The influence of french graphemic rules on english pronunciation of “s” and “ss”

case of study :third year students of english in Oum El Bouaghi univ

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language Sciences and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

It is said that the good speaker of French is the good speaker of English. Language mastery and proficiency are closely related. However, it is found that students who have a French linguistic background make errors when pronouncing English, especially the pronunciation of the letter and the combination / ss /. It is hypothesize that those errors are of an interlingual nature due to the interference of the French graphemic rules. In order to verify this hypothesis, test has been and ministered to a sample of 21 students. The results obtained suggest that students have failed to recognize the correct pronunciation of many words in English. As opposed to those on French. We believe that they are the words with which the students are not familiar. In order to confirm the hypothesized reasons behind such a failure a questionnaire has been administered to the same sample of students. The findings show that the primary cause of mispronunciation of the words is the interference of French language and they confirm the hypothesis. Finally, on the light of research findings, some suggestions are offered to enhance learners’ levels of pronunciation.

Keywords: contrastive analysis.error analysis .foreign language.second language.first language.native language.target language.
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List of abbreviations

CA: Contrastive Analysis
CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
EA: Error Analysis
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language
FL: Foreign Language
IPA: International Phonetic Association
L1: First Language
L2: Second Language
LMD: Licence Master Doctorat
NL: Native Language
RP: Received Pronunciation
TL: Target Language
PhoneticSymbolsUsed

The following phonetic symbols, representing all the sounds that have dealt with in this research, may be used for a quick reference. A detailed description of the sound systems of both French and English and their various spelling representations will be provided in Chapter One. These symbols are part of the International Phonetic Alphabet adopted by the International Phonetic Association, both of which have commonly been abbreviated into IPA.

1. Standard French
   a. Simple Vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>open, front, unrounded</td>
<td>gâteau</td>
<td>gato</td>
<td>cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>open, front, unrounded</td>
<td>acteur</td>
<td>akto1</td>
<td>actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>half close, front, unrounded</td>
<td>effacer</td>
<td>efase</td>
<td>delete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>half open, front, unrounded</td>
<td>mer</td>
<td>mër</td>
<td>sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@</td>
<td>half close, central, unrounded</td>
<td>penser</td>
<td>pase</td>
<td>think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>close, front, unrounded</td>
<td>idée</td>
<td>ide</td>
<td>idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>half close, back, rounded</td>
<td>jaune</td>
<td>Zon</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>half open, back, rounded</td>
<td>objet</td>
<td>ObZE</td>
<td>object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>half close, front rounded</td>
<td>feu</td>
<td>fœ</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>half open, front, rounded</td>
<td>fleuve</td>
<td>fl9v</td>
<td>river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>close, back, rounded</td>
<td>rouge</td>
<td>ruZ</td>
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</tr>
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<td>y</td>
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<td>rue</td>
<td>ry</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
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<td>old</td>
</tr>
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<td>2E</td>
<td>half open, front, unrounded, nasal</td>
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<td>matê</td>
<td>morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2O</td>
<td>half open, back, rounded, nasal</td>
<td>Oncle</td>
<td>2Okl</td>
<td>uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>half open, front, rounded, nasal</td>
<td>parfum</td>
<td>parfê</td>
<td>perfume</td>
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### b. Consonants

<table>
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<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<td>b</td>
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<td>table</td>
</tr>
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<td>d</td>
<td>voiced, dental, stop</td>
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<td>disk</td>
<td>disk</td>
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<td>fam</td>
<td>Woman</td>
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<td>légume</td>
<td>legym</td>
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<td>l</td>
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<td>free</td>
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<td>ane</td>
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<td>vit</td>
<td>fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>maison</td>
<td>mɛz2O</td>
<td>home</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>voiceless, palato-alveolar, fricative</td>
<td>chaud</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>hot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Z</td>
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<td>pigeon</td>
<td>piZɔ</td>
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<tr>
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<td>voiced, palatal, nasal, stop</td>
<td>agneau</td>
<td>aJo</td>
<td>Lamb</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>voiced, velar, nasal, stop</td>
<td>parking</td>
<td>parkiŋ</td>
<td>parking car</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>voiced, bilabial, glide</td>
<td>minuit</td>
<td>minHi</td>
<td>midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>voiced, palatal, glide</td>
<td>cahier</td>
<td>kaje</td>
<td>notebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>voiced, bilabial, velar, glide</td>
<td>oui</td>
<td>wi</td>
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2. Standard English

a. Simple Vowels

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<th>Transcription</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>close, front, unrounded</td>
<td>busy</td>
<td>bIzI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>half close, front, unrounded</td>
<td>leopard</td>
<td>&quot;lep@d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>half open, front, unrounded</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>h&amp;v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>open, central, unrounded, short</td>
<td>above</td>
<td>@&quot;bVv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>open, back, rounded</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>bI&quot;kQz</td>
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<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>close, back, rounded</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>bUk</td>
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<td>@</td>
<td>half close, central, unrounded</td>
<td>thorough</td>
<td>&quot;TVr@</td>
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<td>i:</td>
<td>close, front, unrounded, long</td>
<td>machine</td>
<td>mɔ&quot;Si:n</td>
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<td>3:</td>
<td>half close, central, unrounded, long</td>
<td>bird</td>
<td>b3:d</td>
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<td>A:</td>
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<td>fast</td>
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<td>O:</td>
<td>open, back, rounded, long</td>
<td>cause</td>
<td>kOz</td>
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<td>u:</td>
<td>close, back, rounded, long</td>
<td>beauty</td>
<td>&quot;bju:ti</td>
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d. Diphthongs

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<td>I@</td>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>&quot;TI@rI</td>
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<td>e@</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>pre@</td>
</tr>
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<td>U@</td>
<td>Cure</td>
<td>kjU@</td>
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<tr>
<td>el</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>deI</td>
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<tr>
<td>aI</td>
<td>Either</td>
<td>&quot;aI@D@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OI</td>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>nO lz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@U</td>
<td>Boat</td>
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<td>aU</td>
<td>Now</td>
<td>naU</td>
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c. Triphthongs
### Diphthong

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>aI@</td>
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<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>voiced, bilabial, stop</td>
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<td>bel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>voiced, alveolar, stop</td>
<td>lady</td>
<td>&quot;leIdI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>voiceless, labiodentals, fricative</td>
<td>phase</td>
<td>feIz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>voiced, velar, stop</td>
<td>great</td>
<td>greIt</td>
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<tr>
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<td>voiceless, velar, stop</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>kalNd</td>
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<td>l</td>
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<td>alone</td>
<td>@&quot;l@Un</td>
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<td>m</td>
<td>voiced, bilabial, nasal</td>
<td>name</td>
<td>neIm</td>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>voiced, alveolar, nasal</td>
<td>sun</td>
<td>sVn</td>
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<td>voiced, velar, nasal</td>
<td>sing</td>
<td>siN</td>
</tr>
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<td>p</td>
<td>voiceless, bilabial, stop</td>
<td>apple</td>
<td>&quot;&amp;pl</td>
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<td>s</td>
<td>voiceless, alveolar, fricative</td>
<td>assume</td>
<td>@&quot;sju:m</td>
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<td>t</td>
<td>voiceless, alveolar, stop</td>
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<td>@&quot;trVkt</td>
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<td>vell</td>
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<td>voiced, alveolar, fricative</td>
<td>zoom</td>
<td>zu:m</td>
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<td>S</td>
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<td>shine</td>
<td>SaIn</td>
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<td>voiced, palato-alveolar, fricative</td>
<td>measure</td>
<td>&quot;meZ@</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Voiceless, interdental, fricative</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>Tlnk</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>father</td>
<td>&quot;fA:D@</td>
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<td>h</td>
<td>voiceless, glottal, fricative</td>
<td>behind</td>
<td>bI&quot;haInd</td>
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<td>tS</td>
<td>voiceless, palato-alveolar, affricate</td>
<td>church</td>
<td>tS3:tS</td>
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<td>dZ</td>
<td>voiced, palato-alveolar, affricate</td>
<td>suggest</td>
<td>s@&quot;dZest</td>
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<td>r</td>
<td>voiced, alveolar, retroflex, glide</td>
<td>race</td>
<td>rels</td>
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<td>young</td>
<td>jVN</td>
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<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>voiced, bilabial, glide</td>
<td>queen</td>
<td>kwIn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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4. Means of research

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1. **Statement of the Problem**

In the process of learning a language, which is neither the native language (NL) nor the second language (L2), but rather a language which shares some features of either or both languages; learners are exposed to errors since errors are part of learning, these errors whether of competence or performance result not only from the difference, but also from the similarities.

Some assume that, in the Algerian context, good learners of French are also good learners of English. This may be due to the closeness of both languages; which facilitates the learning of the new language (English). However, English learners (3rd year) at O.B university may have painful experience with the cognate nature of some words which mislead the students in correct use of the new language. One aspect that most of the students neglect in learning the new language is the aspect of pronunciation; how the words are correctly pronounced and what errors they make whenever they pronounce some words. From classroom observation, it is noticed that most students mispronounce words that include the letter's and the combination 'ss' mainly the words with which they are unfamiliar. For instance, the learners pronounce the following words with the sound /z/ instead of /s/: precise, concise, increase, casino … and the following words with /s/ instead of /z/: dessert, dissolve …

2. **Aim of the study**

This dissertation aims at investigating the nature of the common errors that appear in most student’s pronunciation. The study will shed light on the phenomenon of language transfer and more precisely the influence of French graphemic rules on the pronunciation of /z/ and /s/ sounds and which results errors of pronunciation.

3. **Research Questions and hypotheses**

The research aims at addressing the following questions:
Does the mastery of French graphemic rules facilitate learner’s pronunciation of words containing the letter “s” and the combination ‘ss’ in English?

To what extent does French interfere in the student’s pronunciation of the words that include the letters ‘s’ and ‘ss’ in English?

In view of these questions, it is hypothesized that:

Algerian learners of English mispronounce words containing the letter ‘s’ or the combination ‘ss’ with which they are not familiar due to the interference of the French graphemic rules.

4. Means of research:

In order to confirm or to refuse the hypothesis of this research, that is, Algerian students of English mispronounce some words that include the letters ‘s’ and ‘ss’, especially those which they are not familiar with because of their tendency to transfer from French by applying its graphemic rules. It will be more appropriate to use a test to evaluate student’s level of pronunciation. To verify the nature of these common errors and whether these errors are due only to language interference a formal questionnaire will be administered to the same sample of students to clarify the real reasons behind such deviation.

