Analysing EFL Learners’ Pronunciation of the Vowel Sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/

The Case of Third Year Students at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University.

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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Dedication

This modest work is dedicated to my parents who have supported me unconditionally, and whose good examples taught me to work hard for the things I want to achieve.

It is also dedicated to my sisters and brothers and all my friends especially Badrezzaman, Allaeddine, Mouhammed and Haroun

To all my teachers, my friends, my classmates or anyone who helped me, cared for me, wished me luck or just liked me once.

I'm grateful for each and everyone of you.
Aknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Miss. Samiha KHOUALDI for her support, commitment, very helpful guidance, suggestions and advice throughout the accomplishment of this dissertation.

My special thanks go to third year students of group 3 and 4 at the department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University who willingly accepted to take part in this work by accepting to be recorded.

I would also like to thank Mr. Chaira Farid for helping me with very useful and essential documents to carry out this work.

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Finally, I am very grateful to my teachers, from primary school to university, who provided me with knowledge and support. Without them, graduating would have been impossible.
Abstract

This study is concerned with the identification, analysis and classification of pronunciation errors at the level of the vowel sounds /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/ made by third year students at the department of English, Larbi Ben M'hidi University. These errors are attributed to two major sources: the overgeneralisation of English pronunciation rules and the interference of the French vowel sound system. Accordingly, this research seeks to explore the extent to which these sources affect students’ pronunciation of the target vowel sounds. To answer the study’s questions, an error analysis on the pronunciation of the target vowel sounds is done. The fieldwork is conducted following a descriptive analytical method with a voice recorder to collect oral data. Analyses are carried out to fulfil the main purpose of this dissertation. The results establish valid evidence that the two predetermined sources appear to affect learners’ pronunciation at the level of the target vowel sounds to a considerable extent. The significance of this study flows from the fact that previous studies rarely tackled the pronunciation of these four vowel sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/. So, through this study awareness of those errors will be raised so that teachers will do something to lessen their occurrences.

Key words: Pronunciation, Vowel sounds, Error Analysis.
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<td>Contrastive Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Error Analysis</td>
</tr>
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<td>FL</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLL</td>
<td>Foreign Language Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>International Phonetic Alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
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<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
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<td>Mother Tongue</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

Learning additional languages apart from one’s mother tongue has a significant importance nowadays for it allows us to keep up with the world, and communicate with people speaking those languages. It seems that English is the first language that people are seeking to learn nowadays because it is the most dominant and the one which is invading every inch on the ground.

Learning a foreign language requires learning, or at least taking into account its aspects like syntax, pragmatics, semantics and pronunciation. The latter seems to be a major aspect of any language. That is to say, having, for example, a good level at grammar or having much vocabulary is not enough to be a good communicator unless you have a correct pronunciation. What really distinguishes the English language from other languages is its unique pronunciation. The latter is too ambiguous that it prevents most EFL learners from being understood when they engage in conversations with native speakers or those non-natives who have a good level at English.

In Algerian universities, many students of English underestimate the importance of pronunciation compared to other aspects of the language like vocabulary and grammar. It is really undeniable that most students of English at the University of Larbi Ben M’hidi have some problems with pronunciation. They make a lot of phonological errors when they speak English. They find pronunciation somehow difficult to be fully mastered if compared to other language aspects. They may be good at grammar, vocabulary and pragmatics of the target language, but with a bad pronunciation they often fail to be understood by their teachers or even by their classmates who have a good pronunciation.
After doing a test, we found that third year students have problems with the production of the following vowel sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/. These sounds are the ones that are the most mispronounced by the students at the University of Larbi Ben M’hidi. For example, they pronounce the word ’’pronounce’’ as /prənaʊns/ instead of /prənaʊns/, ’’definition’’ as /dɪfɪnɪʃn/ instead of /defɪnɪʃn/, ’’function’’ as /fʌŋkʃn/ instead of /fæŋkʃn/ and ’’share’’ as /ʃeə/instead of /ʃeə/. Some of these sounds are mispronounced due to overgeneralisation and some others due to French interference. It seems that when students are not exposed enough to the target language, the effect of overgeneralisation and interference is more likely to take place.

2. Aim of the Study

The present study aims at identifying, analysing and classifying the pronunciation errors at the level of the vowel sounds /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/ made by third year students at the English department of Larbi Ben M’hidi University. These errors will be examined to decide the extent to which the overgeneralisation of the English pronunciation rules and the interference of the French vowel sound system contribute to the commitment of such errors.

3. Research Questions

Since EFL learners’ mispronunciation of some vowel sounds is the centre of this study, the following two questions are to be answered:

- To what extent does overgeneralisation influence learners’ pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə? 

- To what extent does French interference influence learners’ pronunciation of the vowel sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə?
4. Research Methodology

4.1. Sampling and Participants

The population of this study is made up of third year students (4 groups) at the department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University. Due to the limited time, a sample of 15 students out of the whole number is selected.

4.2. Research Instruments

To carry out this study, one major research instrument will be used which is recording the participants’ voice while reading a group of sentences containing words which have the target vowel sounds. A specialised voice recorder will be used for the recordings. After recording the participants, Oxford Dictionary will be used to transcribe the target words (correctly or incorrectly pronounced). Online Larousse Dictionary will be used to transcribe the French words.

5. Structure of the Dissertation

The present study embodies two fundamental chapters. The first one is theoretical in which there are two sections. The first section is about pronunciation and it includes its definition, its features, methods and approaches of teaching it as well as the factors affection its learning. The second section talks about Error Analysis, the difference between an error and a mistake, types of errors and steps of Error Analysis. The practical chapter, however, is devoted to data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results as well as the pedagogical implications and limitations of the study.
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Section one : Teaching Pronunciation in EFL Classrooms

Introduction

In our everyday life, any communication process requires that the speaker and the listener understand each other, otherwise it breaks down. One of the most important factors to ensure effective communication is good pronunciation without which communication is hard or even impossible. Having a good knowledge of grammar and lexis is important, but a good pronunciation is essential and can cover weaknesses in other aspects of language such as grammar. Good knowledge of grammar without understandable pronunciation does not ensure successful communication. It is very embarrassing and frustrating for a non-native speaker with good command of grammar and lexis to fail to make himself understood by a native speaker (Harmer, 2001).

Many language learners have understood the importance of pronunciation and made it as a goal, knowing that poor pronunciation hinders communication and can stand in their way towards success. The concept of good pronunciation does not necessarily refer to native-like pronunciation. Instead, it means an understandable pronunciation which has been defined by scholars as the pronunciation that can be understood by the listener without any particular effort (Abercrombie, 1991).

1. Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the production of sounds of a particular language. It can also be defined as the way people utter words. A good pronunciation facilitates the understanding of speakers so it is a very important aspect in oral communication. When talking about pronunciation, one has to think about word stress, sentence stress and intonation since they are the most important elements that lead to an intelligible spoken English.
Richard et al. (2002) define the word pronunciation as follows: ‘‘pronunciation ( also known as phonology ) includes the role of individual sounds and sound segments, that is, features at the segmental level as well as supra-segmental features such as stress, rhythm and intonation’’ (p. 84). That is to say, pronunciation takes place when all of the features, both segmental and supra-segmental, take part in the process.

Frazer (2000) says that speakers having an accurate pronunciation are easily understood even if they make other errors. However, others having a bad pronunciation do really suffer to be understood despite accuracy in other language areas.

As a detailed and comprehensive definition, Seidlhofer (1995) suggests that pronunciation is:

The production and perception of the significant sounds of a particular language in order to achieve meaning in contexts of language use. This comprises the production and perception of segmental sounds, of stressed and unstressed syllables, and of ‘speech melody’, or intonation. Also, the way we sound is influenced greatly by factors such as voice quality, speech rate and overall loudness. Whenever we say something, all these aspects are present simultaneously from the very start, even in a two-syllable utterances such as Hello (p. 87).

That is to say, pronunciation involves all the features even if with the pronunciation of very simple words.

2. Features of Pronunciation

Achieving intelligibility requires a full consideration of both segmental and supra-segmental language features since they are the essential elements of an accurate
pronunciation. So when learners are aware of and understand what these features mean, they are on the right way to acquire a good pronunciation.

2.1. Segmental Features of Pronunciation

2.1.1. Phonemes

A phoneme is defined by Crystal (2008) as follows: ‘‘the minimal unit in the sound system of a language’’ (p. 36). It is the smallest sound unit of any language. Different phonemes mean different pronunciations. That is to say, if two words have at least two different phonemes, they necessarily have different pronunciations. For example, the words cure and pure differ in their first phonemes /k/ and /p/.

With 20 vowels and 24 consonants, English language has 44 phonemes.

2.1.1.1. Vowels

According to Roach (1991), vowels are speech sounds which cause no obstacle to the flow of the air when they are produced. Vowels in English are of three categories. There are single vowel sounds like the /ʌ/ in ‘‘love’’ and the /æ/ in ‘‘man’’, diphtongs which are a combination of two vowel sounds pronounced successively like the /eə/ in ‘‘air’’ and /ɪə/ in ‘‘here’’, and finally triphthongs which are a combination of a diphtong and the vowel sound /ə/. The word ‘‘hour’’ is an example of a triphthong /aʊə/.

Single vowels are in their turn divided into short single vowels and long single vowels. There are seven short vowel sounds which are /aɪ/, /eɪ/, /æ/, /ə/, /ʊ/, /ɜː/ and /iː/, and five long vowel sounds which are /ʌ/, /əʊ/, /æ/, /ɔː/ and /iː/.
2.1.1.2. Consonants

Consonants are speech sounds which are produced with either a full or a partial blockage of the airstream coming from the lungs (Crystal, 2008). Consonants in English are of two main categories: voiced and voiceless.

2.1.1.2.1. Voiced and Voiceless Consonants

According to Crystal (2008), when producing a voiced consonant, one should feel his vocal cords vibrate such as the consonants /v/ and /d/. However, when there is no vibration in the vocal cords, one is producing a voiceless consonant like the consonants /t/ and /θ/.

