO - oOo) |

Q3) Match the words 1–8 to the same rhyming word a–e.

- |                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| 1) /eɪ/ day.....    | A- here  |
| 2) /əʊ/ phone ..... | B- pure  |
| 3) /ɔɪ/ noise.....  | C- hair  |
| 4) /ʊə/ sure.....   | D- loud  |
| 5) /aɪ/ try         | E- high  |
| 6) /eə/ wear.....   | F - toys |
| 7) /aʊ/ crowd ..... | G- grey  |
| 8) /ɪə/ year.....   | H -shown |

Q4) Choose the sound of the underlined letters.

- |                   |      |      |
|-------------------|------|------|
| 1) <u>w</u> eight | /eɪ/ | /aɪ/ |
| 2) <u>s</u> now   | /aʊ/ | /əʊ/ |
| 3) <u>i</u> dea   | /ɪə/ | /eə/ |
| 4) <u>n</u> oisy  | /ɔɪ/ | /əʊ/ |
| 5) <u>f</u> air   | /ɪə/ | /eə/ |
| 6) <u>s</u> ound  | /aʊ/ | /əʊ/ |
| 7) <u>s</u> tile  | /eɪ/ | /aɪ/ |
| 8) <u>t</u> our   | /əʊ/ | /ʊə/ |

Q5) write the consonant sound. Use /j/,/f/,/dʒ/, /k/,/ð/,/w/,/θ/,/tʃ/,/ʒ/,/ŋ/,/h/, /g/,/n/,/f/,

e.g. :enough/f/

There .....things..... yacht.....photo..... journey..... when.....

shop.....church.....television..... swimming.....sink..... garage..... school.....

useful.....who.....

Q6) Match the words in each pair to the correct pronunciation.

- |                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1) Heard .....  | A- /fu:d/  |
| 2) Again .....  | B- /hed/   |
| 3) Food .....   | C- /fʊ:t/  |
| 4) Hat .....    | D- /hɑ:t/  |
| 5) Short.....   | E- /ægeɪn/ |
| 6) Ugly .....   | F- /hæt /  |
| 7) Head.....    | I- /fɒt/   |
| 8) Foot .....   | J- /hɜ:d/  |
| 9) Shot .....   | K- /fʊt /  |
| 10) Heart ..... | H- /Δgli/  |

Q7) Choose the correct pronunciation of the vowel these words.

- |            |      |      |         |      |       |
|------------|------|------|---------|------|-------|
| 1) advice  | /ɪ/  | /aɪ/ | 5) work | /ɜ:/ | / eə/ |
| 2) perfume | /ʊ/  | /u:/ | 6) head | /i:/ | /e/   |
| 3) plate   | /ə/  | /eɪ/ | 7) note | /ɒ/  | /əʊ/  |
| 4) mouse   | /u:/ | /aʊ/ | 8) toy  | /ɔ:/ | /ɔɪ/  |

Q8) Mark the sentences whether are Falling Intonation (↘), Rising Intonation (↗) or Rise-Fall Intonation (↗↘)

e.g. :I like football, tennis, basketball and volleyball. (↗↘)

- 1) Where do you work?
- 2) Have you finished already?
- 3) What country do you come from?
- 4) I'll be back in a minute.
- 5) Do you like your new teacher?
- 6) Dad wants to change his car.
- 7) Is John leaving on Thursday or Friday?
- 8) We've got apples, pears, bananas and oranges.

Q9) Underline the stressed words in the sentences.

e.g.: they have studied English for ten years.

- 1) glass are made from sand.

- 2) I have my breakfast at seven.
- 3) Shakespeare wrote Hamlet in 1599.
- 4) Marry didn't write her report.
- 5) My father has painted our house.

### **Oral Test**

**Read these sentences with a good pronunciation.**

- 1) Do you listen to pop music?
- 2) What do your parents do ?
- 3) My sister is a clever student, she always has full marks.
- 4) I go to university walking.
- 5) How much your shirt is?
- 6) If you have enough time, you can walk there.
- 7) What a nice car you have!
- 8) I know your father well.
- 9) I have got brown eyes.
- 10) You like fish, don't you?
- 11) He ate whole bread.
- 12) My teacher is honest person.
- 13) Can I open your bag?
- 14) My mother wears glasses.
- 15) Many people have two phones.
- 16) When is our next exam?
- 17) Could you draw this picture, please?
- 18) The sweater comes in blue, white pink and black.

## Appendix B

### Classroom Observation Checklist

Group ..... Class..... Date.....

#### Teacher Role (Does teacher)

Criteria	Yes	No	Notes
Ask students about previous lecture?			
Speak Arabic during the lecture?			
Pronounce words enough to be understood?			
Use correct pronunciation?			
Be affected with mother tongue pronunciation?			
Give students opportunity to share the lesson?			
Correct students mispronouncing words?			

#### Students Role (Do students)

Criteria	Yes	No	Notes
Interact in English with teacher?			
Speak Arabic in the lecture?			
Mispronounce /p/ and /v/ sounds?			
Mispronounce /θ/ and /ð/ sounds?			
Mispronounce /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ sound?			
Always pronounce the sound /r/?			
Pronounce /ŋ/ as /ŋg/?			
Confuse between /ʊ/ and /ʊ/?			
Confuse between /ɔ:/ and /u:/?			



Confuse between /ɪə/ and /eə/?			
Stress the wrong syllable in the words?			
Stress the wrong word in the sentence?			
Misuse of intonation?			
Be affected with mother tongue sounds?			

**Appendix C**  
**Teachers' Interview Questions**

- 1) Do you think that the current curriculum you follow allows you to teach the sound system of the target language? Why, Why not?
- 2) Do you think that you sufficiently focus on the pronunciation skills? Why, why not?
- 3) Do you think that your students have common errors in pronunciation? To what extent they are fossilized errors?
- 4) Which part do you think poses the most significant problem while your students produce language orally? The segmentals (consonants & vowels) or suprasegmental (stress)?
- 5) What do you think is the main reason for such common mispronunciations?
- 6) What do you suggest to eliminate these pronunciation errors?
- 7) Do you operate at the segmental or suprasegmental level during pronunciation teaching?
- 8) What would you suggest to eliminate the pronunciation errors of your learners?