5. Structure of the study

The research dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the review of literature, whereas the second chapter is devoted to the practical part of this research. In chapter one, we will deal with three parts. The first part deals in the theory C.A& the theory of transfer. The second part is reserved to the study of the sound systems of both French and English.
The second chapter is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the data generated by the test given to the students and the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire devoted to the explanation of the nature of errors made by the students in the tests. Finally, some pedagogical implications are suggested, which we think will help students as well as teachers.

CHAPTER I

Pronunciation and language transfer

I.1. Contrastive Analysis Error Analysis and Transfer Theory

I.1.1. Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis is generally defined as systematic comparison of specific linguistic characteristics to compare the sounds, grammars and the vocabulary of two languages with the aim of describing the similar and different points between them. CA, which aims at predicting difficulties in the target language emerged in Europe in the fifties and flourished in America by the sixties. Until the late sixties, The prominent theory that was used in the study of L2 learning was the behaviouristic theory. This theory suggests that learning is a question of habit formation and, hence, the errors are the result of the influences of the mother tongue habits. The notions of transfer and interference were then borrowed from psychological learning and applied to second language learning. For this reason, more attention
was given to the comparison between the learners “NL and the TL in order to predict and explain the errors made by the learners, CA started in the centre of Europe with the works of Fries (1945), Weinreich (1953) then it moved to the USA represented by the work of lado (1957).

**I.1.1.1. Objectives of contrastive Analysis:**

A number of fundamental and applied objectives have been traditionally attributed to CA to help teachers in their tasks teaching a FL. These objectives which we will discuss in turn are:

a) Providing insights into similarities and differences by establishing some universals between the languages.

b) Predicting and explaining the problem in L2 learning.

c) Developing course materials for language teaching.

Firstly, CA aimed at the very beginning to study language families, trying to classify them within one language, therefore (French and Spanish were considered Latin languages, while English, German and Dutch were considered as Germanic ones). The rise of the Prague School gave more importance to the systematic analysis of language on a synchronic basis. Many languages were compared to establish universals and language specific characteristics. These comparisons aimed at describing the similarities and differences between the structures of language. That is to say; more differences lead to difficulties and problems, while more similarities lead to easiness and facilitation. Ladostates that: “we assume that the student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and other extremely difficult. These elements which are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult, The teacher who makes a comparison
of the foreign language with the native language for the students will know better what the real learning problem are and can better provide for teaching them (1957; 2). This view was strongly supported by Banthy, Trager and Waddle (1966:37) who state that “the change that has to take place in the language behavior of a FL student can be equated with the differences between the structures of the student’s NL and that of the TL … the difference between two languages can be established by contrasting two linguistic analyses … what the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by contrastive analysis “. There was a belief that a more effective pedagogy would result if similarities and differences between the NL and TL were carefully identified. The comparison of the sounds was valid and significant because the sound system of languages at the time was limited.

Secondly, CA is aimed at predicting and diagnosing the problem in L2 learning. CA is perceived as an approach that can predict the difficulties that the learner will face in L2. Concerning this point, Oller (1971;79) states that CA is “… a device to predicting points of difficulty and some of the errors that learners will make “. Weinreich (1953 , cited in Cook, 1993;8) states how the two language systems can be acquired in the mind of the same individual. He uses the concept ‘interference’ and defines it as “those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language “(Weinreich, 1953:1); he further claims “the greater the difference between two systems, the greater is the learning problem and potential area of interferences”. According to him, differences lead to difficulties (errors) as a result of the interference of the native language, Lado (1957) agrees with the view of Weinreich, states we assume that the student who comes into contact with a foreign language with find same features of quit easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult Lado, (1957; 2)
CA also aims at helping the teacher to use this knowledge for explaining the errors made by L2 learners. James (1980:148) claims that “An important (element) of the teacher’s role as monitor and assessor of the learner’s performance is to know why certain errors are committed. It is on the basis of such diagnostic knowledge that the teacher organizes feedback to the learner and remedial work “.

The most universal definition that gathers all the objectives of CA is given by Lehiste (1988;127). He claims that CA is “a comparison of structures of language A and language B, and designing teaching materials that will take account of all the anticipated errors”.

**I.1.1.2. Contrastive Analysis Hypotheses**

The major claims of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) which has to do with the behavioristic (stimulus/response) psychology can be explained in the following points:

1. Learning is just a question of habit formation.
2. The comparison between the NL and TL will provide the similarities and differences between the two languages.
3. The habits of the NL may hinder the learners in the target language.
4. The differences between languages create problems while similarities lead to easiness.
5. On the basis of differences, CA may predict the errors that students will make (Corder).

According to Ellis (2008:360), there are two versions of Lado’s CAH that can be distinguished. In its strong version, the CAH claims that all L2 errors could be predicted by identifying the difference between the learners’ native language and the target language. Lee (1968:180), for instance, states that that “the prime cause, or even the sole cause, of difficulty and errors in foreign language learning is interference come from the learner’s native language”.
While in the weak version as proposed by Wardhuagh (1970), transfer is at best, only a partial explanation of learning difficulty, and contrastive analysis could be used only a posteriori to explain rather than predict. Wardhuagh (1970, 125) claims that while the two versions are equally based on the assumption of L1 interference; they differ in that the strong version has a predicative power while that weak version has some power to diagnose errors that have been committed.

a. The Strong Version

The Strong Version or priori version claims that the difficulties, hence the errors that students will make can be predicted by contrasting the two language. Richards (1974:60) argues that “the strong version states that the learner’s behavior is predictable othe basis of a comparison of SL and TL “. The strong version of CA has been made with two assumptions; the first is that the differences between languages lead to errors caused by interference. Lightbown and Spada(2006:78-79) notes that “ errors were often assumed to be the result of ( negative ) transfer from the learner’s nativelanguage“ . The second assumption is that where there are similarities between the native language and the target language, the learner is likely to find easiness and facilitation in learning. Lado (1957:1) argues that “…in the comparison between native and foreign language like the key to ease of difficulty in foreign language learning “. In the preface of his famous book, lado states “ the plan of this book rests the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning , and those that will not cause difficulty , by comparing systematically the language and the culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student . “ (1957: vii).
The strong of the CAH is clearly stated by Lee (1968, cited in Johnson, 2008: 180) who claims that the sole cause of difficulty and error in FL learning is the interference that comes from the NL. In addition, he argues that the difficulties are mainly due to the differences between the two languages, and the greater these differences are, the more the learners will face difficulties. The strong version which was supported by many proponents, was, however, criticized by others for its prediction power. Wardhaugh (1970, cited in Brown, 2007: 250-251) claims that the strong version is unrealistic and impracticable because it oversimplifies the process of predicting difficulty. Wardhaugh states that “at the very least, this (strong) version demands of linguistics that they have available with syntax “. (1970: 125). This is what made him suggest another version, termed as weak version of CAH.

b. The Weak Version

Unlike the strong version, the weak version or the posteriori version does not require a prediction of the difficulties, but it suggests a use of linguistic knowledge to explain actually committed errors. The researches start with learner’s errors, explaining a subset of them by pointing to the similarities and differences between languages. The weak version was supported by many linguists such as Richards (1974: 61) who claims that “the weak claim of CA is that of accounting for learner behavior “. Wardhaugh claims that the weak version does not require the prediction of the difficulty, but it demands the explanation of similarities and differences between the two language systems after observing the interference phenomenon. Therefore, the weak version has an explanatory power. Wardhaugh (1970) considers the weak version of CA as one part of error analysis and argues that a great number of contrastive analysts agree with the weak, but not with the strong, but not with the strong one. He states that the weak version has been proved to be helpful in the field of L2/FL which makes it far from critics or attacks.
I.1.1.3. weaknesses and Criticism to CA

The strong version which was supported by many proponents, was, however, criticized by others for its prediction power, which is no longer theoretical, and needs to be checked. Consequently, many weaknesses have been attributed to CA. Ellis points out that CAH is “too simplistic and too restrictive “(2008: 360).

Firstly, CA focuses on the similarities which many create errors. Duskova (1969) has found many examples where the similarities between two languages do not facilitate the learning of new languages are not structurally isomorphic; there is always divergence and convergence between L1 an L2. Evidence for this criticism is the example of false cognates between French and English where the two words look similar in their spelling, but they differ in their meaning (‘lecture’ in French to mean ‘reading’ and ‘lecture’ in English to mean a ‘sermon’, among others). In pronunciation as well, there are some sounds which are shared by two languages but that are not pronounced in the same way in the words. For instance the sound /s/ is pronounced /z/ in the word ‘casino’ in French, but with /s/ in English.

Secondly, differences do not always lead to difficulties and similarities do not always mean easiness. Nickel (1971) claims that different elements are necessarily difficult since they are completely new elements, and, thus, learning them will be easy for the learner. Moreover, totally new elements have been proved to be easier to learn. For example, words which have two different sounds in the first language and the target language may be easier to be memorized.

Although there were some replies to the criticisms against CA, mainly by Carl James (1983), who argues that contrastive analysis had never pretended to predict all the difficulties explicitly (cited in Beghoul, 2007:13). However it was argued that learners’
errors are not only due to interference which CA claims; they can also be intralingual and developmental errors. For this reason, CA lost its value and much of its credibility.

I.1.2. Error analysis

The failure of CA to account for many learners’ errors led to the adoption of the EA approach as a tool for investigating how the learners acquire an L2. EA has a much shorter history, dating from the 1960s and early 1970s. Unlike CA, EA sees learner’s errors positively i.e. it gives much attention to the comprehension of L2 acquisition (James 1998, cited in Brown, 2005: 257). Corder (1967: 167) reports “A learner’s errors… are in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies and procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of language.

“That is to say, the mistakes which learners commit should not be overlooked, but they should be investigated and analyzed in order to find clues of the mechanisms that contribute in the emergence of errors.

EA aims at identifying and describing errors produced by the learners in their interlanguage system, Selinker’s (1972) terminology. It is argued that it is a form of language different from both the NL and TL but which shares some characteristics of both. Selinker argues that since there are differences between FL learner’s utterances and those of native speakers of the same TL.