The following chart summarises what have been talked about above concerning phonemes.

**Table 1.** English phonemes (Steve, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/p/</td>
<td>pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td>think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ð/</td>
<td>think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ/</td>
<td>short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʒ/</td>
<td>casual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ŋ/</td>
<td>sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/h/</td>
<td>hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/</td>
<td>love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/j/</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. Supra-segmental Features of Pronunciation

2.2.1. Stress

The term stress in phonology refers to the extra emphasis used when speaking a particular syllable in a word or a particular word in a sentence. That is to say, in every word, specific syllables are given much importance when they are uttered as well as particular words in a sentence. Hence, there are stressed and unstressed syllables and words. Another definition is provided by Harmer (2001) who says that a stress is the point in an utterance when someone, intentionally, changes the length of the vowel, raises the pitch of the voice and increases the voice volume.

It should be noted that multi-syllable words may contain more than one stress i.e., primary and secondary stress. Therefore, one will find it too easy to deal with the stress of one-syllable words. Whereas, he/she will find hindrances while trying to identify the stress of multi-syllable words.

There are some cases when the stress placement is easily predicted without making any efforts. For example, two-syllable words having the ‘‘schwa’’ sound, which is never stressed, in one of the syllables, so the stress will automatically be placed on the other syllable containing no ‘schwa’’ like the word ‘‘again’’. The syllable which is stressed is /gen/ since /ə/ is always unstressed.

2.2.2. Intonation

It has been said before that pronunciation is the way sounds are produced. Intonation, however, is the way utterances are pronounced to express a particular meaning. The term intonation is defined by Crystal (2008) as follows: ‘‘a term used in the study of supra-
segmental phonology, referring to the distinctive use of patterns of pitch, or melody’’ (p. 252).

Intonation ‘’performs several functions in language. Its most important function is a signal of grammatical structure, where it performs a role similar to punctuation in writing’’ (Crystal, 2008, p. 253). In summary, all of these features should be exposed to learners as a part of pronunciation teaching which is very important.

3. Teaching Pronunciation

Teaching pronunciation to EFL learners seems to be a very difficult task, especially when learners show no interest to learn it. It is not a matter of systematicity since one can never grasp the whole phonological rules, and even if done, exceptions will always come up to cause problems. Therefore, pronunciation should be taught implicitly waiting for the learners to deduce the rule themselves.

Fraser (1999) suggests that studying phonetics and phonology of a given language, though it may be useful, is not the key to learn pronunciation. Hence, teaching pronunciation in a communicative way is inevitable in order to get fruitful results. Learners this way will certainly acquire pronunciation exactly the way it is supposed to be acquired.

3.1. Approaches to Teaching Pronunciation

Since it is a neglected area in language teaching, pronunciation should be taken into account and given much more interest because having an accurate or at least a good pronunciation helps intelligibility to take place. In other words, language teaching is not only about speaking and writing, for example. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) suggests that
there are two main approaches to teaching pronunciation in the modern language teaching field.

3.1.1. The Intuitive-imitative Approach

As the name of the approach suggests, the intuitive-imitative approach is based on the teacher’s prediction and the learner’s imitation of the sounds. In other words, Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) propose that in the intuitive-imitative approach all what learners have to do is to listen to the sounds and rhythms of the target language via using some technological devices like audiotapes and videos, then they imitate those sounds without any rule or instruction given. According to Carlos (2013), “in this approach the problem is the model to be imitated because here the learner must have a good model to avoid the acquisition of mispronunciation” (p. 91).

3.1.2. The Analytic-linguistic Approach

The Analytic-linguistic approach was developed to teach pronunciation to EFL learners explicitly, i.e., by giving the rules directly and exposing learners to information on pronunciation like the international phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions and vocal charts. The analytic-linguistic approach is said to reinforce the intuitive-imitative approach. Carlos (2013) states that “with this model the teacher must have the abilities to handle the resources in a correct form and the materials must have enough quality to be convenient” (p. 103).

3.1.3. The Communicative Approach

The communicative approach appeared for the first time in the 1980’s, and since then became the dominant approach in the field of second language acquisition. In the communicative approach, communication is the purpose that leads people to learn a
language and therefore to learn an accurate pronunciation for a better communication. This focus on language as communication “brings renewed urgency to the teaching of pronunciation since both empirical and anecdotal evidence indicate that there is a threshold level of pronunciation for non-native speakers of English” (Celce-Murcia & al., 1996, p. 7).

3.2. Methods of Teaching Pronunciation

Teaching pronunciation is not an easy task and it requires a lot of preparation and planning so as to arrive at the desired results. Hence, teachers have to select the most appropriate and effective ways that may help learners to learn a good pronunciation. A variety of methods are used in classrooms to teach pronunciation. Firstly, the naturalistic method in which learners should not be exposed to sounds to be listened to and imitated. They rather listen to sounds and rhythms without any pressure or stress. However, with time they have to repeat the sounds that they already listened to. Secondly, the phonetic transcription method which is based on exposing learners to the phonological rules with a detailed description of the international phonetic alphabet, then learners have to consider those given rules thoroughly. “This method has one advantage; once the learner becomes aware of the phonetic alphabet, he or she can learn the pronunciation of the new words also by referring to a standard dictionary” (IJSTM, 2016, p. 5). Another method of teaching pronunciation is called the silent way. The most important characteristic of this method is that the teacher has to act silently as much as he or she can using only gestures to tell learners what to do. In the silent way, the production of sounds accurately is of a high importance; for example, a learner should concentrate on stress placement and right intonation. In this method, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) suggest that teachers should use different means like sound-colour charts, word charts and coloured rods. Finally, the minimal pair drills method which is about drilling the distinction between
sounds. According to IJSTM (2016), the teacher has to expose his learners to the basic patterns of sounds, then he or she chooses the words that differ by a single sound. These words are drilled so many times that the learner will fully understand the distinction between sounds; for example, /sɪt/ as opposed to /sɪt/ and /mæn/ as opposed to /mæn/.

4. Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning

Teachers of English as a foreign language undoubtedly encounter hindrances when trying to teach pronunciation of the target language to learners. They, teachers, must consider a lot of factors that may influence the process of pronunciation learning. Why do some learners do better at acquiring the proper pronunciation than others? Five main factors may possibly answer this question:

4.1. Learner’s Age

The age of the learner is a major determinant that affects the acquisition of an accurate pronunciation. The older the learners are, the more difficult for them to learn a correct pronunciation (Zhang, 2009). Nevertheless, this claim should not prevent adult learners from trying to enhance their pronunciation provided that they work hard since the brain’s capacity to learn weakens as they age. Another proof that supports the claim that age may affect pronunciation learning is the so called the critical period hypothesis which believes that learning a language before puberty age will have better results and vice versa.

4.2. Learner’s Attitude

Learners’ attitudes towards the language they are learning may either help or obstruct the development of the target language. In other words, if a learner has a positive attitude towards the English language, he or she will learn it faster and therefore will be able to acquire a correct pronunciation. Learners with a negative attitude, however, may fail to
learn an accurate pronunciation. Learners’ attitude towards the target language has a relation with identity. Sedlâčková (2009) claims that learners who strongly stick to the identity of their native country, will have no will to develop the target language’s skills.

4.3. Motivation

Motivation seems to be a very important factor which affects the process of pronunciation learning. Learners who are motivated learn better than those who show no interest. That is to say, if a learner has a strong will to to make efforts to improve his pronunciation, improvement will certainly take place. According to ETEA (2014), various motivational factors may lead learners to try to improve their pronunciation. Firstly, learners have a desire to incorporate in the target language community. Secondly, they need to be understood by their teachers. In addition, they want to improve their employment prospective. Finally, they want to develop their communication skills.

4.4. Exposure to the Target Language

The amount of exposure to the target language may shape the EFL learner’s pronunciation; for example, if an FL learner lives in an English speaking country or is exposed to the target language for much time, he or she will unintentionally acquire an accurate English pronunciation. So living in the right environment helps learners to improve their pronunciation (ETEA, 2014).

4.5. Individual Differences

It is unquestionable that learners are not the same; there are some things which make them different from each other. Those things are called individual differences. the process of pronunciation learning may be affected by the learner’s personality, surrounding people and exposure to media, for example. That is to say, learners who are sociable and like to
make new friends have the opportunity to engage in daily conversations, and therefore improve their pronunciation through practice. Introverted learners, however, do really suffer to improve their pronunciation because of little practice. On the light of this, Brown (2007) says that learners who are not sociable and who usually lack confidence in themselves feel afraid to make mistakes, and this leads to no improvement in their pronunciation.

So, these factors may lead EFL learners to encounter a lot of pronunciation problems which in turn lead the learners to find difficulties in communication

5. Common Pronunciation Problems (EFL learners)

5.1. English Vowel Problems

EFL learners do really encounter hindrances in the production of vowel sounds due to the lack of concordance between the English vowel system and the learners’ vowel system. In this context, Arab learners of English, or more specifically Algerian EFL learners fail to produce some vowel sounds because they do not exist in their mother tongue; for example, in Arabic we do not have the vowel sound /a/ so that EFL learners in Algeria usually mispronounce it. As well as the vowel sound /ʌ/ which is very difficult to pronounce, too. There are also other vowel sounds which are wrongly produced because of other reasons which will be discussed throughout this study.

5.2. English Consonant Problems

In addition to vowels, consonants are also said to be problematic for EFL learners to pronounce since their native language does not contain some of the consonant sounds. According to Averly and Ehrlich (1992), there are five problems that face EFL learners when producing the English consonants. Firstly, most of EFL learners feel unable to
aspirate the voiceless stop consonants /p/, /t/ and /k/. Secondly, they often mix between /t/ and /r/. i.e., some EFL learners may say /faɪbə/ instead of /vaɪbə/. In addition, EFL learners, especially Arabs, find it somehow difficult to pronounce the /p/ sound correctly, so they may say /hæbən/ instead of /hæpən/. Moreover, some consonant clusters are also mispronounced by EFL learners. An example concerning this case is the difficulty they find in pronouncing the initial cluster in the word ‘blame’ /ˈblɛm/ and the final cluster in the word ‘talked’ /ˈtɔːkt/.

