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## **Pronunciation-Learning Strategies and their Impact upon the Production of English Front and Back Vowels:**

The Case Study of Third-year Students of English in the Department of  
Foreign Languages, Mila University Centre

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Master Degree in

**Language Sciences and Didactics of Language**

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## *Dedications*

*I, Selma Meferedj,*

*In the name of Allah the most Merciful and the most Compassionate,*

*dedicate this work to:*

*My mom, thanks for always being there for me;*

*My dad, I really love you;*

*My family members: Samir, Meriem, Yassin, and Salha,*

*I enjoy my life with you in it;*

*My future husband Alla,*

*You are my dearest friend, my deepest love, you are the best of me;*

*My best friends forever: Leguene Selma, Sidi Imane, and Boulakrout Sara,*

*Family isn't always blood;*

*My little nephew: Iyad, you bring happiness to our home.*

*I, Selma Leguene,*

*In the name of Allah the most Merciful and the most Compassionate,*

*dedicate this work to:*

*My beloved parents*

*My shining diamonds who sacrificed around the clock for my happiness*

*My father Lakhdar and my mother Laakri;*

*My brothers: Karim, Faycel, Houssam and Djihad, my sisters: Naziha*

*And Rokiya, my sister-in-law Mereim;*

*My future husband, Bachir: life without you means nothing;*

*My best friends forever, Imane Sidi, Selma Meferedj*

*Boulakrout Sara and Chafya Kerkouch;*

*My little nephew Sirin and my little niece*

*Rodayna*

*All my relatives.*

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## **Abstract**

Pronunciation is arguably one of the most pivotally important sub-skill that contributes significantly to the gradual growth and eventual maturity of language proficiency. A whole host of different learning strategies has been implemented by practitioners for empowering learners to develop such a skill in a more satisfactory fashion over the years. The main goal of the present research work has been to examine the effectiveness of deploying pronunciation-learning strategies on the production of English front and back vowels. It has endeavored to unveil the teachers' and students' attitudes towards the use of pronunciation-learning strategies. The case study pertains to third-year students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila during the academic year 2018-2019. To test the research hypothesis, two questionnaires were administered, one for teachers and the other for students. The data gathered reveals that the students have a positive attitude towards the use of pronunciation-learning strategies in learning English front and back vowels. Teachers confirm the importance of those strategies and their positive impact upon the production of English front and back vowels. The findings obtained allow for the confirmation of the hypothesis. From the results, the research proves that more attention should be given to the use of pronunciation-learning strategies. The overwhelming conclusion reached in the current study affirms that pronunciation-learning strategies have a significant impact upon the production of English front and back vowels. Moreover, the more diversified pronunciation-learning strategies students employ, the more error-free their production of English front and back vowels will be.

**Key Words:** pronunciation, pronunciation-learning strategies, English front vowels, English back vowels.

## **List of Abbreviations**

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

PLS: Pronunciation Learning Strategies

IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet

L<sub>1</sub>: First Language

L<sub>2</sub>: Second language

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## **General Introduction**

1. Statement of the Problem
2. Aim of the Study
3. Research Questions
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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Pronunciation is the most important and difficult problem that non-native speakers of English face when studying English. Pronunciation refers to the ability to produce comprehensible speech to fulfil speaking test requirements (Hughes, 2002). It is considered as a crucial aspect in mastering a foreign language, since it gives meaning to what is being said. Ill-formed pronunciation can lead to negative impressions, misunderstanding and ineffective communication, despite the fact that one can have good vocabulary and grammar.

Depending on the previous idea that emphasises the importance of pronunciation in communication, we turn our interest to investigate the difficulties that EFL learners face in their process of learning the English pronunciation, which has a specific sound system described by those learners as a complex one. We point that the most difficult part in pronunciation they constantly come up against is producing vowels. To be more specific and to set thematic limits to our research undertaking, we will be focussing crucially upon the English front and back vowels, their characteristics, how to produce them, and why EFL learners face difficulties while producing them. Amongst our most centrally crucial preoccupation in the present research work is the pronunciation-learning strategies they may use and their impact upon these productions.

### **2. Aim of the Study**

The aim of our study is manifold. We have set out to find out which pronunciation-learning strategies are used by the third-year students of English at the Department of foreign languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila. In addition, we have striven to establish whether there exists a positive relationship between the students' use of



pronunciation-learning strategies and their learning of English pronunciation, most peculiarly English front and back vowels.

### **3. Research Questions**

With the perpetual appearance of lots of researchers who were and still are interested in pronunciation, and with their production of various strategies that help learners in their process of acquiring proper pronunciation, particularly front and back vowels, we were led to raise the following primary research questions:

- I. -What are these pronunciation-learning strategies?
- II. -Do they effect the production of English front and back vowels?

### **4. Research Hypothesis**

In the light of what has been previously stated, there are various pronunciation - learning strategies used by EFL learners. We hypothesize that the more diversified pronunciation-learning strategies students employed, the more error-free their production of English front and back vowels would be.

### **5. Research Methodology**

To answer the research questions and to test our hypothesis, a teachers' questionnaire along with a students' questionnaire are administered to both Phonetics and Oral Expression, teachers, and to third-year students at the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre/ Mila, respectively. The questionnaire aims at gathering data about students' and teachers' vantage points of view as regards the use of pronunciation-learning strategies in the production of English front and back vowels.

## **6. Structure of the Dissertation**

Our research is divided into three chapters; the first two chapters are theoretical, whilst the third one is practical and forms the core of our work. Chapter one gives an overview about phonetics and phonology, the English sound system, the classification of the English vowels, the place and the manner of articulating of vowels. We conclude with some previous studies about the acquisition of English vowels by non-natives. Chapter two deals with pronunciation, its definition, importance, teaching pronunciation, variables affecting its acquisition, approaches to pronunciation, and learning strategies that EFL learners may use. More specifically, the chapter examines the teaching of pronunciation- learning strategies in relation to the production of English front and back vowels. The third chapter investigates the hypothesis mentioned before via questionnaires filled out by both teachers and students.

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## **Chapter One:**

### **The English Sound System**

#### **Introduction**

Every language in the world has a specific sound system that differentiates it from those of the other languages. In order to be able to speak a specific language, you have to be familiar with its sound system. As foreign learners of the English language, we need to make this step.