One would be completely justified in hypothesizing, perhaps even compelled to hypothesize, the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner’s attempted production of a TL norm. The linguistic system we will call interlanguage.(1972:176)
The phenomenon “interlanguage” is signified by different items like: approximative systems; Nemser’s terminology (Brown256) idiosyncratic dialect (Corder1971, 151).

I.1.2.1. Fossilization

As long as the learner remains in exposure to TL data, his performance will come better with time; it will fit more and more the TL criteria and contains less error. Despite the fact that learners may achieve a certain level of proficiency and mastery of the TL, some of the errors will not disappear from their language production or performance. These errors are systematic is called fossilization which Brown(2007: 270) referred to by “the relative permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into a person’s second language competence.”

I.1.2.2. Errors Vs Mistakes

Corder (1973:256-260) distinguishes between random deviations and systematic deviations. Random deviations (mistakes) are, generally, what is meant by “slips of the tongue or the pen”. There are many reasons that cause such mistakes like tiredness, nervousness, excitement … etc. so, such mistakes are not systematic since do not result from the learner’s ignorance of rules or lack of knowledge. They occur when the learner knows the correct TL rule but uses it inconsistently; and case the learner is able to correct himself of his attention is draw to them, easily.

On the other hand, a systematic deviation (errors) occurs when the learner has discovered a rule but is the wrong one. The learner has not yet acquired a particular HT structure, and as result performs it the wrong way. In this sense, errors signify a defect in the underlying knowledge about the TL (256-260).

I.1.2.3. Stages of Error Analysis
1.2.3.1 Identification

In order to recognize the errors, Corder (1971; in Brown, 2007: 260) clarifies this by distinguishing between overt and covert errors. He claims that the learner’s errors may be overt or covert. The former is when the utterance is not acceptable at the level of the TL rules i.e. grammatically incorrect. The latter is when it seems all right (grammatical) but it does not convey the intended meaning.

1.2.3.2 Description

After identifying errors, it is needed to describe them since errors recognition depends on their interpretation to the utterances in which they appear. Corder (1972:37) argues that “the whole success of our description of errors hinges upon the correctness of our interpretation of the learners intention of meaning.”

Erroneous utterances are classified according to: grammar, phonology, orthography and discourse. Errors can also be classified as ones of addition, omission, substitution and misordering (wrong selection).

1.2.4. Analysis and Explanation of Errors

Error analysts consider this stage, where the source of the errors is determined, as the most important one in EA.

EA has found that the source of errors is not only the interference, but there are other sources. (Richards 1971; in Johnson, 2001:66) classified errors as intralingual, interlingual (interference), and developmental errors.
1.1.2.4.1 Intralingual Errors

They are those faulty forms within the language itself; they do not reflect structures from another language. They reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions for rule application (Ellis, 2008: 53). Richards (1971) identified four types of intralingual errors: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized (Richards 1971; in Johnson, 2001: 67). Overgeneralization is the main source of such errors; for instance, when the learner uses an utterance like *he can speaks* instead of *he can speak*. This indicates that he over generalized the rule v+s with the third person for the present tense.

1.1.2.4.2. Interlingual Errors

These errors are the result of the use of elements from one language while producing (speaking) another. Learners tend to transfer rules from their native language to the target language. According to Ellis (2008:53), transfer errors are common at the phonological and lexical levels. An example of interlingual phonological errors is when a learner, who knows French, pronounces the letter /s/ in the word *useful* /z/ instead of /s/.

1.1.2.4.3. Developmental Errors

They are the errors that occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the TL based on limited knowledge. They are similar to those made by children who are acquiring the TL as their mother tongue, and this what the term developmental reveals. Lightbown and
Spada (2006:81) argue that “such errors reflect learners’ understanding of the second language system itself rather than an attempt to transfer characteristics of their first language”.

### I.1.2.5. Weaknesses of EA

There have been a number of critiques of EA. According to Ellis (2008:61-62), the claimed inadequacies of EA include: weaknesses in methodological procedures and limitations in scope. The former includes methodological problems involving all the stages of analysis. The latter is because EA focuses only on the errors which learners produce at a single point in time; this can only provide a partial picture i.e. no account of what learners do of development over time.

### I.1.3. The Study of Transfer

Foreign learners, usually, tend to transfer the grammatical structures of their native language to the target language. Lado (1957) asserts that “we have ample evidence that when learning a foreign language we tend to transfer our entire native language system.” (11) Odlin (1989:27) defines transfer as “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously […] acquired.” Where the foreign language differs from the NL, difficulties are assumed to be the result of negative transfer; and where there are similarities neither difficulties nor errors are possible (positive transfer). In other words, when coming into contact with a foreign language, some features are found to be easy and others difficult. The elements that are similar to the NL will be easy to learn, whereas those that are different will be quite difficult (Lado, 1957:2).

Ellis (2008:359), also, provides a definition for the term transfer: “the hypothesis that the learning of task A [NL] will affect the subsequent learning of task B [FL].”

Transfer is considered as the dominant factor in FLL; it is due to differences between L1 and L2. However, similarities, as well, may cause serious problems and errors, in addition to
other sources such as intralingual and developmental errors. Concerning this point, Hocking
(1969:94-95) argues that “the idea that it is only points of difference between L1s and L2s that
cause serious difficulty is simply not true, though it is surprisingly often accepted as self-
evident.” Selinker (1972) states,

language transfer is best thought of as a cover term for a whole class of behaviours,
processes and constraints, each of which has to do with cross-linguistic influence; i.e. the
influence and use of priorlinguistic knowledge, usually but not exclusively native
language(NL) knowledge (Selinker, 1972: 208)

The term “cross-linguistic influence” is used as an equivalent to the term “language transfer”. It
does not refer only to the influence of NL on L2, but also the influence of L2 on FL. There are
different possible measures for cross-linguistic affects: positive transfer and negative transfer that
include avoidance and overuse (Ellis, 2008: 354).

I.1.3.1. The Diversity of the Forms of Transfer Effects.

I.1.3.1.1. Positive Transfer

When there are similarities between L1 and L2, learning L1 will facilitate the learning of L2
(Ellis, 2008: 355). That is, cross-linguistic similarities can facilitate FLL through positive transfer
from the NL to the TL, on the basis of the prior knowledge that the learner has about his L1
system. Ringbom emphasized that “learners, consciously or not, do not look for differences, they
look for similarities wherever they can find them” (Ringbom 2007; in Ellis, 2008: 355).
Positive transfer can occur at all levels of linguistic learning. For instance, similarities between any two languages’ lexical systems can give the learner of one a head start in learning the other and reduce the time needed for learning. But, It should be paid attention that some similarities may mislead and cause errors as in the case of “LES FAUX AMIS”. Learners should recognize that the word “actuellement” in French does not mean the same thing as the word “actually” in English. In this point, Ellis (2008:355) argues that “similarities are evident not so much in the total absence of errors […] but rather in a reduced number of errors, as well in learning task.”

I.1.3.1.2 Negative Transfer

It is a result of the learner attempts to use structures from his previously acquired languages (NL or L2) where the TL structures are different. Hence, he may over -generalize rules from L1 that do not fit L2 norms (Ellis,2007: 355).This could be a reason for the confusion in pronouncing /s/ and /z/ sounds in English that will be discussed later.

I.1.3.1.3. Avoidance

It arises when the learner knows what the TL is but finds it too difficult to use in the particular circumstances because of differences between the NL and the TL. In this case, Ellis (2008:357) argues that “the effects of the L1 are evident not in what learners do (errors), but in what they do not (omission).” For instance, Schachter attested, in his study, that Japanese and Chinese English language learners are found to produce fewer errors when using relative clauses than Arabic and Persian learners because they have not used much relative clauses; avoid using them (Schachter1974; in Ellis, 2008:357).

I.1.3.1.4. Overuse
Overuse or overproduction can occur as a result either of intralingual processes (over generalization) or of avoidance (Ellis, 2008: 358). For example, English foreign learners, generally, tend to over generalize the rule of the past simple for regular verbs to irregular ones. In addition, avoiding the use of some structures in the TL will lead to the use of other structures that are not frequent.

1.1.4. Constraints on Transfer Effects

Transfer in FLL is, generally, influenced by many factors:

a- Cross-linguistic commonness

b- Markedness (marked and unmarked forms)

c- Distance (NL linguistic data and the TL)

Conclusion

Because of the weaknesses of the CA and EA, none of these two approaches is complete by itself; rather they are completing each other. The cross-linguistic influence in FLL is a useful notion that is adopted by both perspectives. It is said to be inevitable phenomenon whenever two languages exist in a performer’s mind. In the next part, the sound system of the two languages (French and English) as a first step for achieving the purpose of this work will be dealt with.

1.2. The Sound System of French and English

1.2.1. Sounds Classification
The sounds of both English and French will be described using some universal criteria to describe world languages. Generally speaking, sounds are divided into two major categories: vowels and consonants. Such a division is made according to the way the sounds are articulated. Sounds are either voiced or voiceless. When the vocal cords in the larynx vibrate it is voiced, which is the case of all vowels. In the case of consonants, some are voiced, while others are voiceless.

**Vowels**

They will be classified using the system of Cardinal Vowels as suggested by the British phonetician Jones (1997). Vowels are then classified according to three dimensions:

- **a.** The part of the tongue: Whether it is the front, the center, or the back of the tongue that is raised to the palate or lowered from.
- **b.** The distance between the upper surface part of the tongue and the palate. This distance determines whether a vowel is close, half-closed, half-open, or open.
- **c.** The shape of the lips: Whether the lips are rounded or spread. The shape of the lips determines whether the vowel is rounded or unrounded.

**Consonants**

Five criteria are generally used by phoneticians and phonologists to classify consonants of world languages (Beghoul, 2007: 42), which are:

- **a.** The state of the glottis: Whether the vocal cords vibrate or not (voiced vs. voiceless).
- **b.** The passage of the air: Whether the air moves only through the oral cavity (oral), only through the nasal cavity (nasal), or through both of them (nasal).
- **c.** The place of articulation: referring to the point of contact between the speech organs in the production of the sound (bilabial, labio dental, dental, alveolar, post alveolar, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, laryngeal, and glottal).
d. The manner of articulation: It is the manner in which the air stream flows out of the oral cavity (continuant or stop with their subdivisions) and whether the articulation is consonantal or is vocalic. It is consonantal when it is with a major obstruction to the airflow, if, on the other hand, it is without a major obstacle, it is vocalic. In the latter case, the consonant may be classified as a semi-vowel, in the sense that it is phonetically vowel i.e. produced without a major obstacle to the airflow, but, phonologically (functionally), consonant as it occurs at the margins of syllables, not at the center,
e. Syllabicity: Whether the consonant may be syllabic or not, i.e. whether it may phonologically function as a vowel and be the center of a syllable, hence it is called syllabic consonant or not since it is the vowel that generally occupies the center. The most frequent syllabic consonant is the consonant /l/ as in the word 'middle' [mIdl], in such case, the sound /l/ functions as a vowel occupying the center of the word.