6. English Vowel System

Since the present study aims at analysing the mispronunciation of only particular vowel sounds, the English vowel system should be talked about in details.

6.1. Vowel Sounds vs. Consonant Sounds

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) establishes two kinds of segments, consonants and vowels. What defines these segments is the presence or the absence of a constriction in the vocal tract. In other words, if a sound is produced by some constriction in the vocal tract, it is a consonant. If it is produced without constriction, it is a vowel (Ogden, 2009). Collins and Mees (2003) explained it further by considering the involvement of a contact or near-contact between articulators. If there is such a contact, a consonant sound is produced, if there is no such contact, a vowel sound is produced.

The complexity of describing the articulation of these two sounds differs. Consonant sounds are easy to be described as long as we can feel, to some extent, what organs are involved. Vowels, in contrast, are not easier to be described except in auditory terms because there is no actual contact between the speech organs (Cruttenden, 2014). Katamba (1989) consents to this point of view and argues that ‘vowels are more difficult to
describe accurately than consonants. This is largely because there is no noticeable … in the vocal tract during their production” (p. 8).

Obviously, ‘‘vowel letters are not “vowel sounds”, and “consonant letters” are not “consonant sounds”. Letters are used in writing/spelling; sounds are used in speaking/pronouncing. The separation of what a sound is and what a consonant is holds further complications.

6.2. Vowel Sounds

According to Crystal (2008), vowels are articulated when the air flows out of the mouth with no complete closure. “If air escapes solely through the mouth, the vowels are said to be oral; if some air is simultaneously released through the nose, the vowels are nasals” (p. 517).

Many explanations, descriptions and classifications were successively provided concerning the nature of the vowels, the several possible articulations with specific organs involved.

All languages are made up of particular number of vowels; for example, Japanese and Spanish have only five vowels. General American has fourteen or fifteen distinct vowels, and British English consists of twenty distinct vowels (Ladefoged, 2001).

Various attempts took place in order to describe the articulation of the vowel sounds. One of the early ways that were used is “a two dimensional diagram representing the articulatory space: the vertical axis is tongue height, and the horizontal axis is tongue fronting…” (Collins & Mees, 2003, p. 22). By the nineteenth century, further endeavours brought to existence a more accurate manifestation of the articulatory aspect of the vowels. It was a set of “Cardinal vowels (CVs)” that are “… specially selected vowel sounds
which can conveniently be used as points of reference from which other vowels can be measured (Jones, 1956, p. 18).

In his dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, Crystal (2008) provided a diagram in which the primary CVs were placed. It is shown in Figure 1 (see page 21). The number of CVs is sixteen, eight of them are primary and the other eight are secondary. There are boundaries or limits that those vowels must not exceed, if one tries to produce a sound by exceeding those pre-identified extreme lines, there will be a kind of air restriction, consequently, it will lead to the production of a consonant sound (Collins & Mees, 2003).

CVs are placed on the cardinal vowel quadrilateral. Diphthongs are automatically formed with particular combinations of two vowels each. Table 2, which is provided by Odgen (2009), summarises the CVs and the diphthongs set in five relatively different versions (p. 67). The model provided in this study is the RP and as it is shown in this table, it is Roach’s version in 2004.
Table 2. Vowels in English key words (Odgen, 2009, p. 67).

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VOWELS

Front: i, y
Central: i, ɪ
Back: u, u

Figure 1. Cardinal vowels (Crystal, 2008, p. 66)
In figure 2, the three possible lip positions for different kinds of vowels are displayed. The production of vowels manifests no obstacle to the flow of air coming out of the lips but for each group of vowels, the lips, though always open, take three major positions.

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2.** Lip positions in vowel articulation: (a) spread; (b) neutral; (c) rounded (Clark & Yallop, 1995, p. 27).

The description of the CVs in that quadrilateral is based on both articulatory and auditory phonetics. Teachers consider it somehow complicated to make learners understand it and remember it with its details. Some scholars like McCully (2009) see that “what is crucial for the classification of vowels is the relative height and position of the tongue” (p. 111). This all depends on the lesson objectives, on the teaching materials and the overall academic aims.

Going back to Table 2, to further elucidate the symbols shown here, the simplified examples in Figure 3 are based on Ashby’s version in 2011. The short vowels, the long vowels, the diphtongs are categorised altogether under the word ‘’vowel’’.
All in all, in the English language there are fourteen vowel sounds, nine of them are short (/ɪ/, /i/, /e/, /æ/, /ɒ/, /ʊ/, /u/, /ʌ/, /ə/) and they are categorised by Jones (1956) as the primary set in the cardinal vowel chart. The other five vowels are long (/ɑː/, /ɔː/, /uː/, /ɜː/, /iː/). Moreover, there are five closing diphthongs, where there is a glide towards a closer tongue position, which are (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/) and three centring ones, where there is a glide towards a central tongue position, which are (/ʊə/, /eə/, /ɪə/).

7. Pronunciation Rules

7.1. Are there fixed rules to the English pronunciation?

The English pronunciation seems to have no simple consistent rules, the same letters are pronounced differently in different words, and there are cases of similar sounds that correspond to different spellings. For example, the letter A can be pronounced /æ/ as in have /hæv/, /eɪ/ as in take /teɪk/, /aɪ/ as in ask /ɑːsk/, /eə/ as in hair /heə/, /ɒ/ as in swan /swɒn/, /ɔː/ as in water /wɔːtə/, /ʌ/ as in village /vɪlɪdʒ/ and /ə/ as in banana /bænənə/.

Another letter which causes problems when pronounced is the letter O. This letter is pronounced /ɒ/ as in got /gɒt/, /ɔː/ as in more /mɔː/, /ʌ/ as in monday /mʌndei/, /ɒ/ as in
wolf /wʊlf/, /uː/ as in women /wɪmɪn/; /uː/ as in move /muːv/; /ɜː/ as in worm /wɜːm/; /əʊ/ as in hold /hɔʊld/ and /ə/ as in /ˈkɒntrəʊl/.

There are also variant spellings that a single sound may represent. The vowel sound /iː/ may represent the letters ‘e’ as in see /siː/, ‘ea’ as in eat /iːt/, ‘eo’ as in people /piːpl/, ‘ey’ as in key /kiː/, ‘i’ as in machine /məʃiːn/ and ‘ei’ as in neither /niːðə/.

In the practical part of this research, pronunciation rules will be handled according to the specific vowel sounds addressed. For each piece of Analysis, a relevant rule will be presented.

In short, the first section began by defining the word pronunciation. Then, different definitions according to different scholars and perspectives were provided. After that, features of pronunciation were discussed, so light was shed on both segmental features, vowels and consonants, and supra-segmental features, i.e., stress and intonation. In addition, the approaches and methods that are used in pronunciation teaching were talked about. Specifically, three main approaches which are: the intuitive-imitative approach, the analytic-linguistic approach and the communicative approach. Concerning the methods, we discussed four methods which are: the naturalistic method, the phonetic transcription method, the silent way and finally the minimal pair drills method. Next, we talked about five facors that are said to affect EFL pronunciation learning. These facors are: the learner’s age factor, the learner’s attitude, motivation, exposure to the target language, and the individual differences. After we finished with the affective factors, we discussed some pronunciation problems facing EFL learners. Finally, we ended the first section with the most important and target point in our research which is the English vowel system in which we gave some detailed information about the English vowel sound system illustrated with some figures and tables.
In order to lessen the pronunciation errors among EFL learners, one may do an Error Analysis to investigate those pronunciation errors being made.
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Section Two : Error Analysis

Introduction

Errors have become a field of interest for linguists, psychologists and teachers as well (Gass & Selinker, 1994). They have a very significant role in the study of language acquisition in general, and in determining and identifying learners’ level of mastery of the language system by considering those errors made by learners (Corder, 1967). For that reason, language errors especially pronunciation errors should be paid a considerable attention. This second section of the theoretical chapter is devoted to talking about Error Analysis. The section begins with a definition of Error Analysis as well as a definition of both errors and mistakes and the difference between them. Also, the different types of errors and their sources were tackled. Then, the section finishes with a discussion of the significance of errors as well as a detailed explanation of Error Analysis steps.

1. Definition of Error Analysis

Error Analysis is a kind of linguistic analysis which focuses on learners’ errors, foreign language learners (FLL) or second language learners (SLL). This theory was founded by Pit Corder, a British linguist, in the 1960s as a reaction to the Contrastive Analysis (CA) theory. The latter, according to many researchers, did not manage to explain and study learners’ errors well. Unlike CA which focuses on the prediction of errors that may be made by FLL or SLL, the basic aim of Error Analysis is to examine, describe and analyse those errors. Hence, teachers may find it easy to determine language areas that need to be reinforced (Corder, 1967). In other words, error analysis is very useful in either foreign or second language acquisition since it helps teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers to know what the problem areas are. Corder (1967) says that:
The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process (p.125).

Based on Corder’s definition, the process of error studying is quite similar to the process of studying how children acquire the mother tongue since the SL or FL are new to the FL as the mother tongue is new to children.

Corder (1974) says that the goal of Error Analysis is to find ‘‘what the learner knows and does not know…enable the teacher to supply him not just with the information that his hypothesis is wrong, but also, importantly, with the right sort of information or data for him to form a more adequate concept of a rule in the target language’’ (p. 170).

All in all, Error Analysis targets three main purposes. First of all, it allows teachers to discover how well learners master the target language and whether they are developing or not. Secondly, to have an idea about the common hindrances that learners are facing while learning a second or a third language, and thirdly, to know how people learn the target language. So based on what was stated above, the process of Error Analysis has to be looked at as something positive for both teachers and learners. Teachers benefit from it by being aware of the problem areas in which learners make errors; learners benefit from it by being helped to overcome those errors.