The English sound system is consisted of 20 vowels and 24 consonants. The observable thing in this system is that the vowel sounds cover the entire range of mouth positions: front, center, back, open, close, spread, rounded, and neutral. Some vowels are long, others are short, some are pure vowels, and others are diphthongs or triphthongs. So, in contrast with the sound systems of the other languages, which have few number of vowels, (e.g., the Arabic language as mentioned by Alotaibi and Hussain (2010) has no more than six vowels). The sound system of the English language is characterized by this variation in its vowels. As a result, for most learners, the English vowels present an important area of study.

For the sake of bringing familiarity of the English sound system, especially the vowels' part, to EFL learners, this chapter is presented.

## **English Sound System**

### **1.1. Phonetics**

Phonetics is a sub-discipline within linguistics. A branch that focuses on the study of the sounds which are used in speech (Collins and Mees, 2003). It is a system of describing and recording sounds objectively concerned with the smallest unit of language. Moreover, Roach, Esling, and setter (2011) define it as “the scientific study of speech. It has a long story, going back certainly to well over two thousand years ago. The central concerns in phonetics are the discovery of how speech sounds are produced, how they are used in spoken language, how we can record speech sounds with written symbols and how we hear and recognize different sounds” (p. 66).

On the other side, Crystal (2008) states “phonetics is the science which studies the characteristics of human sound-making, especially those sounds used in speech, and provides methods for their description, classification and transcription” (p. 363).

For Kelly (2000), phonetics is concerned with the study of speech sounds, and a phonetician usually works in one or more of the following areas:

- The anatomical, neurological and physiological bases of speech (physiological phonetics).
- How sounds are produced by the vocal apparatus. The actions and the movements of these speech organs in producing sound (articulatory phonetics).
- How sounds travel through the air from the speakers’ mouth to the hearers’ ear, and how these sounds are interpreted by the human ear (acoustic phonetics).
- How people perceive the sounds they hear (auditory phonetics).
- How our speech is perceived by the brain (perceptual phonetics)

## 1.2. Phonology

According to McMahon (2002), phonology is a sub-discipline in linguistics, which deals with sounds. To know what sounds we use and make is part of understanding what makes us human. Each person grows up speaking only a particular language or languages and each language only makes use of producible and distinguishable sounds. Moving to the domain of phonology, which is the language specific selection and organization of the sound to signal meaning. Phonologists' interest lies principally in the sound patterns of a particular language and what speakers and listeners need to know, and children need to learn, to be speakers of that language. Another definition of phonology says that phonology is the study of ways in which a given language shapes sounds into distinctive categories of perception and of their pronunciation rules. Widdowson (1996) states that "phonology is the study of phonemes and their relations in sound system" (p. 42). It, likewise, studies the distributions as well as the sound combinations that a language uses. In addition, Kartyastuti (2017) contends that it is the study of language system and the general properties displayed by these systems. By contrast, whilst phonetics studies all possible sounds that the human vocal apparatus can make, phonology studies only those contrasts in sound (phoneme) which make differences within language.

She also argues that teachers should not pay attention only to phonetics but they should be knowledgeable about phonology of English because it provides systematic and well founded understandings of the sound patterns of English. While phonetics is the study of the ways in which speech sounds are produced, phonology is the study of how the speech sounds are used in that language to distinguish meaningful units (such as words), how sounds are patterned in a language. Consequently, the study of phonology requires us to take meaning into consideration while phonetics does not.

### **1.3. The Sound System of English**

Every language in the world has a limited number of speech sounds. All sounds, including the English sounds, are usually classified into two broad categories: vowels and consonants.

In the English language system, there are 24 consonants and 20 vowels. It is very important to recognize that there is a basic distinction between them, since they are produced differently.

Consonants are produced by narrowing the mouth, which blocks the air, or hinders it. In addition, the active movements of the tongue touch some parts of the mouth cavity. Crystal (2008) says “consonants are sounds made by a closure or narrowing in the vocal tract so that the airflow is either completely blocked, or so restricted that audible friction is produced” (p. 103).

Vowels, on the other hand, are produced when the air passes freely through the mouth and there is a very little narrowing in the mouth cavity. For Roach, Esling, and Setter (2011), vowels are sounds that make the least obstruction to the flow of air. In the production of vowels, it is important to mention that there is an active movement of the parts of the tongue without touching any part of the mouth cavity.

### **1.4. The Production of Speech Sound**

As a starting point when we talk about the speech sounds production, we must acknowledge that speech does not start in the lungs, but it starts in the brain where the creation of the message and lexicon-grammatical structure happen. These mental operations need a representation of the sound sequence as it needs also a number of commands that will be executed by our speech organs to produce what is called “utterances”. So, the production of speech sounds passes through two main stages, the first consists of mental operations, and

the second of physical productions. After mental operations, we come to physical productions of sounds. Speech sounds are produced when the air moves out of the lungs through the mouth and the nose.

According to Roach (1991):

All the sounds we make when we speak are the result of muscles contracting. The muscles in the chest that we use for breathing produce the flow of air that is needed for almost all speech sounds; muscles in the larynx produce many different modifications in the flow of air from the chest to the mouth. After passing through the larynx, the air goes through what we called the vocal tract, which ends at the mouth and nostrils. Here the air from the lungs escapes into the atmosphere. We have a large and complex set of muscles that can produce changes in the shape of the vocal tract, and in order to learn how the sounds of speech are produced, it is necessary to become familiar with the different parts of the vocal tract. These different parts are called articulators (p.08).

So, different speech sounds are made when the air goes through different parts of the mouth, and here we make a distinction between articulators and places of articulation.

Articulators include the lip, the blade, and the back of the tongue. Whereas the places of articulation include the teeth, the alveolar ridge, the hard palate, the soft palate (the velum), the glottis, the uvula, and the combination of actions and movements undertaken by the parts of the tongue in the mouth cavity to create consonants and vowels.



## 1.5. English Vowels

### 1.5.1. Definition of Vowels

Vowels are produced with a voiced aggressive air-stream passing through different mouth shapes. They are produced with a primary articulation made by the front, center and back of the tongue. (O’Conner, 1980, Bickford and Floyed, 2006, Marchal, 2009).

In all the production of vowels in pharynx and the mouth (the oral tract), there is no obstruction and no narrowing of a degree that causes audible friction.

According to Roach, Esling, and Setter (2011) “vowels are the class of sound which makes the least obstruction to the flow of air, they are almost always found at the center of a syllable, and it is rare to find any sound other than a vowel which is able to stand alone as a whole syllable” (p. 100).