Since the main objective of this research paper is the way the letter ‘s’ is pronounced in the different word forms, i.e. when it is pronounced /s/ and when it is pronounced /z/, more attention will be given to the graphemic rules that govern pronunciation of the letter ‘s’ in French to check if there exists a general rule that governs the pronunciation of the letter ‘s’ in English. Hence, our description of all the sounds will be brief using the symbols that are part of the International Phonetic Alphabet adopted by the International Phonetic Association IPA.

French

The French sound system consists of 37 sounds: 16 vowels, 3 semi- vowels and 18 consonants. The main characteristic of this sound system is that it consists of four nasal vowels in addition to the oral ones and this is what makes the difference between the French sound system and other languages’ sound systems.

1.2.2.1. Simple Vowels
Some phoneticians claim that Standard French, commonly known as Parisian French, includes 16 simple vowels (Blake 1973), while some others (Delattre 1968), state only 15 vowels (Blake and Delattre in Beghoul 2007).

\[
\begin{align*}
/\acute{i}/ & \text{ is oral, front, close} \\
/\acute{y}/ & \text{ is front, close, rounded} \\
/\acute{u}/ & \text{ is oral, back, close, rounded} \\
/\acute{a}/ & \text{ is oral, central, open} \\
/\acute{a}/ & \text{ is oral, central, open} \\
/\acute{u}/ & \text{ is oral, back, close, rounded} \\
/\acute{a}/ & \text{ is oral, central, open} \\
/\acute{e}/ & \text{ is oral, front, mid} \\
/\acute{\acute{e}}/ & \text{ is front, open} \\
/\acute{\vO}/ & \text{ is oral, front, mid} \\
/\acute{\acute{\vO}}/ & \text{ is front, open, rounded} \\
/\acute{\vO}/ & \text{ is oral, back, mid, rounded} \\
/\acute{\acute{\vO}}/ & \text{ is central, open} \\
/\acute{\vO}/ & \text{ is oral, front, open} \\
/\acute{\acute{\vO}}/ & \text{ is back, open, rounded} \\
/\acute{\vO}/ & \text{ is oral, front, open, rounded}
\end{align*}
\]

1.2.2.2. Diphthongs

There are eleven combinations of vowels in French. The tendency in transcribing these diphthongs is to combine the two glide consonants /j/ and /w/ with a vowel just as it is the case of the English diphthongs in the American phonetic tradition. Hence, a word like ‘roi’ is transcribed as /rwa/, and a word like bataille is transcribed as /bataj/. Below are examples of 10 diphthongs with their orthographical representations:

\[
\begin{align*}
/\acute{a}j/ & \text{ travail, } /\acute{e}j/ \text{ pareil, } /\acute{\acute{e}}j/ \text{ oreille, } /\acute{\acute{a}}j/ \text{ feuille, } /j\acute{\acute{e}}/ \text{ siege, } /j\acute{\acute{\acute{e}}}/ \text{ bien, } /j\acute{\acute{\acute{\acute{0}}}}/ \text{ dieu, } \\
/\acute{w}a/ & \text{ oiseau, } /\acute{w}\acute{\acute{\acute{e}}}/ \text{ loin.}
\end{align*}
\]

1.2.2.3. Triphthongs

They are also not so evident because they include one consonant as one of the glides, 7 triphthongs are then put as examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
/\acute{\acute{e}}j/ & \text{ veiller, } /\acute{\acute{e}}ja/ \text{ malveillant, } /j\acute{\acute{e}}j/ \text{ vieille, } /\acute{\acute{w}a}j/ \text{ cahier, } /\acute{\acute{w}j}\acute{\acute{e}}/ \text{ moyen, } /\acute{\acute{w}j}\acute{\acute{\acute{e}}}j/ \text{ noyau, } /\acute{\acute{i}e}j/ \text{ appuyé}
\end{align*}
\]
1.2.3.4. Consonants

There are 21 consonants in the French sound system containing 3 semi consonants which are /j/, /H/ and /w/. The consonants will be classified according to the principles mentioned before in an alphabetical order.

**The graphemic Rules of the Sound /s/**

As we have seen from the previous tables, a sound can be realized by more than one grapheme notably the short vowel /i/ and the voiceless consonant /s/. There are some cases where we can find two sounds that are realized by the same grapheme such as ‘c’ for the sounds /k/ and /s/, and the grapheme ‘s’ for the sounds /s/ and /z/.

Since our concern in this research is the way the sound /s/ is pronounced in different words, we have to mention some of the rules that govern the pronunciation of this sound which we assume that students are familiar with as they have dealt with in the fundamental school. According to Mebirouk (2004) and Einhorn (2006) the letter ‘s’ is pronounced /z/ when it is inserted between two vowels in the word such as *maison* and *mesure*. As an exception, in compound words such *parasol, tournesol, soubresaut* and *vraisemblable* where it is pronounced with /s/ though it is situated between two vowels. In all other cases, it is pronounced with /s/. For instance, at the beginning of the word as in *simple*, between two consonants such as in *instance*, between a vowel and a consonant such as in *observation* and if it is combined with another ‘s’ (hence be called the geminate ‘ss’) such as in *boisson*.

**English**

A study of the English sound system will cover the same aspects of French: Vowels (the three types), consonants, stress and the graphemic rules of the letter ‘s’.

1.2.3.1. Vowels
UK Standard English, the pronunciation of which is known as Received Pronunciation or RP, contains twenty-five vowels. They are divided into 12 simple vowels, 9 diphthongs or combinations of two vowels, and 5 triphongs or combinations of three vowels. All vowels are oral, that is to say, the passage of the air is solely through the oral cavity. The feature of nasality occurs only at an allophonic level and is just an aspect of connected speech. Based on Roach's classification, this section classifies the English vowels following the criteria above.

\[
\begin{align*}
/\text{i}/ & \text{ is oral front close} & /\text{ə}/ & \text{is oral central mid} \\
/\text{ɪ}/ & \text{is oral front close} & /\text{ɜ}/ & \text{is oral central mid} \\
/\text{e}/ & \text{is oral front mid} & /\text{ɒ}/ & \text{is oral back open} \\
/\text{æ}/ & \text{is oral front open} & /\text{ə}/ & \text{is oral back open} \\
/\text{ɑ}/ & \text{is oral back open} & /\text{ɔ}/ & \text{is oral back close} \\
/\text{ʌ}/ & \text{is oral central open} & /\text{u}/ & \text{is oral back close rounded}
\end{align*}
\]

1.2.3.2. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are combinations of two vowels. There are three centring diphthongs i.e. diphthongs end with a gliding towards the central schwa (Roach, 1983 :20). Example: **Clearing /Iə/, sure/ ə/, there /eə/,** and five closing ones, i.e. those gliding towards /I/ or towards /ə/. Example: **they /eI/, boy /I/, mighty /aɪ/, go/ə/, now /a/**

1.2.3.3. Triphthongs
The triphthongs are combination of three vowels. A triphthong starts with one of the five closing diphthongs and ends with the schwa. Here are the various spelling representations: /ˈelə/layer, /ˈælə/ire, /ɪə/employer, /əʊ/follower, /a ə/our.

### 1.2.3.4. Consonants

There are 24 consonants in English. They can be classified by the same criteria used to classify the French language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of articulation</th>
<th>Manner of Artication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/p/ is oral, bilabial</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b/ is voiced, oral, bilabial</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/ is oral, alveolar</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/ is voiced, oral, alveolar</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/ is oral, velar</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/g/ is voiced, oral, velar</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/ voiced, bilabial</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal, syllabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/ voiced, alveolar</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal, syllabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋ/ isvoiced, velar</td>
<td>it is stop, consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/ oral, labiodental</td>
<td>Itis consonantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetic Symbol</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>voiced, oral, labiodental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>is oral, alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral, alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>is oral, palate, alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral, palate, alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td>is oral, interdental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral, interdental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>is oral, palate alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>is voiced oral palate alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/h/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral, glottal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>voiced, oral, alveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/j/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral, palatal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>is voiced, oral, bilabial, velar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 01**

**Phonetic Features of French Consonants (Place of Articulation and Manner of Articulation)**

**Graphemic Rules of the Sound /s/**

There is no general rule that governs the pronunciation of this sound in English. The only general rule is that the ‘s’ is pronounced with /s/ if it appears both at the beginning and at the end
of the words. In the other cases, it depends on the word, rather than on the position of the ‘s’, for instance the verb *use* is pronounced with /z/, while the noun *use* is pronounced with /s/. Some linguists such as Lilly and Viel (1977:82) suggest some rules where the letter ‘s’ is pronounced with /s/ and where it is pronounced with /z/. They set up the following:

a-The consonant ‘s’ is pronounced with /z/ in two cases:

1. When it occurs between two sounds, the one which is a stressed vowel as in the words *rose* and *misery*.
2. When it occurs before a syllabic consonant such as in *resemble*, *socialism*.

b-The consonant ‘s’ is pronounced with /s/ in the following cases:

1. at the beginning of the words such as *sample*, *sister*.
2. at the end of the words such as *gas* and *this*.
3. between two vowels such as in *comparison* and *fantasy*.
4. between a vowel and a consonant as in the words *obstacle* and *establish*.

Lilly and Viel (1977) have given a list of 30 words as an exception to the rules above such as *useful*, *increase*…However; these rules cannot be applied to all the words. For instance, although the ‘s’ appears before a syllabic consonant in the words *bison*, *nursery*, *basin*...it is pronounced with /s/. In words, like the verbs *close* and *lose* for instance, though the ‘s’ is between two vowels, it is pronounced with /z/. In addition, there are many words that Lilly and Viel did not consider such as the words *houses*.