2. Definition of Error

Many language scholars tried to define the word ‘error’ according to their experience in the field of language teaching. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), an error is ‘‘the use of a linguistic item (e.g. a word, a grammatical item, a speech act, etc.) in a way
which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning” (p. 10). Lennon (1991) says that an error is a linguistic form that is not produced by a native speaker of the language. Hence, errors are said to be made by non-native speakers of the target language. In addition, errors, which refer to the mistakes committed by non-natives in spontaneous speaking or writing, are believed to be systematic. Errors are not self-correctable and reveal that learners still have problems with the language they are seeking to learn. Errors are indispensable to the learning process; making errors is a proof that learners are trying to learn the target language.

3. Difference between Error and Mistake

One may think that the words error and mistake can be used interchangeably, i.e., having the same meaning, but this is extremely wrong since each word has a particular meaning to convey. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly quite hard to distinguish between the two terms. On one hand, mistakes, according to BÖksész (2006) are:

Inaccuracies in linguistic production either in our native language (L1) or in the foreign language (L2) that are caused by memory lapses, physical states and conditions such as fatigue, inattention or strong emotion. Mistakes are mainly slips of the tongue or lapses, even native people make mistakes in speech and writing (p. 123).

So on the light of the definition of BÖksész (2006), it is quite clear that mistakes are self-correctable and are not systematic; have no relation with lack of knowledge, but rather with a lack of attention. Another characteristic of mistakes, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, is that they can be committed by both native and non-native speakers of the target language.
Errors, on the other hand, are systematic and are not self-correctable. In other words, they are made due to incomplete rule understanding so learners can never correct them by themselves unless they are made aware of them by their teachers.

Two main characteristics make the difference between the two terms: ‘systematicity’ and ‘self-correctability’. Unlike mistakes which are unsystematic and self-correctable, errors are completely the opposite. That is to say, while, either native or non-native language learners are aware of and can, themselves, correct a particular mistake after committing it, non-native speakers do not even know that they made a certain error and therefore cannot correct it. In this aspect, Taylor (1997) confirms that ‘errors are not mistakes; you cannot eliminate them by being very careful’ (p. 3). Another distinction is made by Ellis (1994) who says that errors are a kind of deviation caused by a lack of knowledge; whereas, a mistake is a result of failure of performance due to some conditions like stress rather than lack of knowledge. For example, ‘Every day I have lunch at 07:15 then I go to school’ and ‘Everyday I have breakfast at 07:15 then I go to work’. The first sentence tends to be a mistake. The closest interpretation of it is that the speaker intended to say breakfast instead of lunch, but maybe because of tiredness or being hungry he said lunch. After few seconds, he may discover his mistake and correct it. The second sentence, however, appears to be an error. The speaker misspelled the adverb ‘every day’ saying, ‘everyday’, which is an adjective, instead. Hence, the speaker failed to distinguish between the adjective ‘everyday’ and the adverb ‘every day’. The sentence he produced, unlike the first one, is grammatically incorrect, and therefore considered as an error.

4. Types of Errors

It seems that classifying errors into types is of a great importance for it allows teachers to know the specific areas in which errors are produced by learners. So instead of saying
that a particular learner made an error, it is quite preferable saying that he made, for example, a lexical error. Many linguists endeavoured to categorise learners’ errors. Each suggested a different classification according to his perspective.

4.1. Lee’s Classification

One classification is proposed by Lee (1990). This classification is made up of four main types: Grammatical errors, Discourse errors, Phonological errors and Lexical errors.

4.1.1. Grammatical Errors

Grammatical errors are those errors which affect the word structure as well as the sentence structure. That is to say, morphological errors are made at the level of words while syntactic errors are produced at the level of the sentence. In other words, if a learner used, for example, the word ‘fastly’ meaning ‘in a fast way’, he would have made a morphological error since he failed to build or derive the right adverb which is normally remains ‘fast’. However, if he, for example, placed, in an affirmative sentence, the subject after the verb, he would have made a syntactic error because in English sentence structure, the subject, in any affirmative sentence, always precedes and never follows the verb (Lee, 1991).

4.1.2. Discourse Errors

This type of errors take place when the learner does not have enough knowledge about the pragmatics and culture of the target language. This leads to the use of inappropriate words and expressions that, in specific contexts, are not used by native speakers. Discourse errors can also be considered as the learner’s failure to get the actual communicative message intended by speakers (James, 1998). In other words, incorrect way of interpreting a particular utterance leads FL or SL learners to make such type of error. An example of a
discourse error is when, for example, a native speaker tells a non-native one ‘my car is a real lemon’. The learner here, having no idea about the idiom said by the native speaker, may interpret the message in a wrong way; he may understand that the speaker’s car is of a yellow colour; however, the actual meaning intended by the speaker is the fact that his car is in a very bad condition and it breaks down regularly.

4.1.3. Lexical Errors

Lexical errors are made as a result of the learner’s inability to select the right words to build up a meaningful sentence. That is to say, certain sentences, even though grammatically correct, are said to hold a weird and ambiguous meaning because the FLL or SLL didn’t use the exact word or combination of words that is supposed to be used. This type of errors often occurs due to overgeneralisation (Lee, 1990). A good example of a lexical error caused by overgeneralisation is the use of, for example, the adjective ‘serious’ to describe dangerous animals. The learner may produce the following sentence: ‘Bears are serious animals’. The word ‘serious’ here doesn’t have the meaning of ‘dangerous; nevertheless, the learner, unknowingly, generalised it to describe animals, and therefore made a lexical error.

4.1.4. Phonological Errors

Phonological errors are those errors made at the level of pronunciation; errors at the level of segmental features (phonemes) and supra-segmental features (stress and intonation). Making a phonological error appears to create serious problems to communication since it affects intelligibility. Misproducing one single sound may change the communicative message completely. Hence, the more you have an accurate pronunciation, the very well you will be understood (Lee, 1990).
4.2. Krashen’s Classification

Stephen Krashen proposed another classification of errors different from that of Lee. According to Krashen (1982), errors are of three main categories which are the most common: **global errors**, **stigmatised errors** and the **most frequent errors**.

Global errors tend to affect the structure and organisation of utterances, and therefore obstruct communication. That is to say, this kind of errors leads to unintelligibility since it affects the form of the sentence. An example of a global error may be the wrong order of adjectives and incorrect placement of adverbs and connectors.

Stigmatised errors are those which create embarrassment or considered offensive to communication in the target language. They occur through the use of taboo words or words which are socially refused or unacceptable (Sárosdy, 2006). The FLL or SLL may, unintentionally, make a stegmatised error by using a word or expression, which is embarrassing in the target language, to mean something contray to what the word actually means.

The **most frequently occurring errors** tend to be made repeatedly by foreign or second language learners and they should be corrected regardless of the category they belong to (Sárosdy, 2006).

4.3. Corder’s Classification

Pit Corder, the founder of Error Analysis, suggests a two-type classification of errors, namely errors of competence and errors of performance which refer respectively to errors and mistakes. This classification seems to strengthen the fact that errors are different from mistakes. On one hand, errors of competence happen because of using some rules which
do not match the target language (Enam, n.d.). In other words, when the learner is not fully aware of the rules of the target language, he may well make an error of competence.

Errors of competence are by turn divided into two kinds: Interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are caused mainly by either the interference of the learner’s mother tongue or second language. Learners of English in Algeria, for example, especially beginners, may produce utterances like ‘’you fell from my eye’’ translating it word for word from their dialect, the Algerian dialect. This expression, however, does not exist in English and has never been used by English native speakers. Intralingual errors, as opposed to interlingual errors, occur because of the target language itself. That is to say, learners make such kind of errors due to the complexity of the target language. Using, for instance, the plural form ‘mouses’ instead of ‘mice’ is considered an intralingual error.

Errors of performance, on the other hand, undoubtedly refer, as mentioned before, to mistakes. They are self-correctable and occur as a result of special circumstances such as anxiety, tiredness and uncertainty (Enam, n.d.).

5. Significance of Errors

The way errors are viewed by linguists and scholars changed over time. Behaviourists in the past considered learners’ errors as unacceptable. They thought that error making is a sign of incomplete learning or lack of learners’ improvement.

Making errors in L2 or FL learning is, nevertheless, inevitable since the learning process does not take place at once, but rather it takes too much time. While learning a language, the word ‘perfection’ should not be thought of because the learner has to undergo hindrances and produce errors in order to learn the target language. Brown (1987) confirms that errors, according to behaviourists, are undesirable, negative, and indicate the
failure of the teaching process. Ellis (1994), too, says that the behaviourism school considered errors as prevented deviations that should be eliminated as much as possible. However, with the emergence of the psychological theory in the study of language learning, attitudes to error changed since then. On the light of this, Corder (1967) argues that making errors shows that the learning process is taking place; therefore, they should not be regarded as weakness or failure.

Corder (1987) asserts that errors are significant in three distinct ways. Firstly, they help teachers to control the teaching process. That is to say, those errors show how much learners have developed and what they still have to learn. Secondly, they enable researchers to know more about how language is learnt, and how the learners attempt to learn the target language, i.e., the strategies and procedures they employ. Thirdly, the errors are said to be indispensable to the learner for there will be no improvement in the learner's language if there are no mistakes made.

6. Sources of Errors

The errors that an FL or L2 learner may make while learning the target language have several possible sources and causes. Many studies were carried out by a couple of linguists and scholars in order to narrow down the causes that are said to be responsible for the occurrence of learners' errors. One of the classification of errors' sources was suggested by Richards in his 1970's study. Richards (1970) shed light on three main sources of errors, namely interference errors, intralingual errors and developmental errors.

6.1. Interference Errors

Interference errors occur as a result of the influence of either the MT or the L2. In other words, while learning the target language, a learner, unconsciously, refers to the
language or languages that he already knows and he starts comparing the target language to the language which is already in mind. This generally leads him to use elements of the MT or L2 to cover the elements missing in the target language (James, 1998). Interference errors can happen at the level of grammar, phonology, lexic and semantics. They can also be called transfer errors, and are divided into two types: positive transfer and negative transfer. On one hand, positive transfer takes place when there is much concordance between either the MT or L2 and the TL; for example, French as an L2 affecting, positively, English as an FL; like the case here in Algeria. Negative transfer, on the other hand, is said to occur when there is little or very little concordance between the MT or L2 and the language one is seeking to learn; for instance, Arabic as a MT and English as a TL.