Crystal (2008) goes far and defines vowels in terms of both phonetics and phonology.

Phonetically, they are sounds articulated without a complete closure in the mouth or a degree of narrowing which would produce audible frictions; the air escapes evenly over the center of the tongue, if air escapes solely through the mouth, the vowel are said to be oral; if some air is simultaneously released through the nose, the vowels are nasal. From the phonological point of view, vowels are those units which function at the center of syllables (p. 517).

Kreidler (2004), on the other hand, comes up with a description to vowels, and says that “all vowels are:

[+syllabic], capable of carrying stress and pitch.

[-consonantal], made without impeding the airflow.

[+continuant], articulated with the air going continuously out of the mouth.

[+sonorant], made with regular patterns of vibration.

[+voice], produced with vocal cords vibrating.

[-sibilant], produced with a flat tongue surface” (p. 48).

McCully (2009) adds, “there are two things to notice. In all varieties of English, vowels are in principle non-nasal, i.e. they are produced with the velum (soft palate) raised, thus sealing off the nasal cavity... the other thing to notice is this: we can assume that all varieties of English vowels are voiced” (p. 112).

### **1.5.2. Classification of Vowels**

According to Lászlo (2014), vowels are made with the air stream that meets no obstruction in the mouth, pharyngeal or nasal cavities. Moreover, these vowels can be classified according to:

-the stability of articulation.

-the lip position.

-the tongue position and shape.

-the vowel length.

#### **1.5.2.1. The Stability of Articulation**

All the English vowels are divided into three groups: monophthongs, diphthongs, and diphthongoids.

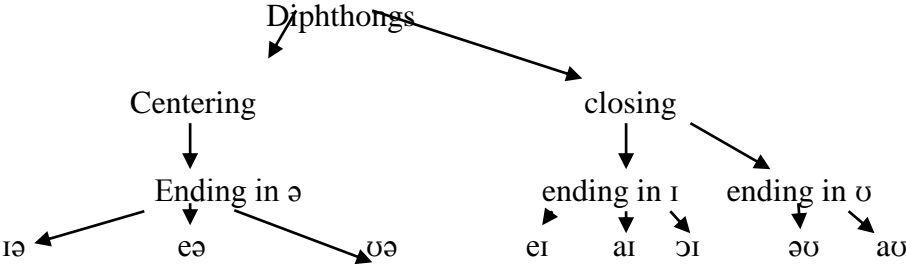
A- Monophthongs: Roach, Esling, and Setter (2011), state that a “monophthong is a single vowel that would be pretty meaningless on its own” (p 57). Monophthongs are also called pure vowels in the sense that in their production, the quality of the produced vowel remains stable and unchangeable because the organs of speech stay in a given position for a certain

period from the beginning to the end of the production. According to Roach (1991), pure vowels are vowels that remain constant and do not glide (p. 20).

There are 12 English monophthongs and they are [i, ɔ, æ, ʌ, u, e, i:, a:, ɔ:, u:, ɜ:, ə].

B- Diphthongs: a diphthong is a combination of two vowels and a movement from one vowel to another. In their production, the organs of speech start from the position of one vowel and move towards the other. For Roach (1991) diphthongs are sounds consisting of a movement or glide from one vowel to another. He adds, “In terms of length, they are like long vowels” (p. 20). The most important thing to know is that the first part is much longer and stronger than the second one, and foreign learners must always remember that the last part of the English diphthongs must not be made too strongly.

The English diphthongs are eight, and the easiest ways to remember them is to put them in a diagram as represented by Roach (1991, p. 20):



**Figure 1: English Diphthongs**

C- Diphthongoids: according to László (2014), this type of vowels are produced when “the articulation is slightly changing, but the difference between the starting point and the end is not so distinct as it is in the case of diphthongs” (p. 13). So these vowels are also gliding vowels like diphthongs, the only difference between them is that the movement between the starting point and the ending one is not so clear as it is in the case of diphthongs. English diphthongoids are [i:, u:].

### **1.5.2.2. The Lip Position**

Vowels can be categorized according to lip rounding. Although the lips have many different shapes and positions, we will consider only the three possibilities mentioned by Roach (1991), which are:

a- Rounded vowels: “are those vowels that are made where the corners of lips are brought towards each other and the lips pushed forwards” (p. 14), for example [o, o:, u, u:].

b- Spread vowels: are those vowels that “are made with the corners of the lips moved away from each other, as for a smile” (p. 14), for example [ɪ, i:].

c- Neutral vowels: are those vowels made “where the lips are not noticeably rounded nor spread. The noise most English people make when they are hesitating (written “er”) has a neutral lip position” (p. 14), for example [ə, ʌ].

### **1.5.2.3. The Shape and Position of the Tongue**

They refer to two possibilities: the vertical distance between the upper surface of the tongue and the hard palate (high, mid, and low), and the horizontal tongue position which means the part of the tongue which is raised highest (front, center, or back).

a-the vertical tongue position:

According to Underhill (2005)

In a vertical axis, to state how far from the roof of the mouth the raised part of the tongue actually is, to describe this the labels high, mid, and low are used. High denotes that the raised part of the tongue is relatively close to the roof of the mouth, and above the level it holds in “neutral” position. Low denotes that the tongue is relatively distant from the roof of the mouth, and

below the level it holds in neutral position. Mid indicates a neutral or middle position between those two extremes (p.08).

High vowels are close vowels produced by raising the body of the tongue above the neutral position to the highest point, e.g. |I:], |U:]. Low vowels are open vowels produced by lowering the tongue below the neutral position, e.g. |a:], |æ|. Mid vowels, on other hand, can be half-close or half-open vowels and they are imaginary positions between close and open vowels.

Half-close vowels such as |e:], |ɔ:].

Half-open vowels such as |ɜ:], |ʌ|.

b- The horizontal tongue position:

According to this position, we have three types of vowels: front vowels in which the front part of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate. They are |I:], |I|, |e|, |æ|, |eɪ|. Central vowels in which the center of the tongue is raised towards an intermediary position in the mouth between the hard palate and the soft palate, and they are |ɜ:], |ə|, |ʌ|. And back vowels in which the back of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate, and they are |u:], |u|, |ɔ:], |ɒ|, |ɑ:], |ɔ|.