**Conclusion**

Both French and English are important in the Algerian system because the two languages are necessary and useful in meeting future needs and job requirements. French is the first Indo-European language learnt and when the pupils discover English; another Indo-European language with the same characters, the transfer from French is practically impossible to avoid. The present research focuses on the interference of the French language in the English production and
pronunciation of the letter ‘s’ and the combination ‘ss’ since learners of the later may be misled by the graphemic rules that govern the pronunciation of this letter in French.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

II.1. Students’ Test

II.1.1. Aim of the Test
The target behind the present test is to examine students’ failure in English pronunciation, comparing it with their performance in French. It is to test subjects according to their achievement in French.

II.1.2. Description of the Test

The test was administered to a group of 21, third year students of English at the University of OumElBouaghi. The sample was selected randomly. The subjects were given a test of two sections; one in English and the other in French. In both sections, students are asked to classify a group of words including the letter’s ‘s’ and ‘ss’ in one of two columns, one for words pronounced with /s/, and the other for words pronounced with the sound /z/.

II.1.3. Analysis of the Test

Each student’s correct answer was scored by giving him one point, that is to say, each subject's total scores could range from 0 to 21 in French, and 0 to 25 in English, and this is done according to the number of words in each language

II.1.3.1. Students’ achievement in French and English

Students’ scores in the test are presented in the following table ranking from the high marks to the low ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores in French</th>
<th>Scores in English</th>
<th>Difference in Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21/21</td>
<td>25/25</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that the results of students in French test are better than the ones in English test. This is illustrated by the total average in both languages; the total average of students’ marks in the French test is 17, 61, and the total average of students’ marks in the English test is 08, 08. Moreover, almost all students have had marks above the average in the French test, ranging from 14 to 21 and only one student has not had the average. However, the majority of students have not had the average in the English test: among 21 students, only 2 students have had the average with marks 16 and 15, while the rest of the students have not had the average; with marks between 6 and 12.
Figure 01
Correlation between French and English Scores

As two variables, the scores in French (Y) and English (X), show that the relationship between the two variables is very weak, illustrated in figure 01.

II.1.3.2. Difference in Performance For each student

Figure 02
Results of Each Student in English and French Tests

The figure shows that the correlation between the marks students have in the French test, and those in the English test is very weak as illustrated by the differences in the height of the designs.
II.1.3.3. Analysis of Students’ Errors in the French Test

In this analysis, the focus is on students’ wrong answers because the main objective is to know the nature of their errors. Hence, only words where students fail to classify successfully with more than 70% will be analyzed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Wrong Answers</th>
<th>Correct Answers</th>
<th>No Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'excuse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la base</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le casino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precise</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tournesol</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessert</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la dose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasol</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.85%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaussure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vraisemblant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It appears clearly from the table above that the students have done well in the French test. Only 62 answers (14%) are wrong, while 365 answers (82.7%) are correct, and only 14 answers (3.16%) are not answered. This is due to the fact that students master the graphemic rules of the letter ‘s’ and the combination 'ss'. Because it is common in Algeria that French is taught before English, and even if students do not speak French fluently, their speech is interrelated with French words. The circle below demonstrates better the results.

II.1.3.4. Analysis of Students’ Errors in the English Test

Again, in this analysis, the focus is on students’ wrong answers because the main objective is to know the nature of their errors. Hence, only areas where students fail to give correct classification with more than 70% will be analyzed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Wrong Answers</th>
<th>Correct Answers</th>
<th>No Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71.42%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90.47%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparison</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.61%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.66%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>precisely</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.66%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concise</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90.47%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>95.32%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purchase</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.80%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessert</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disappear</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.61%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useless</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disadvantage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.85%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.80%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In contrast with the French test, students have failed to give the right classification for the half of the words. 303 are wrong answers (57.70%), while only 200 are correct answers (38%). For the rest, 22 words (4.18%) have not been answered.

When counting the words where almost all the students failed, it is noticed that words which exist in the French language like; base, excuse, comparison, and abuse (wrong answers 76%) that is to say, students transfer the French rules to English as a result of the similarity between the French words like la base, l’excuse, la comparaison and abusé. The rest are words, like close (wrong answers 80%), where students mixed the adjective with the noun, which is meant to be a result of their false hypothesis. It is assumed that this is due to the lack of exposure to English.

For words like, concise, used, disappear, useless and disadvantage (wrong answers more than 80%), it is assumed that students failed because of the application of the French graphemic rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter /s/.

The figure below shows clearly the percentage of correct and wrong answers.
II.1.4. Discussion of the Test

From the analysis of the students’ answers in the test, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The students’ good achievement in French is due to their mastery of the graphemic rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter ‘s’ and the combination ‘ss’

2. The students’ failure in English is due to:
   a. The transfer of the French graphemic rules of the letter /s/ to the English language.
   b. The false hypothesis they make when practising English.

II.2. Questionnaire

Introduction

Analysing the students’ performance in the two tests, French and English, has provided us with some data about the students’ most common errors; we have tried in our analysis of these errors to give a logical interpretation as to the reasons behind these deviations. We need to confirm some of these reasons at least from the students themselves. The following questionnaire is administered for that purpose.
II.2.1. Subjects

The informants consist of the same sample of students in the first practical part of this research as they will be familiar with the questions we will provide them since they will be related to the questions they have answered in the two tests.

II.2.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of ten (10) sentences all of which are written in English. Each sentence consists of one of the words that most, if not all, of the students failed to pronounce. The students’ wrong answers in the English test come in 10 categories. Students are given four options in each sentence, and they are asked to put a mark in front of each correct answer; they can mark up to four answers if needed and where they think that no answer is correct they are supposed to leave the options (answers) unmarked. We could have added one option that is that of no answers, but we were afraid the students may get aware of the wrong answers they made in the test. We decided to count the answers left unmarked as the correct ones.

In fact, it has been such a hard challenge to set such a trap for students since one of the possibilities is that some students may discover such a trap, hence their performance will be different from what is expected, but it is helpful at the same time if students take the sentences as correct one giving us a clear picture about their performance in the tests and more important providing us with the real reasons that lead to the distortion in their pronunciations. In other words, students’ answers will justify the errors they made in pronouncing these words.

II.2.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire
We will be analysing each question on its own to draw up some facts about the nature of the errors they made.

II.2.3.1. Question 1

The letter’s’ in the English word precise is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/.

2. The same word in French précise is pronounced with /z/ sound.

3. It is placed between two vowels in that word.

4. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 05**

Students’ Answers to Question 1

The results obtained from student’ answers to question 1 are: 34.21% of students have chosen the first answer ‘because teachers pronounce the word with /z/’, 36.84% have selected the second answer ‘the same word in French précise is pronounced with /z/ sound’, 18.42% have opted for the third answer ‘because the letter ‘s’ is placed between two vowels in that word’, 10.53% have marked the fourth answer ‘based on their knowledge of English’, whereas 0% have
provided no answer indicating that no student has realized the correct pronunciation of the word precise. We can notice that the percentages of answers are almost the same between 36.84% and 34.21% demonstrating that students’ failure is due to many reasons. Some choices can be grouped as one common reason like the second and the third answers. The highest percentage of students (36.84%) have argued that the letter ‘s’ in the word precise is pronounced with /z/ because the same word in French précise is pronounced with /z/; besides, 18.42% have claimed that the reason is that the letter ‘s’ is occurring between two vowels. This is a good indication that the students have transferred the rules they know in French to their target language (English). The students can be said also to be misled by cognate nature of the word. The second higher percentage of students, representing 34.21%, have justified their choices by their teachers’ pronunciation of the word; students have claimed that their teachers pronounce the word with /z/; this implies that they are misled by their teachers’ mispronunciation of the word; classroom observation shows that most of the teachers pronounce the word precise with /z/ /prI"saIz/ instead of /prI"saIs/. The teachers’ pronunciation becomes fossilized; that is their wrong assumption persists until it becomes the right rule in their minds. The remaining percentage of the students whose claim is based on their knowledge can be related to their teachers’ role in the classroom, which in turn leads them to produce errors.

Students’ failure in pronouncing the word precise can be interpreted as follows:

a. Negative transfer “interference” of the French rules to English which results from the similarity between the words (precise in English and précise in French) as well as the application of the French graphemic rules in English.

b. Teachers’ misleading pronunciation as a result of their fossilization which in turn leads to students’ mispronunciation as a result of their imitation to their teachers.
II.2.3.2. Question 2

The letter’s in the English word concise is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. It is placed between two vowels in that word.

2. My teachers regularly pronounce it with /z/.

3. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge in English.

4. There are other words spelt like this word which are pronounced with /z/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 06

Students’ Answers to Question 2**

The results obtained from the students’ answers to question 2 can be classified as follows: 27.91% of students have chosen the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ is pronounced with/z/ in the word concise because it is placed between two vowels’, 34.88% of students have marked the second answer ‘because teachers pronounce the word with/z/’, 20.93% have preferred the third answer ‘based on their knowledge of English’, 13.95% have selected the last answer ‘there are words
spelt like the word concise which are pronounced with /z/’, whereas the remaining percentage representing 2.33% corresponding to one student has been left unmarked. We believe that the only student who has recognized the correct pronunciation of the word concise /k@n"saIs/ in the test has left all the answers unmarked as s/he knows that none of the answers is correct. The highest percentage of students (34.88%) have claimed that the letter ‘s’ in the word concise is pronounced with /z/ hence /k2On"saIz/ because their teachers pronounce it with /z/. This shows that the students’ are affected by their teachers’ mispronunciation of the word. Most of the teachers, having been once undergraduates with similar backgrounds and under similar conditions of learning keep many of the elements and patterns until much later stages of their professional careers. This, in turn, leads their students to produce the same error. Students’ mispronunciation of the word can be also be related to their transfer of the graphemic rules of the letter ‘s’ in French to the target language, as the percentage of students who have chosen the first answer indicates (27.91%). Other students have claimed that they know from their knowledge of English that the word concise is pronounced with /z/. This may be related to their teachers’ pronunciation of the word rather than to individual knowledge resulting from listening or checking dictionaries. The remaining percentage of students (13.95%) have argued that there are words spelt like the word concise which are pronounced with /z/; they may have in their minds the idea that there exists a rule similar to the French one by which they can generalize to the pronunciation of all words that include the letter ‘s’. In short, students’ failure to achieve the correct pronunciation of the word concise may be related to.

a. Teachers misleading pronunciation as a result of its fossilization.

b. Interference from French, through the application of its graphemic rules in English.

c. Students’ false hypotheses about the TL as a result of limited exposure to it.