6.2. Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors are made because of the difficulties found within the target language. Hence, as opposed to interference errors, neither the learner’s MT, nor his L2 is to blame. These difficulties may appear as a result of the learner’s insufficient knowledge about the target language. Additionally, ‘intraference’ - proposed by Scovel (2001) - is a term that can also be used instead of ‘intralingual’. Intralingual errors are further subdivided into: overgeneralisation errors, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false hypotheses.

6.2.1. Overgeneralisation Errors

According to Enam (n.d.), overgeneralisation errors cover instances where the learner creates a deviant structure or rule on the basis of his experience of other structures or rules in the target language. For example, a learner may pronounce the word ‘minute’ as
/minjuːt/ instead of /mɪnɪt/ because he took it for granted that a ‘u’ is always pronounced /juː/ as in cute /kjuːt/.

6.2.2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

It is about the application of rules to contexts where they are not applicable. A good example is when a learner says, for example, “she made me to leave” instead of “she made me leave”. This kind of errors is made because of the fact that most verbs in English take the infinitival complements like “she asked/ wanted me to go” (Enam, n.d.)

6.2.3. Incomplete Application of Rules

This kind of intralingual errors happens when the learner fails to use the complete rule of a certain structure. Hence, he may say “you go now?” instead of “will you go now?”

6.2.4. False Hypothesis

False hypotheses arise when learners do not completely distinguish between structures of the target language, so they may produce utterances like “one day it was happened” instead of “one day it happened” (Enam, n.d.)

6.3. Developmental Errors

It can be said that developmental errors look like intralingual errors. They are made by learners while trying to generate hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience. On the light of this, Saville-Troike (2006) confirms that “intralingual errors are also considered developmental errors and often represent incomplete learning of L2 rules or overgeneralisation of them”. That is to say, intralingual errors and developmental errors are almost the same since they occur due to complexity of the target language and incomplete understanding of its rules.
7. Steps of Error Analysis

According to Ellis (1994), Error Analysis is conducted by going through four main successive steps. The researcher has to undergo the following stages: (1) collection of a sample of learner language, (2) identification of errors, (3) description of errors and (4) explanation of errors.

7.1. Collection of a Sample of Learner Language

At this stage, the researcher has to collect data from the people (learners) who are involved in the study. At the level of this stage, learners’ errors may be influenced by some factors such as fatigue, stress, hesitation and so on. These factors should be thoroughly considered in order to collect a clear and precise sample of the learner language (Ellis, 1994).

7.2. Identification of Errors

At this stage, the researcher must be very careful while considering the learner’s language. That is to say, the researcher at this stage is supposed to identify the errors made by the learners involved in the study. But before doing that, he/she has to be able to distinguish between errors and mistakes. Learners may, under some conditions, commit mistakes without paying attention, i.e. they know the right answer, but they just fail to answer correctly because of anxiety, uncertainty, fatigue and so on. To eliminate this problem and to be sure whether the learner committed a mistake or made an error, there are two possible ways of doing that. The first way is through checking the consistency of the learner’s performance. In other words, if the learner sometimes uses the correct form or structure or pronounces a certain sound correctly and later on he/she does the opposite, then it is a mistake and therefore it can be self-correctable. However, if the learner, for
example, always mispronounces a particular sound, then in this case it is not a mistake and therefore the researcher should write it down as an error rather than a mistake. The second way is associated with asking the learner to correct a particular mistake. If he is able to correct it, it will remain a mistake, but if he is unable to correct it, then it will be surely an error. Additionally, since the identification of errors is the first step of analysing the data collected about the learner’s language, every deviation should be identified (Ellis, 1994).

7.3. Description of Errors

At this stage, errors are to be categorised into types, and more specifically according to the language area, i.e. phonology, syntax, semantics and so on (Ellis, 1994). According to James (1998), errors are described for two main reasons. First of all, to make the errors explicit and clear. Secondly, error description is the basis for creating categories since it reveals to which type (grammar, phonology, semantics .etc) a particular error belongs (p. 96-97).

7.4. Explanation of Errors

This is the last stage in Error Analysis. After identifying and describing errors, the next step is the explanation of them. Explanation of errors is about giving reasons behind making them and establishing the source of their occurrence. This stage is considered as the most important stage in Error Analysis (Ellis, 1994). According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2006), explaining errors ‘involve determining their sources in order to account for why they were made (p. 62). Additionally, in order to reach effective remedial measures, the analyst should be aware of the way each type of errors was made (Sanal, 2007).

In conclusion, errors, whether interlingual or intralingual remain very necessary to understand learners’ strategies. Analysing such errors which includes identifying,
describing, classifying and explaining them can be of much help to FL or L2 researchers, syllabus designers and teachers.

Conclusion

To summarise the main points covered in chapter one, this theoretical chapter was divided into two sections. Section one was devoted to pronunciation. A definition of pronunciation was provided according to a couple of linguists and scholars, then features of pronunciation were discussed. These features include vowel sounds and consonant sounds as segmental features and intonation and stress as supra-segmental features. After that, light was shed on approaches and methods of teaching pronunciation as well as the factors affecting its learning. Next, some examples of some pronunciation problems facing Arab, and especially, Algerian learners were provided. After that, attention was shifted to the key and most important point in this study which is the English vowel system. The final point covered in section one was whether pronunciation rules are fixed in the English language. The Second section, which was devoted to Error Analysis, began with a full definition of Error Analysis theory then explained the difference between errors and mistakes. The next point tackled was the type of errors according to Lee, krashen and Corder. Finally, the chapter ended with a discussion about the significance of errors as well as the steps involved when doing an Error Analysis.
CHAPTER TWO : Research Methodology and Results

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CHAPTER TWO: Research Methodology and Results

Introduction

As has been mentioned before, the aim of the present study is to identify, analyse and classify the pronunciation errors made at the level of the following four vowel sounds: /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/. Throughout this practical chapter, many things will be tackled in details starting from the research methodology which is about the sample population, research instruments, research setting and procedures. Then, focus will be shifted to the most important thing in the dissertation, i.e. data analysis and interpretation as well as the discussion of the results. Finally, the dissertation will end up with the pedagogical implications together with the limitations and some suggestions for future researchers.

2.1. Research Methodology

2.1.1. Sampling and Participants

It is unquestionable that the first thing a researcher should think about before dealing with the practical part of any research is the population that is going to incorporate in the study. The participants of the present study comprises a number of 15 third year students at the department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi, for the academic year 2017/2018. The students were selected randomly regardless of their gender, age, level, etc. All what were worried about is their acceptance. The latter is a very important condition for interviewing to take place. The reason behind choosing third year students is the fact that they have been exposed to the phonetics module, and therefore to pronunciation lessons for two years at university. Another thing worth mentioning is that the subjects under investigation were not told about the aim of the study so that they can act naturally without any stress or hesitation that may be caused by focusing on correct and
perfect pronunciation. In other words, if they knew that they will be recorded to investigate their pronunciation accuracy, the study would have negative results and it would be meaningless and untrustworthy. The students were told about only the time and place as well as the procedures concerning the recording.

2.1.2. Research Instruments

To carry out this research, one instrument will be used which is recording the participants’ voice. Learners’ speech samples are collected using a specialised voice recorder. Thus, the voice of 15 students is recorded while they are reading sentences which contain words with the target vowel sounds. Recording learners’ speech samples is considered as a very effective tool since it is the most appropriate way to collect learners’ real production of the vowel sounds under investigation. The aim of the recordings is to look for the pronunciation errors that students may make at the level of those vowel sounds. After being recorded, students’ speech is transcribed phonetically using Oxford Dictionary.

2.2. Data Collection Procedure

For any study to be conducted, the data need to be collected in an adequate way in order to meet the objective of the study and answer the research questions. In the present study, as was mentioned before, the sample of recordings is the only tool used for collecting data. The samples of recordings were done at the University of Larbi Ben M’hidi with a group of third year LMD students. The participants were 15 (6 males and 9 females). They were divided into small groups. Each group was recorded at a specific time. The recording process was very difficult and it took the researcher too much time because the participants did not have much free time. Besides, most of them live far away from the University, so they usually return home directly after they finish studying which
made it quite difficult to meet them regularly. Noise of other students created a real problem to the researcher since silence is highly needed for the recording process to be successful; therefore, the researcher had to guarantee full silence before starting recording the participants. So, the appropriate time for the recordings was when the other students were inside their classrooms. Every individual participant was given the sentences and asked to read them aloud so that the voice would be clear during the identification of errors. After data were collected, they were listened to carefully and attentively. Each participant’s recording was listened to separately so many times using headphones. Then, the target words were transcribed phonetically using Oxford Dictionary.

It is worth mentioning that each participant was asked to read 28 sentences. Those 28 sentences carried 28 words. Each word, in turn, contained the 4 vowel sounds being worked on. Namely, /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ and /eə/. So, there were 8 words containing the vowel sound /ə/, 8 words containing the vowel sound /e/, 8 words having the vowel sound /ʌ/ and the rest 4 words contained the diphthong /eə/.

Since one of the two possible sources of pronunciation errors in this study is interference, Online Larousse Dictionary was used to transcribe the French words.