Underhill (2005) says

Tongue position is the most important variable in determining the sound of the vowel. For each of the 12 English monophthongs, the tongue is curved in some way such that one part of the tongue is closer to the roof of the mouth than any other part. This raised part may be the front of the tongue, raised towards the hard palate; or the center of the tongue, raised towards the juncture of the hard palate and the soft palate; or the

back of the tongue raised towards the soft palate. The resulting vowels are correspondingly referred to as front, center, back vowels (p. 07)

The table below summaries the classification of the English vowels according to the horizontal and the vertical positions of the tongue (adopted from IPA).

Front	Central	Back	
i		u	High
ɪ		ʊ	
E	ə	o	Mid
ɛ	ʌ	ɔ	
æ		ɑ	Low

**Table 1: Classification of Vowels according to the Position of the Tongue**

#### 1.5.2.4. Vowel Length

It is a fourth variable used to describe and classify monophthongs. It is concerned with the physical duration of the vowels, and according to this variable, we have two types of vowels: short vowels, and long ones. These latter ones tend to have a longer duration than do the first ones. According to Underhill (2005), we have two points to note about length.

The first one is that the English vowels are traditionally referred to as long vowels or short vowels. It is true that long vowels have a longer duration, but length is not an absolute attribute of any vowel.

The second note is that length is not the only thing that differentiates long vowels from those short, but they differ also in the quality of the sound regardless of whether they are longer or shorter.

Short vowels	Examples	Long vowels	Examples
æ	As in apple	eɪ	As in ate
ɪ	As in insect	ɪː	As in meat
ʌ	As in umbrella	aɪ	As in might
ɒ	As in upon	oʊ	As in moat
ɪ	As in elephant	jɔː	As in mute

**Table 2: Classification of Vowels according to Length, with Examples**

### 1.5.3. Place and Manner of Articulation of Vowels

All speech sounds can be described in terms of features; these features are two major types, manner of articulation and place of articulation. Manner of articulation denotes those features that describe how the sound is produced in the oral, pharyngeal, and nasal cavities. It is the interaction of the speech organs, the tongue, the lips and the palate when making a sound. Whereas, Place of articulation refers to the features which describe where the sound is made in the oral cavity, and which part of the tongue is used.

#### 1.5.3.1. The Place of Articulation

There are two places of articulation features for each English vowel.

a- A horizontal position of the tongue in the mouth indicates that we have three possibilities: front vowels that are made with the tongue in the front of the mouth; these vowels have the feature [+front]. Central vowels made with the tongue in the center of the mouth, and have the feature [+center]. Moreover, back vowels produced with the tongue in the back of the mouth, and have the feature [+back].

b- A vertical position of the tongue indicates three other possibilities: high vowels produced with the tongue high in the mouth, and have the feature [+high]. Mid vowels made with the tongue in the middle of the mouth, and have the feature [+mid]. And low vowels made with the tongue low in the mouth, and have the feature [+low].

So, we can describe each vowel according to these two places of articulation, and we will have, for example, |u| is [+back, +high].

|e| is [+front, +mid].

### **1.5.3.2. The Manner of Articulation**

Relating to the manner of articulation, we find: Simple vowels that are phones produced in one place in the mouth, they have the manner of articulation [-diphthong]. Diphthongs that are phones starting out in their production in one position in the mouth, and involving movements of the tongue to another position, and have the manner of articulation [+diphthong]. Moreover, there are rounded vowels made with the lips forming the shape of a circle, such as the “o” shape, they have the manner of articulation [+rounded]. Unrounded vowels which are the opposite of rounded vowels, in the production of those vowels the lips do not shape the form of a circle and they have the manner of articulation [-rounded]. Tense vowels that are produced with more tension in the facial muscles. As states by Crystal (2008) “tension here means the overall muscular effort used in the production of a sound” (p. 480), those vowels are described with [+tension]. Finally, we have lax vowels that have less tension in the facial muscles, “they are produced with less muscular effort and movement, compared to tense vowels” (p. 271), they have the manner of articulation [-tension].



## 1.6. English Front and Back Vowels

### 1.6.1. English Front Vowels

A front vowel is any in a class of vowel sound used in some spoken languages that are produced with the front of the tongue raised towards the hard palate without creating a constriction that would be classified as a consonant.

According to Crystal (2008) “in phonetics, classifications of front speech sounds are of two types: (a) those articulated in the front part of the mouth (as opposed to the back); (b) those articulated by the front part (or blade) of the tongue. Front sounds which satisfy both criteria would be front vowels” (p. 200). He indicates that the production of front vowels needs the involvement of two participants, the front part of the tongue and the front part of the mouth, and both of them are necessary. Roach (2011) states that front vowels include i, e, ε, a (unrounded) and y, ø, œ, æ (rounded). The front vowels that have been mentioned in the IPA are:

- . Close front unrounded vowel [i];
- . Close front compressed vowel [y];
- . Near-close front unrounded vowel [ɪ];
- . Near-close front compressed vowel [ʏ];
- . Close-mid front unrounded vowel [e];
- . Close-mid front compressed vowel [ø];
- . Open-mid front unrounded vowel [ɛ];
- . Open-mid front compressed vowel [œ];
- . Near-open front unrounded vowel [æ];
- . Open front unrounded vowel [a];
- . Open front rounded vowel [ɶ];

### **1.6.2. English Back Vowels**

A back vowel is any in a class of vowel sounds used in spoken languages that is produced with the back of the tongue raised towards the soft palate without creating a constriction that would be classified as a consonant. László (2014) states that a back vowel is that vowel which is produced when the tongue is in the back part of the mouth and the back of it is raised towards the soft palate.

Crystal (2008), on the other hand, comes up with a definition stating that back vowels are those articulated in the back of the mouth with the back part of the tongue. The back vowels that have been mentioned in the International Phonetic Alphabet are:

- .Close back unrounded vowel [u];
- . Close back protruded vowel [ɯ];
- . Near-close back protruded vowel [ɯ̟];
- . Close-mid back unrounded vowel [ɤ];
- . Close-mid back protruded vowel [ɔ];
- . Open-mid back unrounded vowel [ʌ];
- . Open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ̞];
- . Open back unrounded vowel [ɑ];
- . Open back rounded vowel [ɒ];

### **1.7. Previous Studies about the Acquisition of Vowels by Non-Natives**

Many recent studies such as Flege and Port (1981), have examined the perception and the production of English vowels in second language acquisition. A number of researches reported that the acquisition of English pronunciation, especially the English vowels by non-natives, has specific properties and various degrees of accuracy. Those studies have shown

that such acquisition is possibly the most challenging task for L<sub>2</sub> learners, since it encounters a considerable amount of difficulties.