II.2.3.3. Question 3
The letter ‘s’ in the word close in “My new house is close to the school” is pronounced with /z/ because:

1. The letter /s/ in this word is placed between two vowels.

2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.

3. My teachers pronounce it with /z/.

4. The verb ‘close’ which is spelt in the same way is pronounced with /z/.

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Table 07

Students’ Answers to Question 3

The results obtained from the answers to question 3 can be classified into: 32.14% of students have selected the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the word close is pronounced with /z/ because it is placed between two vowels’, 25% have marked the second answer ‘they know that from their knowledge of English’, 10.71% have chosen the third answer ‘teachers pronounce it with /z/’, and 35.71% have opted for the last answer ‘the verb close which is spelt alike is pronounced with /z/’. Whereas the remaining percentage, representing 3.57%, consists of the unmarked answers. The number of the latter corresponds to the number of correct answers in the
test. The table shows that the percentages of three answers are close to each others; this indicates that the students' failure is due to more than one reason. The highest percentage of students, 35.71%, have argued that the letter 's' in the word close in the sentence "My new house is close to the school" is pronounced with /z/ because the verb close is pronounced with /z/; this shows that the students have built a false hypothesis about how the adjective close is pronounced based on their assumption that since the verb close, with which they are familiar is pronounced with /z/, it is likely that the adjective close, with which they seem not to be familiar is pronounced with /z/. The second highest percentage of students, 32.14%, have claimed that the letter ‘s’ in the adjective close is pronounced with /z/ because it is placed between two vowels, this makes clear that their mispronunciation of the word is due to interference from French. Some students’ claim is based on their knowledge of English; we believe that this knowledge is based on a false hypothesis they make about how the word close in the sentence is pronounced because of their limited experience rather than being familiar with the word. That is why we can classify this claim within the first interpretation.

In short, the students’ failure to recognize the correct pronunciation of the adjective close in the sentence can be related to:

a. Students’ false hypothesis due to their limited exposure to language, treating an adjective as its verb.

b. Interference from French due to the application of its graphemic rules on the pronunciation of the word in English.

II.2.3.4. Question 4

The letter 's' in the word houses is pronounced with /s/ sound because:
1. The word house, which is the singular of houses, is pronounced with /s/.

2. I know that it is pronounced with /s/ from my experience in English.

3. My teachers pronounce it with /s/ sound.

4. Other words spelt in the same way are pronounced with /s/.

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**Table 08**

**Students’ Answers to Question 4**

The results obtained from the students’ answers to question 4 can be divided into: 56.67% of students have chosen the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the word houses is pronounced with /s/ sound because the word house, which is the singular form of houses, is pronounced with /s/’. 30.00% have selected the second ‘their experience in English’; 3.33% have chosen the third answer ‘teachers pronounce it with /s/ sound’, and 6.67% have marked the fourth answer ‘other words spelt in the same way are pronounced with /s/’, whereas the remaining percentage, representing 3.33%, consists of the unmarked answers, which corresponds in its number to the number of students who have transcribed correctly the word in the test, indicating their awareness of such a misleading question. The percentages obtained show that the students’ main reasons in pronouncing the word houses with /s/ are those found in the first and second answers. The highest percentage of students, 56.67%, has claimed that the word houses, which is in the plural form is pronounced /haUsIz/ because the singular form is also pronounced /haUs/. Students can be said to mispronounce the word houses due to the false hypothesis they make about how the word is
really pronounced due to their familiarity with the singular form of the word houses, as well as with some rules governing the /s/ of the plural at the end of the words. Therefore, we suppose that they apply the sum of this knowledge in the word houses and pronounce it erroneously. The second highest percentage, 30%, has claimed that their knowledge of English allows them to know the answer. We think that this knowledge does not express their familiarity with the word, as they come into contact with it, but it rather shows some false hypothesis about the word based on limited experience; this claim can, then, be related to the first reason.

We can say that the students’ failure in recognizing the correct pronunciation of the word houses has rather to do with the false hypothesis they have developed about the word rather than with the interference of French.

II.2.3.5. Question 5

The letter’s’ in the word casino is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/ sound.

2. The same word in French casino is pronounced with /z/.

3. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my experience in English.

4. The letter’s’ is located between two vowels in this word.

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Table 09
Students’ Answers to Question 5

As the table above shows, the percentages of students’ answers to question 5 vary: 5.41% have marked the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the word casino is pronounced with /z/ sound because teachers pronounce it with /z/’, 48.65% have chosen the second answer ‘because the same word in French casino is pronounced with /z/’, 18.92% have answered the third one ‘based on their knowledge of English’, 24.32% have selected the fourth one ‘the letter ‘s’ in that word occurs between two vowels’, and the remaining percentage, 2.70%, represents the unmarked answers which we think expresses students’ correct pronunciation of the word in the test. This is proved by the correspondence between the number of correct answers in the test and the unmarked answers in the questionnaire. The students’ failure in achieving the correct pronunciation of the word casino, according to the highest percentage of students’ answers to the question, is related to the similarity between the word in English and its counterpart in French which is casino that is pronounced with /z/. Students are thought to be unfamiliar with the pronunciation of the word in English; that is why when it was introduced to them, they relied on their knowledge of French about the word casino with which they are familiar; hence pronounced it with /z/. Interference from French is due to the similarity between the words in their spelling and can be said to be the main reason of the students’ mispronunciation of the word. The second highest percentage of the students, 24.32%, have argued that the word is pronounced with /z/ because the letter ‘s’ in this word occurs between two vowels. This indicates that the students’ failure is due to the negative influence of French through the application of its graphemic rules in English which impedes on the learners’ pronunciation. The third percentage, 18.92%, have claimed that their knowledge helps them; we think that this knowledge does not go in the sense that they have come into contact with such word’ pronunciation, but rather it is based on a false
hypothesis of the existence of a general rule in English that governs the pronunciation of the letter’s’ just like in French.

We can say then that students’ failure in pronouncing the word casino, which we think they are unfamiliar with is due to the interference of French, both by applying its graphemic rules in English as well as to the cognate nature of the word.

II.2.3.6. Question 6

The letter’s’ in the word loose is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. The letter's’ is located between two vowels in this word.

2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.

3. It is different in spelling from the word loss which is pronounced with /s/.

4. My Teachers usually pronounce it with /z/.

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Table 10

Students’ Answers to Question 6
The results obtained from students’ answers to question 6 are: 29.63% of students have chosen the first answer; ‘The letter ‘s’ in the word loose is pronounced with /z/ sound because it is located between two vowels in this word’, 22.22% have selected the second answer ‘based their answer on their knowledge’, 37.03% have marked the third one answer ‘it is different in spelling from the word loss which is pronounced with /s/’, 7.40% have opted for the fourth answer ‘teachers usually pronounce it with /z/’, whereas the remaining percentage with 3.70% represents the students who have left the answers unmarked, showing correspondence to the number of correct answers in the test, what indicates that the student who correctly pronounced the word loose in the test, may be the one who has left all answers unmarked. The highest percentage of students, 37.03%, have claimed that the letter’s’ in the word loose is pronounced with /z/ because it is different in spelling from the word loss which is pronounced with /s/. Students seem familiar with the distinction between the verb lose which is pronounced with /z/ and the noun loss which is pronounced with /s/, but unfamiliar with the distinction between the verb lose which spelt with one ‘o’ and the adjective loose which is spelt ‘oo. Hence they have treated the adjective loose as the verb lose pronouncing it erroneously, instead of pronouncing it /lu:s/, most students pronounced it /lu:z/. Student’ failure can be related then to the false hypothesis they make based on their limited exposure to language. The second highest percentage of students with 29.63% have argued by the position of the letter ‘s’ in the word loose; it occurs between two vowels, students’ failure then is the result of the negative influence of applying the French grapheme rule. The other higher percentage of students, 22.22%, have justified by their knowledge of English, again we believe that this knowledge has to do more with their assumption that the word is pronounced with /z/ since it is placed between two vowels as well as it is spelt differently from loss which is pronounced with /s/. 
In short, students’ failure in pronouncing the word loose can be related to two major reasons:

a) Students’ assumption that the adjective loose is pronounced the same way as does the verb lose they are familiar with based on their limited experience in English.

b) Interference of French via using its graphemic rule that governs the letter‘s’ in English.

II.2.3.7. Question 7

The letter‘s’ in the word increase which is a verb is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.

2. Words that are spelt like this word are pronounced with /z/.

3. The letter‘s’ is located between two vowels in this word.

4. It is the noun increase and not the verb which is pronounced with /s/.

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Table 11

Students’ Answers to Question 7
The results of students’ answers as the table above shows vary; 21.21% of students have chosen the first answer, claimed that ‘teachers pronounce it with /z/’, the same percentage of students have preferred the second ‘words that are spelt like this word: surprise and please are pronounced with /z/’, 24.24% have marked the third answer claimed by ‘the appearance of the ‘s’ between two vowels’, while 30.30% of students have opted for the fourth answer ‘it is the noun increase which is pronounced with /s/’, whereas the remaining percentage with 3.03% represents the unmarked answers which corresponds to the number of correct pronunciation in the test. The table shows that the percentages of the four answers are close to each others; indicating that different reasons have governed the students’ justifications; the highest percentage of students with 30.30% have argued that the letter ‘s’ in the verb increase is pronounced with /z/ because it is the noun increase which is pronounced with /s/. Students are thought to be familiar with the noun hence recognizing its correct pronunciation to be /”Inkri:s/, but not the verb increase. We can say that the students have assumed that the noun is pronounced with /s/, whereas the verb is pronounced with /z/. This false assumption can be associated with their limited experience in English. The second highest percentage of students, 24.24%, have argued by the position of the ‘s’ in the word; since it is between two vowels, it is pronounced then with /z/. Students can be said to be impeded by the French graphemic rule they know, which have mislead them in pronouncing the word correctly in English. The next higher percentage of students with 21.21% have justified by their teachers pronunciation of the verb increase /In”kri:z/, teachers then are believed to mislead their students’ pronunciation of the word because they themselves pronounce it erroneously, this makes us think that teachers also do not differentiate between the pronunciation of the noun and that of the verb, in all, their pronunciation will induce their students, who have the tendency to imitate them, hence produce the same error. Finally, the same percentage, 21.21% of students have claimed that words spelt like the word are pronounced with /z/, this indicates that students are trying to over generalize a rule they believed to exist in
English, where in fact it does not. We can then say that students’ mispronunciation of the word is also due to the interference of French.