2.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, the researcher seeks to describe and analyse the oral data collected from the participants while reading a group of sentences (see appendix 1). Those collected data are shown in the form of graphs representing the percentage of both correct and incorrect articulations of the given words. Thus, there are 28 graphs; each graph deals with one single word showing its pronunciations by the participants. Each graph is followed by a detailed description and explanation of why participants articulated the target vowel sounds the way they did.
The word analysis which consists of 4 syllables was pronounced differently in terms of the first syllable. Out of the 15 participants recorded, only 9 of them succeeded to pronounce the first syllable accurately. They pronounced the first letter ‘a’ as a schwa and therefore as it should be pronounced. However, the rest 6 participants, i.e. 40% failed to articulate the first syllable correctly. They said */ænælɪsɪs/ instead of /ə'nælɪsɪs/. This failure in identifying the correct articulation is mainly due to the interference of the French vowel sound system which affected the pronunciation of the word analysis. That is to say, in French there is the word ‘analyse’ in which the initial letter ‘a’ is pronounced /a/. The latter is similar to /æ/ in English.
The word camera went through two different pronunciations. (26, 66 %) of the participants pronounced it as /kæməra/ which is the correct pronunciation. However, the majority, i.e. (73,34 %) mispronounced both the second and the third syllable which are discussed here. They said */kæmræ/ instead of /kæməra/. So, 11 out of the 15 participants articulated the second and the third syllable as if they are dealing with a French word. Hence, it is quite obvious that the interference of the French vowel sound system influenced the pronunciation of the word camera.
Two thirds of the participants managed to produce a schwa sound at the level of the second syllable in the word information. Although the word information is very popular in English and is used frequently, (33.34 %) of the participants pronounced the letter ‘o’ in the second syllable incorrectly. They said */ɪnfɔːˈmeɪʃən/* instead of the correct */ɪnfəˈmeɪʃən/*.

So, producing the long vowel sound /ɔː/ rather than /ə/ reflects the interference of the learners’ second language, French. The second syllable of the word information in French is pronounced the way we pronounce the combination ‘for’ in the word ‘forever’, for example.
The word introduction was mispronounced by two thirds of the participants which represent (66.67 %) of the whole number. Specifically, two thirds of the participants that were recorded failed to pronounce the target second syllable correctly. That is to say, while the pronunciation of the letter ‘o’ in the second syllable should be a schwa, 10 of the participants pronounced it /ɒ/. Because the word introduction exists in French, the participants took the pronunciation of the second syllable of the word in French and applied it on the English one. Thus, they said */ɪntrəˈdʌkʃən/ rather than */ɪntrəˈdəkʃən/ producing erroneously the vowel sound /ɒ/ which is similar to the French counterpart /ɔ/.
The word opinion was pronounced in two different ways. The first syllable which carries the target vowel sound was pronounced correctly by only third of the participants while the rest of them mispronounced it. The majority of the participants pronounced the word opinion as */ɒpɪnjən/* instead of */əpɪnjən/* . That is to say, they articulated the letter 'o' in the first syllable as */ɒ/* rather than a schwa sound. This pronunciation error is due to the overgeneralisation of some pronunciation rules. In other words, the initial letter ‘o’ is often pronounced */ɒ/* in words like ‘opportunity’, ‘opposite’ and ‘operate’…etc. So, the participants thought that it is a fixed rule while it is not.
For the word terrible, only the second syllable is discussed. The word was pronounced in two ways: /ˈterɪbəl/ and /ˈterəbəl/. As figure 7 shows, only one participant out of the whole number was able to give the correct pronunciation at the level of the second syllable. However, the rest of the participants (93.34%) mispronounced the letter ‘i’ in the word, producing the vowel sound /ɪ/ instead of the correct one /ə/. The mispronunciation of the vowel sound schwa in the word terrible reveals the effect of overgeneralisation. In other words, most of the participants pronounced the letter ‘i’ as it is often pronounced in words like ‘territory’, ‘horrible’, ‘terrify’, ‘participle’ and so on.
Tonight

The word tonight was articulated in two different ways as the graph shows. Approximately half of the participants pronounced the word in a correct way while the rest did not. At the level of the first syllable, which is the targeted syllable, (’46.67 %) of the participants said /tʊ/ while the correct pronunciation is /tə/ which was given by the rest (53.33 %). This pronunciation error occurred because the participants thought that the combination ‘to’ is always pronounced /tə/ or /tu/. 

Figure 6. Students’ articulations of the word tonight.
Towards

![Bar chart showing articulations of the word 'towards'.]

Figure 5. Students’ articulations of the word towards.

For the word towards, which a two-syllable word, the concerned syllable is the first one since it carries the target vowel sound /ə/. Out of the 15 participants that were recorded, only 3 of them managed to pronounce the word accurately. However, the rest (80%) said /tu'woːdz/ instead of /tə'woːdz/. This failure in producing the target vowel sound correctly is undoubtedly due to the overgeneralisation of pronouncing the letter ‘o’ in words that are similar to the word towards. That is to say, before pronouncing the words, the participants divided it into two parts ‘to’ and ‘wards’. They pronounced the word ‘to’ as it is pronounced alone, i.e. /to/. They took it for granted that the combination ‘to’ is always pronounced with the vowel sound /ə/. 
2.3.2. The vowel sound /e/

Academic

The word academic was pronounced correctly by none of the 15 participants. While the correct pronunciation is /ækædɪmɪk/, the participants came out with two different pronunciations which are wrong. (66, 66 %) of the participants said /ˌækædɪmɪk/ and (33,34 %) said /ˌækædɪmɪk/. So, no one was able to articulate the target syllable, the penultimate, as it should be pronounced. They produced the vowel sounds /ɪ/ and /ɪː/ rather than the correct /e/. The reason behind making such an error is that the word academic is an English modification of the French word ‘académique’, which is actually its origin. Hence, the use of those two pronunciations by the participants reflects the interference of the French vowel sound system since the word ‘académique’ is pronounced with the French vowel sound /e/ which is similar to the English /ɪ/. 

![Figure 19: Students' articulation of the word academic.](image)
In the word edit, only the first syllable is discussed. The correct pronunciation of the first syllable was exhibited by only (13.33 %) of the participants, i.e., two out of the whole number. The rest 13 participants pronounced the word edit as /'ɪdɪt/ instead of /'edɪt/.

Mispronouncing the letter ‘e’ in the word edit was because of the fact that the participants thought that the ‘e’ is always pronounced /ɪ/ when it is initial such as in words like ‘emit’ and ‘elaborate’, for example.
While 6 of the participants knew how to pronounce the word heavy correctly, 9 of them did not do so. As the graph shows, the majority said /hiːvi/ while the correct pronunciation is /hevi/. So, the combination ‘ea’ caused problems to the participants because it is sometimes pronounced /e/ and sometimes pronounced /i:/ (Provided that it is not followed by an ‘r’). So, it is quite clear that the only interpretation is that the participants overgeneralised the pronunciation /i:/ in the word heavy.
Only one fifth of the participants were able to articulate the word necessary correctly. The target syllable in the word necessary is the first one since it carries the target vowel sound /e/. The rest of the participants, i.e. (80%) failed to pronounce the combination ‘ne’ correctly. They pronounced it as /nɪ/ instead of /ne/. What led the majority of the participants to produce /nɪ/ rather than /ne/ at the level of the first syllable is the fact that they already knew the French counterpart ‘nécessaire’ which is pronounced /nesəsɛʁ/. So, they articulated the letter ‘e’ of the first syllable the way they do with the French counterpart.
The targeted word present, which was given in context as an adjective, was pronounced in two different ways, one of which is the accurate one /prɛzənt/. As figure 17 demonstrates, (46.67 %) of the participants did not articulate the first syllable correctly. That is to say, they used the short vowel sound */ɪ/ instead of /e/. Asking why they made such an error brings us back to the origin of the word itself. In French language, there is the word ‘présent’ which is pronounced /pʁezɑ̃ (knowing that the French vowel sound /e/ is similar to the English /ɪ/). Generally, it can be said that there is a great influence of the French pronunciation on the English one since many words are found in both languages and due to the fact that French is the participants’ second language to which they were exposed the first.
Concerning the word telephone, only two participants succeeded to articulate it the way it should be articulated. The syllable which is concerned here is the first one ‘te’. The latter was erroneously pronounced by (86.67 %) of the participants. They said /ˈtɪlɪfəʊn/ rather than the correct one /ˈtelɪfəʊn/. This mispronunciation reflects a French effect. In other words, the participants were already exposed to the word ‘téléphone’ in French before encountering it in English. Hence, they pronounced the first initial letters ‘te’ as if they were pronouncing it in French. To say it clearly, ‘téléphone’ is pronounced /ˈtelɪfəʊn/ in French and the vowel sound of the first syllable of the word ‘téléphone’ is similar to the vowel sound they erroneously produced.
The word regular was mispronounced by the majority of the participants (86.67%). 13 out of the whole number chose to articulate the vowel sound /ɪ/ instead of /e/. They said /ˈrɪgjʊlə/ instead of /ˈregjʊlə/. This pronunciation error was caused by the interference of the participants’ second language, French. In other words, the counterpart of the word regular in French is ‘régulière’ whose vowel sound of the first syllable is similar to /ɪ/ in English. Therefore, most of the participants pronounced the first syllable in the word regular like they pronounce the French word ‘régulière’
Although the word welcome is very common in English and is used almost every day, it was wrongly articulated by 7 out of the 15 participants that were recorded. (46.67 %) of the participants said /ˈwiːlkəm/ while the proper pronunciation is /ˈwelkəm/. So, only (53.33 %) of the participants knew how to pronounce the letter ‘e’ in the syllable ‘wel’. It seems that this failure in articulating the target vowel sound in the word welcome is due to the overgeneralisation of the pronunciation rules. A good example is the word ‘secret’ in which the vowel sound of the first syllable is pronounced /iː/. This may have led the students to make such a pronunciation error.
2.3.3. The vowel sound /ʌ/

Among

![Bar Chart]