For Arabic learners, many difficulties are encountered in articulating and perceiving the English vowels. Hago and Khan (2015) examined the pronunciation problems that Saudi learners face at secondary schools, and mentioned that the English and the Arabic languages have different phonological systems based on vowel quality and quantity. English has a centripetal vowel system in the sense that vowels have the tendency to move to the centre of the vowel space. Other languages, on the other hand, have a centrifugal vowel system where vowels are located at the periphery of the acoustic space. The Arabic vowel system falls in between these two patterns. These differences allow for describing English and Arabic as languages that have notably distinct vowel systems that cause difficulties to Arabic learners.

Hago and Khan (2015) mentioned also the study of Power (2003) which claims that the distinction between specific vowels, especially open, lax, short vowels such as |ɪ|, |ʊ|, and |ʊ|, will be difficult for the Arabic speakers: the vowel |ɪ| will be lengthened and lowered to |e|, whereas |ʊ| may be produced as |i| or |æ|. In vowel systems, two types of difficulties can be found; the first one is concerns diphthongs that are replaced by other sounds due to L<sub>1</sub> interference. For example, |eə| becomes |eɪ| and |ʊə| becomes |u:|. The second difficulty is found in the distinction between certain pairs of vowels as in |ɪ| and |e| as in ‘sit’ and ‘set’.

Al-Otaibi and Hussian (2016) talked also about other differences in vowel quality and quantity in English and Arabic. They said that Arabic has length only as a distinctive criterion among vowels with no existence of other criteria such as roundness, and tenseness, which do exist in English. Most back English vowels are rounded while front and central vowels are not. Some vowels, like front vowels, contrast in terms of tenseness. Hence, English and Arabic are not different only in terms of the size of their vowel inventory but also in phonetic qualities of the vowels. In the perception of English vowels, many different phonetic cues

may play a role; however, with Arabic learners of English, they may only be sensitive to length and neglect other phonetic cues.

Amer (2012, as cited in Al-Badawi and Azmi Salim, 2014) tries to illustrate the main differences between English and Arabic vowel system. He comes up with the results that vowel sounds in English are more than Arabic vowels. There are non-existent English vowels in Arabic like [e, ɔ, ɒ, ʒ:, ə, ɑ:]. English vowels are affected by consonants following them, while Arabic vowels are not. These differences show obviously that Arabic learners will encounter difficulties in learning some vowels especially vowels that do not exist in Arabic.

Taking other examples of the acquisition of English vowels by non-natives, and far from the Arabic model, we have the Indonesian learners. Riadi, Rufinus, and Novita (2013) conducted a study that investigates student's problems in pronouncing short and long English vowels. His study reported that for Indonesian, the vowel length remains the same to pronounce in any word, but the problems may appear to the vowel sound length when Indonesian learners, for instance, will have to pronounce between short and long vowels as in seat and sit. They may regard the sounds similarly as just [sit]. They perhaps will generalize the English vowels with Indonesian ones that they have only short vowels exist.

The researcher analyses also the factors that cause those problems in pronunciation. He used Swan and Smith's (2010) linguistic problems that Indonesian learners face, using English phonological aspects, problems faced during the learning process, and social aspects.

To conclude, the acquisition of English vowels is marked as the most challenging task for non-natives, Arabic, Indonesians, or others. They are all affected by several factors that Kenworthy (1987) mentioned, and we will discuss them in the coming chapter.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of this chapter, we conclude that the English sound system is amongst the most complex sounds systems. It consists of 20 vowels and 24 consonants. Those vowels and

consonants have specific ways of production. The English vowel sounds are classified into different categories according to the stability of articulation, position of the tongue, lip shapes, and length. Their place and manner of articulation are different from those of consonants. The English vowels and EFL learners were the subject matter for many researchers who undertook studies concerning the acquisition of English vowels by those learners, and many results were reached.

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## **Chapter Two:**

### **Pronunciation-Learning Strategies**

#### **Introduction**

Pronunciation is an inseparable part of English; it deserves adequate attention by both teachers and learners. Many learners rank pronunciation as the most difficult aspect in acquiring English. In English as a second language setting it can be used in real life setting in addition to classrooms and this can allow for more exposure to the language. However, in English as a foreign language setting, it is no longer a means of communication and there is no other place but the classroom where it is used. As a result, EFL learners find difficulties in acquiring good pronunciation; in this case pronunciation instructions can be useful since it will bring students chances to enhance their intelligibility and to acquire knowledge. While teachers in such situations play a major role with the use of these instructions to help, students themselves can participate positively in enhancing their own levels and facing those factors that affect their pronunciation learning, such as the native language, motivation, attitude, age, aptitude, the amount of exposure by the use of various strategies known as pronunciation-learning strategies.

#### **2.1. Pronunciation Definition**

It is defined as the way for students to produce clearer language when they are speaking, or it is the act or the manner of pronouncing a word; utterance of speech, a way of speaking, especially a way that is accepted and comprehensible.

Furthermore, pronunciation definition as taken from Oxford Dictionary states that to pronounce means “to make the sound (a word or part of a word) in the correct or particular way. The way in which the word is pronounced is known as pronunciation”.

According to Kenworthy (1987), English pronunciation is a combination of various elements, such as sound, stress, variation in pitch. Moreover, Yates and Zielinski (2009) define pronunciation as the production of sounds that we use to make meaning when speakers speak. It involves consonants and vowels of a language (segments), features of speech beyond the level of the individual segments, like stress, timing, intonation, phrasing (suprasegmental features), and how the voice is described (voice quality).

For Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), pronunciation can be defined in general terms as the production of significant sound in two senses:

First, sound is significant because it is used as part of a code of a specific language; here we are talking about pronunciation as the production and reception of sounds. Second, sound is significant because it is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use, and here we are talking about pronunciation with reference to acts of speaking.

## **2.2. The Importance of Pronunciation**

Having a good pronunciation is very important because it can make people express messages clearly in communication; it allows them to understand what the speaker says, but an English learner with limited pronunciation skills may lose his/her self-confidence especially in social interactions. In other words, learners with good pronunciation tend to be understood by others even if they make mistakes in other areas, such as grammar. Hence, good knowledge of English grammar is not an insurance of intelligibility. As a result, these students may avoid communication in English; they may experience lack of confidence, limited opportunities, and even social isolation (Gilakjani, 2016).