Briefly, students’ failure to pronounce the verb increase can be related to 3 main reasons:

a) Students’ false hypotheses based on their limited experience.

b) The negative influence of French on the pronunciation of the word via applying its graphemic rules, students assume to exist in English as well, what makes them try to over generalize it to all words.

c) Teachers’ erroneous pronunciation which in turn mislead the students in their pronunciation as a result of their imitation.

II.2.3.8. Question 8

The combination of ‘ss’ in the words dessert and dissolve is pronounced with /s/ because:

1. I know that they are pronounced with /s/ sound from my knowledge of English.

2. The combination ‘ss’ is always pronounced with /s/ sound in English.

3. The same words in French dessert and dissolved are pronounced with /s/ sound.

4. My teachers pronounce them with /s/ sound.

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**Table 12
Students’ Answers to Question 8**

The resulted obtained from students’ answers to question 8 can be classified into: 20% of students have marked the first answer ‘the combination of ‘ss’ in the words dessert and dissolve is pronounced with /s/ because they know that from their knowledge’, 28.57% have chosen ‘the second answer the combination ‘ss’ is always pronounced with /s/ sound in English’, 42.68% have preferred the third one claiming by ‘the same words in French dessert and dissolvent are pronounced with /s/ sound’, 2.86% have selected the fourth answer ‘teachers pronounce it with /s/’, whereas the remaining percentage with 5.71% represents the unmarked answers, which corresponds in its number to the number of students who correctly classified the two words in the test, hence realized their correct pronunciation to be /dI"z3:t/ and / dI"zQlv/ respectively. This success can be related to their individual experience rather than any other factor mainly transfer from French. The highest percentage of students, 42.28%, have argued that the combination ‘ss’ in the words dessert and dissolve is pronounced with /s/ because the same words in French dessert and dissolvent are pronounced with /s/, we can say then that the students’ failure was due to the interference of French caused by the cognate nature of the words. The second highest percentage of students, 28.57%, have claimed by the fact that the combination ‘ss’ is always pronounced with /s/ in English. Students’ failure can be related to their limited experience in English, which made them hypothesize that the rule they know in French can be applied in English in all cases, for all words. Another 20% of students have justified their answer by their knowledge, which allows them to answer; we believe that this knowledge has to do more with the
belief that the combination ‘ss’ is always pronounced with /s/in English just as in French, hence when they come into contact with any word that includes the geminate ‘ss’, they will apply this rule, likewise pronounce such word with/s/.

In short, students’ failure to achieve the correct pronunciation of the words dessert and dissolve can be related to the following:

a) Student’ false assumption that there exists a general rule in English as in French which governs the pronunciation of the geminate ‘ss’ based on their limited exposure to the TL.

b) Interference from French due to the application of its graphemic rules on the pronunciation of the words in English.

II.2.3.9. Question 9

The letter 's' in the words comparison, excuses, and oasis is pronounced with /z/ because:

1. The letter 's' in the three words is placed between two vowels.

2. The same words in French comparison, excuses, and oasis are pronounced with /z/.

3. I know that they are pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.

4. My teachers pronounce these words with /z/ in the classroom

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**Table 13**

**Students Answers to Question 9**

The results of the students’ answers to question 9 can be classified into: 20.00% have marked the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the words comparison, excuses, and oasis is pronounced with /z/ because the letter ‘s’ in the three words is placed between two vowels’, 56.66% have chosen the second answer ‘the same words in French comparison, excuses, and oasis are pronounced with /z/’, 13.33% have opted for the third answer ‘they based their justification on their knowledge of English’, 3.33% have picked the fourth answer ‘teachers pronounce these words with /z/ in the classroom’, whereas the remaining percentage with 6.67% represents the unmarked answers, in fact the number of unmarked answers which is two corresponds to the number of correct pronunciations of the three words achieved by the students in the test. This may indicate that those students who have correctly pronounced the words in the test, to be pronounced /Ik"skjuːsIz/, /k@m"pIr.I.s@n/ and /@U"eI.lsIz/ respectively are the ones who left all answers unmarked, to show that the question was erroneously stated. The highest majority of students ,56.66%, have argued that the letter ‘s’ in the words comparison, excuses, and oasis is pronounced with /z/ because the same words in French comparison, excuses, and oasis are pronounced with /z/. We can say then that the major reason behind students’ mispronunciation of the three words is the interference of French due to the cognate nature of the words. The second highest percentage of students, 20%, have justified their answers by the position of the letter ‘s’ in the three words; as it occurs between two vowels, based on the belief that there exists a general rule governs the pronunciation of the ‘s’ just as the one in French. The students tend to apply this rule to all words where the “s” appears between two vowels. We can say then that students’ mispronunciation of the words comparison, excuses, and oasis is due to the interference from
French due to the application of its graphemic rules on the pronunciation of the word in English. With 13.33% some students have assumed that they know that the three previous words are pronounced with /z/ based on their knowledge of English. We believe that the students have developed a false hypothesis reflects their limited exposure to English, or it does show some fossilised knowledge comes to be part of their interlanguage system.

In short, students’ failure in these words can be related to:

a) The negative influence of French due to the cognate nature of the words.

b) Students’ false hypothesis about the reality of universal rule that governs the pronunciation of ‘s’ in English what in turn made them apply such rule to all words.

II.2.3.10. Question 10

The letter ‘s’ in the word useless is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. The letter ‘s’ is placed between two vowels in that word.

2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.

3. The verb it is derived from (to use) is pronounced with /z/.

4. Teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.

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Table 14

Students Answers’ to Question 10
The results obtained from the students’ answer to question 10 vary: 26.47% of students have chosen the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the word useless is pronounced with /z/ sound because it is placed between two vowels’, 20.59% have preferred the second answer ‘they based their justification on their knowledge of English’, 38.23% have selected the third choice ‘the verb it is derived from to use’, 8.82% have justified by ‘their teachers’ pronunciation’, the remaining percentage 5.88% represents the unmarked answers, which corresponds to the number of students who pronounced correctly the word useless, which is /"juːslz/ in the test. The percentages show some closeness between the answers, indicating that students’ failure has to do with more than one raison. The highest percentage of students, 38.24%, have argued that the letter's’ is pronounced with /z/ in the word useless because the verb it is derived from which is to use is pronounced with /z/. We can say that students have made a false hypothesis about how the word is really pronounced, based on their limited exposure to the TL; students may be said to differentiate between the noun use, which is pronounced with /s/ and the verb to use which is pronounced with /z/, yet when it comes to the adjective useless they have failed to recognize its correct pronunciation, we believe that students’ failure is due to treating with the adjective useless as the verb it is derived from rather than as the noun hence pronounced it with /z/. The second highest percentage of students, 26.47%, have justified by the position of the ‘s’ which occurs between two vowels. Students’ failure can be related to the negative influence of French in their performance in English through applying its graphemic rules. Other percentage of students with 20.59%, have claimed by their knowledge of English. We, believe that this knowledge is based on a false hypothesis they make about how the word useless is pronounced because of their limited experience rather than being familiar with the word hence, whenever came into contact with words that include the letter’s’ that appears between two vowels, they pronounce with /z/.
In short, Students’ failure to realise the correct pronunciation of the word useless can be interpreted to:

a) Students’ false hypothesis about how the word is pronounced based on a limited experience in English has to do more with the way the verb it is derived from is pronounced.

b) Interference from French as a result of limited experience in the TL through applying its graphemic rules.

c) Students false assumption that there exists a general rule in English as that of French that governs the pronunciation of the word.

II.2.4. Discussion of the Findings

The analysis of students’ answers they have marked in each question in the questionnaire, which reflects their justification to their answers in the test in an indirect way allows us to stand for some facts concerning the nature of the common errors made by most of the students in pronouncing words that include the letter ‘s’ and the geminate ‘ss’:

1-It shows the awareness of students when performing in the test, and that their answers reflect the some knowledge they have in English far from any pressure or any other biased factor, what made most of them fall into the trap answering all questions, we have administered to them, except those who have correctly answered in the test.

2-Some questions have been given more than one answer. This indicates that the students want to give all the reasons that make them choose any answer.

3- The answers have been given to some questions show some closeness between the choices, indicating that the students have different attitudes (reasons) behind one choice, as with the questions include the words: precise and increase.
4- The justification of the majority of the students to their answers to the questions show that the common errors they made are due to the interference of French both from the application of its graphemic rules as well as due to the cognate nature of the words; mainly the questions that include the words: precise, concise, casino, increase (Verb), dessert, dissolve, excuses, comparison, oasis and useless. They are the words that we believe students with which are not familiar.

5- Interference is not the only source of the learners’ mispronunciation of the words, as some kind of false hypotheses are developed by the learners based on their limited exposure to the target language, this mainly argued in the words: close (Adjective), houses (Plural), loose (Adjective) and increase (Verb).

6- Teachers have a part of responsibility for the errors made by the students in pronouncing some words. Students’ mispronunciation of some words such as precise, concise and increase (Verb) is related to their teachers’ pronunciation which becomes fossilized that we believe that it has to do with their communicative approach focus. As a result of this fossilized knowledge, the students who are supposed to imitate their teachers have made the same errors.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis of the questionnaire accord closely with the predicted reasons (the interpretations) we have given in the test. They have come to confirm that most of the common errors made by the students in pronouncing words that include the letter ‘s’ and the geminate ‘ss’ are due to the interference of French as a result of the application of its graphemic rules in English, as well as the cognate nature of the words. This in fact reflects the limited experience that most of the students have in English, as well as their unmotivated nature towards the pronunciation of words. Moreover, the results show the significant role of the teachers in the
students’ mispronunciation of some words as a result of the influence of the communicative approach on the teaching task. The LMD system, which is supposed to be a radical change in English teaching and learning, has not given more importance to oral expression and listening comprehension: pronunciation.; more focus is devoted to teaching students syntax and writing skills, while the pronunciation aspect is neglected.

Pedagogical Implications:

Below are some suggestions which we believe to be useful to increase students’ level of proficiency in the area of pronunciation:

1. More time should be devoted to the teaching of oral expression and listening comprehension and mainly the aspect of pronunciation, laboratory sessions and videotapes.