As the graph shows, (only 6.66 %) of the participants were able to pronounce the word among correctly. However, the rest of the participants mispronounced it by saying /əˈmɒŋg/ instead of the correct one /əˈmʌŋ/. That is to say, only one participant pronounced the second syllable with the correct vowel sound /ʌ/ whereas the others produced the vowel sound /ɒ/ instead. It is obvious that the reason that led the participants to produce /ɒ/ rather than /ʌ/ is that they assumed that the letter ‘o’ is always pronounced /ɒ/ when it is followed by the combination ‘ng’ such as in words like ‘song’, ‘wrong’, ‘strong’ … etc.
The word borough was mispronounced by all the participants who were recorded. Out of the 15 participants, no one managed to pronounce at least one of the two syllables accurately. So, only one pronunciation /bɔːrəʊ/ that was repeated along the recording process. The syllable that we intended to investigate was the first one carrying the target vowel sound. The whole participants produced the long vowel sound /ɔː/ instead of the correct one /ʌ/. The only interpretation that justifies such a pronunciation error is that the word borough is somehow uncommon among students of English. Hence, they may have never checked its pronunciation. Therefore, they generalised the usual pronunciation of the combination ‘or’ /ɔː/ and applied it to pronounce the combination ‘bor’ (the first syllable). So, it can be said that producing /ɔː/ instead of /ʌ/ was due to the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules. In other words, participants pronounced ‘bor’ the way they pronounce the words ‘for’ and ‘more’, for example.
The word comfortable was pronounced in two different ways, and only (40 %) of participants pronounced it correctly. However, the rest (60 %) mispronounced it by saying /kʌmfɔ:təbəl/ instead of /kɒmfɔ:təbəl/. The target vowel sound here is in the first syllable in which the participants produced the vowel sound /ɒ/ instead of the correct one /ʌ/. It can be said that this pronunciation error is related to the interference of French. To say it clearly, the word comfortable is of a French origin and it is a modification of the French word ‘confortable’; this means that participants had been exposed to the French word before they were exposed to the English counterpart. Thus, they pronounced the letter ‘o’ of the first syllable as /ɒ/ and not /ʌ/ because with the French word the letter ‘o’ is pronounced as /ɔ/ which is closer to the English /ɒ/.
The word function was pronounced either */fɛŋkʃən/ by (93.34 %) or */fʌŋkʃən/ by only (6.66 %). The target syllable in the word function is the first one ‘fun’. The latter was mispronounced by 14 out of the 15 participants. They produced the vowel sound /e/ instead of the one which should be produced /ʌ/ saying /fɛŋ/ rather than /fʌŋ/. It is quite clear that the reason that led the participants to make such a pronunciation error is interference of the French vowel sound system. In other words, the combination ‘un’ in the French language is pronounced /ɛ/ which sound like /en/ in English. Therefore, it is obvious that the effect of the French pronunciation led the participants to pronounce the English combination ‘un’ like they pronounce it in French.
As figure 25 shows, most of the participants (86.67%) said */hendəd/ while the accurate pronunciation is */hʌndrəd/. The latter was exhibited by only two participants out of the whole number. Such a pronunciation error can be attributed to the interference of the French vowel sound system. That is to say, the participants made use of the French pronunciation to pronounce the given English word. In this case, the participants articulated the ‘un’ in the word ‘hundred’ like they articulate the ‘un’ in the French word ‘lundi’. The combination in the word ‘lundi’, for example, is pronounced /ɛ̃/ which is similar to /en/ in English. Therefore, most of the participants pronounced the word hundred as */hendəd/.
For the word pronunciation, only the second syllable is discussed. It went through two different pronunciations, among which one of the mis correct. While (13.33 %) of the participants pronounced the second syllable correctly, the rest (86.67 %) failed to articulate it accurately by saying /-nɒn-/ instead of /-nʌn-/.

It should be noticed that the letter ‘u’ is never pronounced /ɒ/ in English. So, producing the vowel sound /ɒ/ rather than /ʌ/ was unclear, and there was no reason leading them to pronounce it that way. Therefore, the only reason behind making such a pronunciation error is the interference of the French vowel sound system. That is to say, the counterpart of the word pronunciation in French is ‘prononciation’. The second syllable ‘non’ of the French word is pronounced with the vowel sound /ɔ/ which is closer to the English vowel sound /ʌ/ which the participants produced at the level of the second syllable ‘num’.
As the graph shows, none of the participants was able to articulate the word thorough accurately. Specifically, they all failed to pronounce correctly the target syllable which is the first one. In other words, (100%) of the participants said /θɔːrəʊ/ instead of /θʌrə/. So, it can be said that producing the vowel sound /ɔ:/ instead of /ʌ/ reflects overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules. That is to say, the letter ‘o’ is often pronounced /ɔ:/ when it is followed by the letter ‘r’ in the middle of words like ‘sorrow’, ‘torn’, ‘portable’…etc. Therefore, the participants took it for granted that it is always pronounced /ɔ:/, and this led them to make such a pronunciation error.
The word stomach was mispronounced by almost half of the participants recorded. As figure 27 shows, (53.34%) of the participants, i.e., 8 of them failed to articulate correctly the first syllable which carries the target vowel sound /ʌ/. Whereas, (46.66%) were able to pronounce it correctly. The 8 participants said /stɒmək/ while the correct pronunciation is /stʌmək/. Hence, it is quite clear that what led the participants to produce /ɒ/ rather than /ʌ/ is the interference of their second language, French. That is to say, the word stomach is a modification of the French word ‘estomach’ whose second syllable is pronounced with a vowel sound which is closer to /ɒ/ in English. Therefore, since the participants had been exposed to the French word ‘estomach’ before they encounter the English one ‘stomach’, they made use of the French pronunciation and ended up with producing /ɒ/ instead of the correct /ʌ/.

Figure 27. Students’ articulations of the word stomach.
2.3.4. The diphthong /eə/

Bear

The word bear went through two different pronunciations: /beə(r)/ and /bɪə(r)/. While the correct pronunciation of the combination ‘ear’ in the word bear is /eə/, (46.67%) of the participants mispronounced it by producing the diphthong /iə/ instead. The only interpretation of why such an error happened is that the participants thought that the combination ‘ear’ is always pronounced /iə/ such as in words like ‘fear’, ‘rear’ and so on. As a result, overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules affected their articulation of the word bear.

Figure 3.1. Students’ articulations of the word bear.
The word prayer was mispronounced by 14 out of the 15 participants that were recorded. That is to say, as the graph shows, (93.34%) of the participants pronounced the word prayer as /preɪə(r)/ instead of /preə(r)/. So, they produced the triphthong /eɪə/ rather than the central diphthong /eə/. Such pronunciation error undoubtedly took place due to overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules because in words like ‘player’, ‘layer’ and so on, the combination ‘ay’ is pronounced /eɪə/. Therefore, they pronounced the combination ‘ay’ the way it is pronounced in the word ‘player’ and ‘layer’, for example.

Figure 29. Students’ articulations of the word prayer.
As the graph shows, the word share experienced two pronunciations. Only two participants could pronounce it as it should be pronounced. Whereas, the rest 13 participants failed to do so. They said /ʃeə(r)/ instead of the correct one /ʃeə(r)/. Most of the participants, pronounced the letter ‘a’ in the word share the way they pronounce it in words like ‘late’, ‘name’ and ‘wage’…etc. In other words, the letter ‘a’ is often pronounced /eɪ/ when it is followed by a consonant and the letter ‘e’ at final position. So, it is quite clear that the students overgeneralised one of the pronunciations of the letter ‘a’ to pronounce the word share. Therefore, overgeneralisation affected the participants’ pronunciation.
Out of the 15 participants recorded, only 9 of them articulated the word wear as it should be articulated /weə(r)/. However, the rest 6 participants who represent (40 %) failed to do so. They produced the diphthong /ɪə/ rather than the correct one /eə/. The fact behind making such a pronunciation error is that the combination ‘ear’ is often pronounced /ɪə/ in words like ‘hear’, ‘fear’, ‘dear’, ‘near’, ‘appear’ …etc. It should be noticed that the words having the combination ‘ear’ pronounced /ɪə/ are more than those in which the ‘ear’ is pronounced /eə/. Therefore, the participants pronounced the word wear the way they do as a result of overgeneralisation.
2.4. Discussion of the Results

The practical part of this research covered (28) words with both correct and incorrect pronunciations. The words were given in a context, i.e., in meaningful sentences so that the learners would not focus on the target word and therefore overcorrection, which may affect the results of the research, would be avoided. The aim behind doing this was to let the participants act naturally by not concentrating on only the target words. The (28) words were divided according to the target vowel sound they have. So, there were (8) words having the vowel sound /ə/, (8) words having the vowel sound /e/, (8) words with the vowel sound /ʌ/ and the rest (4) words contained the diphthong /eə/. It should be noted that, according to the research questions raised, some of the words exist in the French language and some others do not. After analysing the pronunciation of the participants, it was found that the pronunciation errors at the level of the target vowel sounds were of two main sources: Interference of the French vowel sound system and the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules. The results show that (12) words were mispronounced due to the interference of French, and the rest (16) words were, however, mispronounced because of overgeneralising the pronunciation rules.

On one hand, the interference of the French vowel sound system was strongly observed in the participants’ recordings. Hence, it can be said that the French vowel sound system resembles that of English and because of that negative transfer in pronunciation took place. It seems that what led the participants to make such pronunciation errors in producing the target vowel sounds is the fact that the French vowel sound system is less complex than the English one. In other words, although the two languages share a lot of words which are spelt the same in both languages, the pronunciation of the words in French, unlike in English, is very easy to guess since pronunciation rules are almost fixed. For example, unlike the words ‘cut’ and ‘cute’ in English, the French words ‘but’ and
‘buteur’ are pronounced with the same vowel sound /y/. This pronunciation uncomplicatedness of the French pronunciation rules really attracts the EFL learners whose second language is French to get use of it since the two languages share a long history which led to a huge similarity in hundreds of words. Consequently, during the analysis of the learners’ recordings, we noticed that they pronounced some of the words with French origin the way they are pronounced them in French.

On the other hand, the overgeneralisation of the pronunciation rules was another source of mispronouncing some of the words (16 words). While analysing the recordings of the participants, we found out that some words had been articulated in a way which reveals that the participants overgeneralised some of the pronunciation rules in order to articulate the given words. That is to say, since there are no fixed rules governing the English pronunciation, the participants were unable to know how a particular vowel sound should be pronounced especially in words that they have never encountered. Therefore, they pronounced the target vowel sounds the way they are pronounced in other words. For example, they said /preɪə(r)/ for ‘prayer’ just because they thought that the combination ‘ay’ is always pronounced /eɪ/.