Moreover, (Varasarin, 2007, p. 11) states, “the process of learning English is interconnected”. It means to acquire one aspect of a language might be a support for mastering other aspects. For Gilbert (1984), the improvement of English pronunciation is of



great importance to enhance student's listening and speaking skills. Pronunciation is important in relation to communication. It provides us with the ability to use the language to express ourselves to others and to understand what others communicate to us.

Yates and Zielinski (2009), point out that people can understand learners who have good pronunciation even if they make mistakes in other areas of language, but they may not necessarily be able to understand those who have unintelligible pronunciation even if they have extensive vocabulary knowledge and know grammar.

Morley (1998, as cited in Gilakjani, 2016), believes that when speakers talk to other persons, pronunciation is the first thing that can create good impression about the quality of their language ability. Bad and incomprehensible pronunciation can cause a negative impact for learners as it may make them lose their self-confidence.

### **2.3. Teaching Pronunciation**

Since pronunciation is considered as a basic sub-skill in speaking and since good pronunciation leads to successful communication, it becomes necessary to give importance. Moreover, despite the fact that this idea is so clear for the majority of teachers and learners, pronunciation teaching stills suffer from many problems.

According to Kelly (2000), "there are two key problems with pronunciation teaching. Firstly, it tends to be neglected. Secondly, when it is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to a particular problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being strategically planned" (p. 13).

Pronunciation teaching tends to be neglected not only because of the teachers' lack of interest in pronunciation teaching, but also because of a lack of knowledge of the theory of pronunciation. Therefore, they do not know how to teach it, even though they have interest in this subject, and grammar with vocabulary tend to take precedence in their plans. On the other

hand, language learners often show considerable enthusiasm for pronunciation, they feel it is something that would help them to communicate better. So, paradoxically, it is often neglected.

When pronunciation is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to particular problems that have arisen in the classroom rather than being strategically planned. To solve these problems, Kelly (2000) suggests that pronunciation teachers need:

- a) - A good grounding in the theoretical knowledge: Pronunciation teachers should be a good model to students. Otherwise; the students will initiate bad pronunciation and lead to make mistakes. So teachers need to know how to pronounce words before teaching pronunciation, so that they give students good pronunciation to initiate.
- b) - Practical classroom skill: Teachers need strategies of how to attract students' attention and as a result, materials presented will be easily understood.
- c) - Access to good ideas for classroom activities: Students get more excited in learning pronunciation due to the teacher's attractive ways in teaching pronunciation with the use of good materials.

In teaching pronunciation, there are five principles, according to Nunan (2003) they are:

- Foster intelligibility during spontaneous speech. Teachers need to do so in order to make students concentrate on the pronunciation of words while they are doing the spontaneous speech.
- Keep affective consideration firmly in mind, and affective support to the students in order to make them feel comfortable to develop new pronunciation habits.
- Avoid the teaching of individual sounds in isolation; by giving students, chances to communicate with their friends for getting more interest, fun, and having memorable activities.

-Provide feedback on learners progress, support student's efforts, guide them, and provide cues for their enhancement, in order to make students aware where they need to place their energies.

-Realize ultimately. The learner is in control of changes in pronunciation. The teacher just needs to provide practice opportunities, and encourage the learner.

According to Kelly (2000), there are some strategies in pronunciation teaching:

#### "A) - Drilling

Basic form of drilling involves teacher saying a word or structure and getting students to repeat it, its' aim is to help students achieve pronunciation of language items, and help them remember new items. Drilling often follows a process known as eliciting. It is based on encouraging the students to bring up a word, phrase or structure as they have studied before. Teachers generally use prompts, pictures, mimes, etc. to help learning along. The teacher's main role in drilling is that of providing a model of the word, phrase or structure for the students to copy.

#### b) - Chaining

It is used to drill long sentences involving difficult words and sounds. Teachers separate words from sentences, and model them separately for students to repeat, and gradually build the sentence up until they become complete sentences. There are two kind of chaining: Back chain: students are drilling to

pronounce sentences and build up parts of the end of the sentence from the end. Gradually add to length. Front chaining: students are drilled to pronounce and build up parts of the start of the sentence from start, gradually adding to its length.

c) - Substitution drilling

It involves drilling a structure, but substituting items into the sentence being dealt with.

d) - Open pair drilling

Question and answer drills, might be set up across the class, by one student asking, another responding, and so on” (p. 16).

## **2.4. Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning**

According to Kenworthy (1987, p. 4-7), there are some factors might affect pronunciation leaning, which are:

### **2.4.1. The Native Language**

The foreign accent has some of the sound characteristics of the learner’s native language. These are often enough to identify the origins of a person, and because of the role that native language plays, many studies are made in which the sound systems of English and other languages are compared and problems and difficulties are predicted. This is applied in addition to the individual sounds, their combinations and features, such as rhythm and intonation. The result said that the more differences there are, the more difficulties the learner will have in pronouncing English, but this cannot be applied in all the situations, because

people from different language backgrounds can and do acquire a near-native pronunciation in English.

#### **2.4.2. The Age Factor**

It is commonly assumed that if someone pronounces a second language like a native, he/she probably started learning it as a child. Conversely, if a person does not begin to learn a second until adulthood, he/she will never have a native like accent even he/she has a good grammar or vocabulary.

To know to what extent this idea is true, many research works have been carried out. Oyama's study in addition to other studies came up with the result that the younger a person was when he started learning English, the more native-like was his accent. Whereas, Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle's studies, and other studies reached different conclusions showing that youth confers no immediate advantage in learning to pronounce foreign sounds. These were conflicting results based on different assessment modes of pronunciation with a range of techniques and methods, in addition to the difficulty of controlling other factors, such as ability, attitude, and motivation, opportunity to use and hear the language.

Other studies said that there is a sensitive period for language learning during which biological changes take place in the brain. Others seem to suggest that the younger a person is, the better he or she will be at accurate perception of the sounds of new languages. But recent and continuous exposure to new language sounds prevents his ability from deteriorating. In this case, the age factor would be closely related to the fact that children have had very recent exposure to new sounds because they have just cleaned their first language. Therefore, the results were contradictory, and various interpretations and possibilities are intriguing, but it is clear that we do not yet have enough evidence that stands for the relation between the age and the ability to pronounce a new language.