2. More practice on the how the sounds are pronounced by themselves and how they are pronounced within a given word to draw the students’ attention to the relation between the spelling of one word and the way it is pronounced through the use of symbols and phonetic transcriptions in an attempt to apply the some knowledge acquired in theory sessions.

3. Repetition of the sounds as well as some words is key solutions to reduce some problems, and show the correct pronunciation of words.

4. Self- monitoring: students should be conscious about their pronunciation which may distort communication. As one way to help them; teachers may pretend that they did not understand them and it is the responsibility of the students to make them understand.

5. Teachers should draw the students’ attention to the errors they have made when speaking showing how serious they are so that the student will try not to repeat it again.

6. Teachers should not hesitate, whenever possible to compare the different languages that seem to share some aspects (English/ French), pointing to the differences and similarities between them through exemplification and to draw the students’ attention to
the fact that not all similarities are helpful, they may lead to errors through exemplification, so to make the students aware about the problems that may face them later.

7. Regular dictionary work as a reliable source for correct pronunciation for both students and teachers; the students on the one hand should be enabled to use a good dictionary which uses phonemic symbols in the classroom, so that to help them become familiar with dictionary, and so to gain more confidence in working out pronunciations from phonemic scripts. Teachers on the other hand should trust dictionary whenever they feel not certain about how a given word is pronounced, mainly the words that are regularly used in the classroom to avoid misleading their students to the same errors they have made.

Limitations

Like any piece of research, this dissertation has some limits. For this reason, we would suggest further research in this area:

1. In our research, we did not treat all the words that include the letter’s’ and the combination ‘ss’, but we have just dealt with some of the words we believe most of the students mispronounce from the classroom observation as well as outdoor speech. Further research may take all the words that include the letter’s’ and the geminate ‘ss’.

2. The sample we have dealt with (20 students) is very small comparing to the total number of students who are studying English in the department. Therefore, the results of the research cannot be generalised to the whole population of students of English. Further research may take a larger sample of students.

3. A further research might be recommended in order to check if transfer among students takes another orientation that is the students may be affected by the TL due to the cognate nature of some words, as the case with the word observation in French.
4. A further research might take the performance of the teachers through administering them the same test given to the students, to stand for the reality of their pronunciation of the words, hence to judge the students’ claim about their teachers’ mispronunciation.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that a learner who is trying to learn a new language which shares some aspects with either the NL or any previous language will face some problems, resulted not only from the differences, but also from the similarities between the languages. These problems will in turn lead to errors in using the language. One of the most common errors appears at most students’ speech, when they pronounce some words. Classroom observation, concerning the students’ pronunciation have allowed us to stand for one reality; most of the students mispronounce some of the words that include the letter ‘s’ and the geminate ‘ss’.

The present research has attempted to recognise the words containing the letter ‘s’ and the combination ‘ss’ that most of the students mispronounce. It has investigated the nature of some common errors made by 3rd Year students at the department of English, at OumElbouaghi University when pronouncing words that include the letter ‘s’ and the geminate ‘ss’. The study has shed light on the influence of French on the learners’ pronunciation.

Based on the assumption that the students master some rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter ‘s’ and the combination ‘ss’ in French, we hypothesize that if the Algerian students encounter words which they are not familiar with in English, they will made errors in pronouncing them as a result of the interference of the French graphemic rules.
This work is divided into two chapters: theoretical and practical. The former is devoted to
the review of the literature, whereas the latter is devoted to the analysis of data. We have reviewed
some concepts that serve the aim of the research such as contrastive analysis, error analysis and
language transfer. The last part is reserved to the description of the sound system of the two
languages (French/English). It has highlighted the relation between the graphemes and the
phonemes which clarify the existence of general rules that govern the pronunciation of some
words including the letter ‘s’ and the geminate ‘ss’ in French, but not in English. This gives some
insights about the nature of the students’ pronunciation to be influenced by the French rules.

The practical part is devoted to the analysis of data. In order to test the hypothesis of our
research, two tests, one in French and another in English, have been administered to a sample of
21 students to compare the students’ performance in the two test. The results of the test show that
the students have made many errors in the English test as opposed to the French test; they are the
words we believe that the students with which are not familiar.

Finally, some pedagogical implications are suggested, which we think may help the
students in learning the correct pronunciation of the previous words as well as teachers in better
course designs. Further research is also suggested to achieve results that can be generalized to the
whole learners of English.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendices

Apendex 1

Students’ Test

Classify the words given below according to the pronunciation of the letter /s/:

1- French words:
   L’excuse / la base / abusé / le casino / précise / tourmesol / possessif / la comparaison /
   dessert/ décisive/ la dose/ le parasol/ exclusive/chassure/ basic/ thèse/ vraisemblant/ observation/
   crise/ isolé/poison/disparaître

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2- English words:
   Excuse/ base/ abuse/comparison/ houses/ loose/ precisely/ basic/ crisis/ close/ wise/ concise/
   used/ purchase/ dessert/ disappear/ basis/ useless/ isolate/ desert/ disadvantage/decisive/ thesis/
   observation/ exclusive.

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Questionnaire

Dear students,

We will be very thankful if you answer the questions below which are related to the test you had been given before, because we need to check some facts, without your help we will not succeed. Please, put a mark in front of each answer you think is the correct one. You can mark up to four answers, if needed. If you feel that no answer is correct leave all answers unmarked.

Question 1:
The letter 's' in the English word precise is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/ sound.
2. The same word in French précis is pronounced with /z/.
3. It is placed between two vowels in that word.
4. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.

Question 2:
The letter 's' in the English word concise is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. It is placed between two vowels in that word.
2. My teachers regularly pronounce it with /z/.
3. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
4. There are other words spelt like this word pronounced with /z/ such as: precise.

Question 3:
The letter 's' in the word close in ‘My new house is close to the school’ is pronounced with /z/ because:
1. The letter's' in this word is placed between two vowels.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
3. My teachers pronounce it with /z/.
4. The word function of this word in this sentence is adjective and not a verb.

**Question 4:**
The letter's’ in the word house is pronounced with /s/ sound because:
1. The word house which is the singular of houses is pronounced with /s/.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /s/ from my experience in English.
3. My teachers pronounce it with /s/ sound.
4. Other words spelt in the same way are pronounced with /s/.

**Question 5:**
The letter's’ in the word casino is pronounced with /z/ sound because:
1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/ sound.
2. The same word in French casino is pronounced with /z/.
3. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my experience in English.
4. The letter's’ is located between two vowels in this word.

**Question 6:**
The combination of ‘ss’ in the words dessert and dissolve is pronounced with /s/ because:
1. I know that they are pronounced with /s/ sound from my experience in English.
2. The combination 'ss' is always pronounced with /s/ sound in English.
3. The same words in French dessert and dissolvent are pronounced with /s/ sound.
4. My teachers pronounce them with /s/ sound.

**Question 7:**
The letter's’ in the word loose is pronounced with /z/ sound because:
1. The letter’s’ is located between two vowels in this word.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
3. It is different in spelling from the word loss which is pronounced with /s/.
4. There are other words spelt the same way which are pronounced with /z/.

**Question 8:**
The letter's’ in the word increase which is a verb is pronounced with /z/ sound because:
1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.
2. Words that are spelt like this word are pronounced with /z/.
3. The letter's’ is located between two vowels in this word.
4. It is a verb and not a noun increase which is pronounced with /s/.
Question 9:
The letter’s’ in words comparison, excuses and oasis is pronounced with /z/ because:
1. The letter's’ in the three words is placed between two vowels.
2. The same words in French comparaison, excuses and oasis are pronounced with /z/.
3. I know that they are pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
4. My students pronounce the words with /z/ in the classroom.

Question 10:
The letter’s’ in the word useless is pronounced with /z/ sound because:
1. The letter’s’ is placed between two vowels in that word.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
3. The verb it is derived from to use is pronounced with /z/.
4. Teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.
الملخص

يقال إن المتحدث باللغة الفرنسية هو متحدث جيد للغة الإنجليزية. التحكم الجيد و اتقان اللغة على علاقة

متقاربة. أثبتت الدراسات أن الطلبة ذوي الخلفية اللغوية الفرنسية يرتكبون اخطاء عند نطق كلمات من اللغة الإنجليزية خاصة الحرف "اس" و التركيبة المزدوجة له. فرضنا في بحثنا أن هذه الابتائات ناتجة عن طبيعة النقل الداخلي للفواعد الصرفية للغة الفرنسية و تطبيقها على اللغة الإنجليزية. لإناث ذلك قمنا بانجاز اختبار على عينة مكونة من 21 طالب و اجرينا استقصاء على نفس العينة. نتائج بحثنا و تحليلها قادنا إلى إثبات أن الفرضية الموضوعة سابقاً بأن الاخطاء المرتكبة في التعرف على النطق الصحيح لكلمات من اللغة الإنجليزية و التي تقابلها مثيل من الفرنسية، خاصة تلك الغير مألوفة للطلبة.

كل هذه النتائج تقدنا إلى أن السبب الأولي في سوء اختيار النطق الصحيح للكلمات هو النقل الداخلي للغة الفرنسية ما أثبت فرضيتنا في البحث. في ضل ما استنتجنا نقترح في ختام البحث نصائح بيداغوجية لتحقيق تحسين و تقوية مستوى الطلبة.
Résumé

On dit que le bon parleur du français est un bon parleur d’anglais. La maîtrise de la langue et le professionnalisme sont relatifs. En effet, on découvre que les étudiants qui possèdent une basse linguistique française commettent des erreurs quand ils prononcent l’anglais surtout la prononciation de la lettre « s » et la combinaison « ss ». On a supposé que ces erreurs sont dues à la nature interlinguale de l’interférence des règles graphèmes françaises. Pour prouver cette hypothèse, on a fait un test et un questionnaire sur un échantillon de 21 étudiants. Les résultats obtenus ont prouvés que les erreurs commises à la reconnaissance de la prononciation correcte des mots anglais qui ont des opposés en français, on croit que ces mots sont pas familiers aux étudiants. Toutes ces preuves nous guident que la première cause de la mal prononciation de ces mots est l’interférence de la langue française qui confirme l’hypothèse. Finalement, selon ces résultats on pose quelle que suggestions pour renforcer le niveau de prononciation des étudiants.