In summary, this part of research has dealt with the interference of the French pronunciation as well as the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules in learners’ production of the English vowel sounds /ə, eɪ, ʌ/ and /eə/. Only after this, we can take a look back at the aim and the research questions that were set for this section. First of all, the aim was to identify, analyse and classify the different pronunciation errors of the vowel sounds /ə, eɪ, ʌ/ and /eə/ made by third year students at Larbi Ben M’hidi University. These errors were examined to decide to which extent an interference of the French vowel sound system and the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules contribute to the commitment of such errors. All the analyses and interpretations that were conducted
ultimately serve and fulfill the present aim. That is to say, both the interference of French and the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules affect learners’ production of the vowel sounds /ə/, /ɛ/, /ʌ/ and /eə/. 

General Conclusion

The present study has investigated the pronunciation errors at the level of the vowel sounds /ə/, /ɛ/, /ʌ/ and /ə/ made by third year EFL students at Larbi Ben M’hidi University. It should be noted that before we began working on this thesis, we had made a test which was a kind of recordings through which we narrowed down the vowel sounds that are the most mispronounced by students. After we listened to the students’ recordings, we hypothesised that EFL learners at the University of Larbi Ben M’hidi have difficulties in the production of the vowel sounds mentioned above. Then, we hypothesised that the interference of the learners’ second language, French, and the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules affect the learners’ production of the target vowel sounds.

The main aim of the this research is to identify, analyse and finally classify the pronunciation errors at the level of the target vowel sounds.

The research consists of two chapters: a theoretical chapter and a practical chapter. The theoretical chapter is composed of two sections. The first section deals with English pronunciation with reference to the articulation of the target vowel sounds; whereas, the second section tackles Error Analysis since the study itself is an error analysis. The practical chapter is devoted to description of the study including participants, data collection tools and procedures as well as the discussion of the findings. The data collected was in the form of audio recordings which, in turn, was a group of sentences given to the participants to read.

The results that were reached after the analysis and the classification of errors showed that both the interference of French and the overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules do really affect learners’ pronunciation accuracy.
By the end of this research, we provided some implications for both teachers and learners to deal with this instances of pronunciation errors. First, teachers should try to improve their way of teaching phonetics and phonology as well as the techniques used to explain the accurate production of English sounds. Also, they have to encourage learners to listen to native speakers to improve their pronunciation. Learners, on the other hand, are required to give much importance to their pronunciation not only grammar and vocabulary.

To overcome the limitations of this study, we gave some suggestion for future research. We suggested working with a big number of participants and repeat the recordings of the same words under different circumstances in order to get more trustworthy results.

2.5. Limitations of the study

Although we have reached some important results by the end of the present study, it is undeniable that we encountered some hindrances that affected to some extent its completion.

The first limitation that was faced is the number of the participants involved in the study. Because only few participants accepted to take part in the present research, we manage to record only 15 participants out of the whole number of third year students. Therefore, the results of the research cannot be generalised to the whole population of students of English. Further researches may take a larger sample of students.

The second limitation was the process of recording itself. We faced a lot of hindrances at the recording phase since most of the participants were busy at that time preparing for their tests and exposes. Thus, we were obliged to change the time of some recording sessions. Some other times, we had to change some of the already selected participants, for they promised to come but did not.
Another limitation which is really worth mentioning is that some of the participants, especially males, were not serious while reading the group of sentences given. In other words, they read the sentences in a fast way without concentrating on their pronunciation. As a result, the participants made a huge number of errors at the level of the target vowel sounds.

The last limitation was the time available. It is really a very affective factor when conducting any research. As master students, we were obliged to delay and put our thesis aside for a period of time because we were busy with presentations and courses during the first semester.

2.6. Suggestions For Future Research

Future researchers working on the same topic of this research have to take into consideration the limitations that were encountered while conducting the present study. First, other researchers may conduct studies with large samples of population in order to make the overgeneralisation of the results easy, and therefore to get more trustworthy results. Another suggestion is concerned with the process of error identification. Confirming the nature of the error will require many repetitions of recording the same word under several circumstances.

2.7. Pedagogical Implications

On the light of the previous results, a number of implications can be addressed to both EFL learners as well as teachers in order to overcome the already mentioned pronunciation errors. First, much importance should be given to pronunciation by both teachers and learners. Since pronunciation is one of the key aspects to intelligibility, both teachers and learners should provide much more time for practising this skill by practising all the
activities that may improve the pronunciation of vowel sounds. Second, according to the
participants’ recording, we understand that pronunciation is being taught using traditional
methods and techniques which led the learners’ pronunciation to be affected by
interference of the second language and overgeneralisation of pronunciation rules. Hence,
using modern techniques and methods to teach pronunciation is uevitableble and very
needed. Third, EFL learners should not rely on only their teachers of phonetics to enhance
their pronunciation. They rather must look for other sources of knowledge such as audio
books of native speakers, listening to native speakers’ conversations, imitating them, and
then memorising the accurate pronunciation of the English sounds. Thus, learners will
certainly improve their pronunciation accuracy level. In addition, students should be given
the opportunity to prepare role-plays or dialogues and present them in front of the class.
This kind of activities push learners to check up the correct pronunciation of words before
making their presentations, and this is very beneficial for learners to have a good
pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers of phonetics should help their students and raise their
awareness about features of English pronunciation. Finally and most importantly, teaching
pronunciation for a short period of time is not sufficient for learners. It will be better if the
phonetics module is taught for more than two years unlike the case here at the Department
of English.
References


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE : THE LIST OF SENTENCES
We made an analysis on the way the government money is being spent.

I usually take a camera with me when I go for trips with my friends.

A good teacher is the one who has much knowledge and information about his subject.

Any piece of writing should have an introduction as well as a conclusion.

Since ways of thinking differ, people don’t have to worry about expressing their opinions.

Last night I did not sleep night. I had a terrible flu.

There will be a very funny movie tonight on “bein movies” channel.

My feelings towards her changed over the years.

Academic writing needs to be more formal.

I used to edit the college paper in the old days.

Heavy rain falling is expected by the end of the week.

Looking for a job is necessary before thinking of marriage.

I was not present when the teacher discussed the theme of the research with the students.

The usually exchange messages by telephone.

Before killing her, the criminal was meeting his victim on a regular basis.

“You are welcome among us”. Said the headmaster.

I am really proud that I am among the best students at the department.

Greater London consists of the city of London and 32 boroughs.
I don’t know why I feel **comfortable** when I talk to her.

In English and French languages, both the present participle and the past participle can function as an adjective.

**Hundreds** of animal species are in danger of extinction.

I ate too much at lunch. I have a terrible **stomachache**

Many words in English have more than one **pronunciation**.

The teacher is explaining the lesson; students are giving **thorough** attention.

We broke up because I could not **bear** the way she was behaving anymore.

Muslims perform five **prayers** a day.

I like to **share** my happiness when I feel happy.

I don’t like to **wear** sandals in summer.
Résumé

Cette étude porte sur l'identification, l'analyse et la classification des erreurs de prononciation au niveau des voyelles /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ et /eə/ réalisées par les étudiants de troisième année du département d'anglais, Université Larbi Ben M'Hidi. Ces erreurs sont attribuées à deux sources majeures: une surgénéralisation des règles de prononciation anglaise et l'interférence du système vocal vocalique français. En conséquence, cette recherche cherche à explorer la mesure dans laquelle ces sources affectent la prononciation des voyelles cibles par les élèves. Pour répondre aux questions de cette étude, une analyse d'erreur sur la prononciation des voyelles cibles est effectuée. Le travail sur le terrain est effectué selon une méthode analytique descriptive avec un enregistreur vocal pour collecter des données orales. Les analyses sont effectuées pour remplir le but principal de cette thèse. Les résultats établissent une preuve valable que les deux sources prédéterminées semblent avoir une incidence considérable sur la prononciation des apprenants au niveau de la voyelle cible. La signification de cette étude découle du fait que les études antérieures ont rarement abordé la prononciation des ces quatre voyelles : /ə/, /e/, /ʌ/ et /eə/. Ainsi, grâce à cette étude, la sensibilisation à ces erreurs sera augmentée de sorte que les enseignants feront quelque chose pour réduire leurs occurrences.
ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحديد وتحليل وتصنيف أخطاء النطق على مستوى أصوات الحروف /æ / ə / e / ə ِ ئ التي قام بها طلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة العربي مهدي. تُعزى هذه الأخطاء إلى مصدين رئيسيين: الإفراط في تعميم قواعد النطق باللغة الإنجليزية وتدخل نظام صوت الـتاء الفرنسي. بناءً على ذلك، يسعى هذا البحث إلى استكشاف مدى تأثير هذه المصادر على نطق الطلاب لأصوات حروف الـالامانتة المشتركة. للأجابة على اسئلة هذه الدراسة، يتم إجراء تحليل لأخطاء النطق على مستوى أصوات الحروف المستهدفة والمشتركة أعلاه. يتم تنفيذ العمل الميداني باتباع طريقة تحليلية وصفية مع مسجل صوت لجمع البيانات الشفهية. يتم تنفيذ التحليلات لتحقيق الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة. وتقسم النتائج بناءً صحيحاً على أن المصدرين الذين تم تحديدهما سابقاً يؤثران في نطق المتعلم على مستوى حرف الـالامانتة المستهدفة إلى حد كبير. تتبع أهمية هذه الدراسة من حقيقة أن الدراسات السابقة نادرًا ما تعالج مشكلة النطق لأصوات الحروف الأربعة المذكورة سابقاً. لذلك، من خلال هذه الدراسة، سيتم رفع الوعي بهذه الأخطاء بحيث يقوم المدرسون بعمل شيء تتقبل حدوثهم.