### **2.4.3. The Amount of Exposure**

It is a matter of whether the learner is living in an English-speaking country or not. If this is the case, then the learner's pronunciation skills will be affected, because of this exposure, but it is not only a matter of residency, but also the use of English at home, work, or school since we have bilingual and multilingual situations.

Various studies were conducted around the residency issue, and it seems that the amount of exposure is a contributing factor but not a necessary one for the development of pronunciation skills.

### **2.4.4. Phonetic Ability**

This skill is concerned with people who have "oral mimicry". "Phonetic coding ability" or "auditory discrimination ability». Researchers have designed tests to measure this ability; their results showed that some people are able to distinguish between two sounds better than others are and, or are able to mimic sounds more accurately.

For answering the question of whether certain types of learners are poor discriminators, or good ones benefit from different types of training, one study has indicated that those with good phonetic abilities benefit from pronunciation drills, tasks in which particular sounds are heard. Their innate abilities enable them to exploit all the opportunities to compare what they are doing with the model presented. "Poor discriminators" do not seem to benefit from drills very much. In fact, drills seem to cause their attempts to stabilize before they reach an accurate production of a sound, because of the complexities involved. This seems a factor that is very much out of the control of the teacher. We can only operate on the assumption that our learners have the "basic equipment" and provide a variety of tasks so that something will suit the needs and abilities of each learner.

#### **2.4.5. Attitude and Identity**

Person's sense of identity and feeling of group affiliation are strong determiners of the acquisition of accurate pronunciation of a foreign language. It is difficult to predict whether people will modify their accent or not, and, if they do, to what extent and in what ways. Individuals seem to vary greatly. Some seem to be 'impervious' and even after a long time will absorb only some terms or phrases and the pronunciation of a few new individual words; others seem very receptive and begin to change their accent almost as soon as they step off the plane! Interestingly, analysis of people in conversation has shown that adopting and imitating the way our partner speaks is a way of showing positive and friendly feelings towards that person. It is almost as if there is a wish to avoid calling attention to any difference that exists between two people. This behavior may very well become the source of impetus for accent change.

Many studies of attitude and motivation in language learning have shown that those learners, who show positive feelings towards the speakers of the new language, tend to develop more accurate native-like accents. They are willing to be integrated into the new speech community, and are genuinely interested in both the speakers, and their culture.

#### **2.4.6. Motivation and Concern for Good Pronunciation**

Some learners seem to be more concerned about their pronunciation than others do. When we talk in terms of 'strength of concern' for pronunciation, we are really pinpointing a type of motivation; the desire to do well is a kind of 'achievement motivation'. Conversely, if you do not care about a particular task or do not see the value of it, you will not be motivated to do well. Learners may also be unconcerned because they are simply not aware that the way they speak is resulting in difficulty, irritation or misunderstanding for listener.

## **2.5. Approaches to Pronunciation**

There are three main approaches to pronunciation, which are intuitive-imitative approach, the analytical linguistic approach, and the integrative approach (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, 1996). These approaches integrate traditional methods with modern techniques:

### **2.5.1. The Intuitive-Imitative Approach**

As proposed by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996). L<sub>2</sub> learners listen, imitate the rhythms, sounds of an L<sub>2</sub> without any explicit instruction, so the student, according to this approach, listens to, and imitates rhythms and sounds of the target language by which it will lead to development of acceptable threshold of pronunciation without the intervention of any explicit information. The invention of language laboratory and audio-lingual method contributed to the support of this approach in the 1960's, 1970's and right up into the 1980's.

### **2.5.2. Analytical-Linguistic Approach**

The prominence of an explicit intervention of pronunciation pedagogy in language acquisition is stressed according to this approach. Developments in the field of phonetics and phonology from the latter half of the century are drawn upon, and often “watered down” for the use of pedagogical aids in language classroom (phonemic chart, articulatory description, explanations of the form and function of prosody), in addition to practical exercises ( minimal pair, drills, and rhythm chants) from the basis of an explicit program of accent modification (Carey, 2002, as cited in Hashemian and Fadaei, 2011). Therefore, the analytic linguistic approach explicitly informs the learners and focuses attention on the sounds and rhythms of the target language. This approach was developed to complement the intuitive-imitative approach instead of replacing it (Celce-Murcia, Goodwin and Brinton, 1996, p. 2).



### **2.5.3. Integrative Approach**

Lee (2008, as cited in Hashemian and Fadaei, 2011) believes that in integrative approach, “pronunciation is viewed as an integral component of communication, rather than an isolated drill” (p. 1). Pronunciation according to this approach is practical within meaningful task-based activities. L<sub>2</sub> learners use pronunciation-focused listening activities to facilitate the learning of pronunciation. He believes that there is more focus on the suprasegmentals of stress, rhythm, and intonation as practiced in discourse beyond the phoneme and word level. So, pronunciation here is taught to meet the learner’s practical needs.

Morely (1994, as cited in Hashemian and Fadaei, 2011) believes that in this approach the primary goals of pronunciation teaching are for L<sub>2</sub> learners to develop intelligible speech and be able to communicate in the L<sub>2</sub>. In this approach, Morely (1991, as cited in Chen, 2007) identifies basic pronunciation goals of functional, intelligibility, functional communicability, increase self-confidence, speech monitoring ability and speech modification strategies. Morley states also that there is a dual-focus in oral communication programs where the micro level instruction is focused on linguistic (i.e., phonetic-phonological) competence through practice of segmentals and suprasegmentals, and the macro level tends to more global elements of communicability. This approach aims at developing discourse sociolinguistics and strategic competence by using language for communicative purposes.

Although there are three main contemporary approaches to learning pronunciation, the learning of English pronunciation has been the subject of research for a long time. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) exemplify several pronunciation teaching approaches since the teaching of language started, such as Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method, Cognitive Approach, Silent Way, Communicative Language Learning, Communicative Approach...etc.

## **2.6. Pronunciation Learning Strategies**

### **2.6.1. Learning Strategies**

The field of language learning strategies received a lot of interest. Many researchers tried to investigate these strategies and going far by dividing it into different types to make it easier for the students to use.

Rebecca Oxford began research in this field in the 1980's and hers has been the most influential work in bringing the concept of learning strategies. She describes strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situation" (1990, p. 08).

Based on Oxford's influential work on the definition of learning strategies, other researchers have tried to give other definitions to the concept. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define them as "special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 03).

Pronunciation learning strategies appeared as a result to these studies. Since the majority of researchers were aware about the significant role that it plays. They tried to create specific strategies related to pronunciation, and defined them as: Pawlak (2010, as cited in Szyszka, 2015) says that "pronunciation learning strategies are deliberate actions and thoughts that are consciously employed, often in logical sequence, for learning and gaining greater control over the use of various aspects of pronunciation"(p. 96).

Pronunciation learning strategies are actions and thoughts used consciously by the learner to have control over the use of aspects of pronunciation. In order to take these actions, pronunciation learners must be aware of them and be able to choose those that are most suitable and appropriate for their pronunciation learning process.

## **2.6.2. Classification of Pronunciation Learning Strategies**

Depending on the first taxonomy provided by Peterson (2000) on the basis of her pioneering study that was grounded upon Oxford's classification (1990), six strategy groups classified into two different macro-types direct and indirect can be noticed. The former encompasses memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies; the later metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

We need to know that direct strategies “require mental processing of the language” (Oxford, p. 73) in slightly different ways. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, are those that “underpin the business of the language learning...without (in many instances) directly involving the target language” (ibid, p. 135). Within the latter, metacognitive strategies relate to how learners regulate their emotions, motivations, and attitudes; social strategies relate to how learners learn through interaction with others.

### **2.6.2.1. Direct Strategies**

According to Oxford (1990), direct strategies include: (1) Memory strategies: strategies that help learners store and retrieve new information; (2) Cognitive strategies: strategies that enable learners to understand and produce new language by different means; (3) Compensation strategies: strategies that aid learners in overcoming knowledge gaps and continuing to communicate authentically.

### **2.6.2.2. Indirect Strategies**

Therefore, Oxford (1990) proposes that Indirect strategies include: (1) Metacognitive strategies: strategies that help learners to manage the learning process; learners who use this type of strategies try to achieve self-monitoring and evaluating by organizing their learning process, selecting materials, exercises, and concentrating on certain phonetic features; (2)

Affective strategies: help learners to develop self-confidence using relaxation techniques, like breathing, encouraging and rewarding themselves; (3) Social strategies: learners use this type of strategies to help them improve their pronunciation: they depend on cooperation and interaction with others, asking for help, and for correction to reach this goal.

<b>Oxford's Strategy Types</b>	<b>Pronunciation Learning Strategies</b>
Memory strategy	. Representing sounds in memory
Cognitive strategy	. Practicing naturalistically. . Formally practicing with sounds. . Analyzing the sound system.
Compensation strategy	. Using proximal articulation.
Metacognitive strategy	. Finding out about TL pronunciation. . Setting goals and objectives. . Planning for a language task. . Self-evaluating.
Affective strategy	. Using humor to lower anxiety.
Social strategy	. Asking for help. . Cooperating with peers.

**Table 3: Petersons' (2000) categorization of Pronunciation Learning Strategies Based on Oxfords' (1990) Strategy Types (as cited in Chang, 2012, p. 19)**

<b>Strategy Types</b>	<b>Pronunciation learning strategies</b>
Strategies	. Selecting particular feature of pronunciation to focus on. . Looking for opportunities to practice. . Recording oneself to self to self-evaluate one's pronunciation.

Cognitive strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Making use of phonetic symbols and articulatory description.</li> <li>. Forming and testing hypotheses about pronunciation rules.</li> <li>. Comparing and contrasting the sounds between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>.</li> <li>. Memorizing;</li> <li>. Using color or sound association.</li> <li>. Repeating after the teacher or recording.</li> <li>. Reading aloud.</li> <li>. Using rhythmic gestures that accompany speech practice.</li> <li>. Looking up pronunciation in a dictionary.</li> <li>. Deliberately using words that are difficult to pronounce in spontaneous communication.</li> </ul>
Affective strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Relaxing when encountering pronunciation difficulties.</li> <li>Rewarding oneself for making progress.</li> </ul>
Social strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Practicing pronunciation with others.</li> <li>. Asking others for error correction.</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Pawlak’s (2010) Categorization of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (as cited in Chang, 2012, p. 22)**

### **Conclusion**

Knowing that language is a means of communication, pronunciation has a priority in language learning and teaching. Teachers need to give adequate attention to teaching pronunciation with the use of various techniques and approaches, such as the intuitive-imitative approach, the analytical-linguistic approach, or the integrative approach. Learners, on the other hand, need to know that learning pronunciation is of great importance for perfect oral communication. However, it should be underlined that there are some problems that face

them. The sound differences between the mother tongue and the target language are one of the sources of those problems. In addition, the effects of learner's age, motivation, attitude, and aptitude are considerably vital factors. Moreover, for solving such problems and others, pronunciation-learning strategies, the direct ones including cognitive, compensatory, memory strategies, or indirect ones including social, affective, metacognitive strategies are suggested.

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## **Chapter Three:**

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

The two previous chapters of the present research were devoted to a review of literature about the English sound system and pronunciation learning strategies, with a focus on the English front and back vowels in the first chapter. In the present chapter, we will look at a descriptive study to investigate the teachers' and the student's response towards the effect of pronunciation-learning strategies on the production of the English front and back vowels. We, likewise, aim at finding out whether or not pronunciation-learning strategies are important in improving students' pronunciation proficiency and if teachers and students of English at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila use those strategies or not. To answer these overwhelming questions, two instruments have been deployed, namely the teachers' questionnaire and that of the students, with a presentation of interpretations in the light of the research questions and hypothesis to test stated hypothesis and to reach the aim of the present research.

#### **3.1. The Teachers' Questionnaire**

##### **3.1.1. The Aim of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

Aiming at investigating whether teachers of English give importance to the use of pronunciation-learning strategies, and their attitudes towards its significant impact in improving students' pronunciation proficiency, as well as the difficulties that their students have during the production of the English vowels specifically front and back vowels. In addition, we look for their suggestions for enhancing and helping their students avoid or face



such difficulties. The gathered information will be matched with the theoretical information presented in the first part of the research through analysis and discussion.

### **3.1.2. Sample and Population**

The teachers' questionnaire has been administered to 10 teachers, among them those who teach Oral Expression and Phonetics, and not only one category of teachers was involved in the filling out of this questionnaire at the Department of Letters and English, at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre- Mila, in the academic year 2018-2019. The choice has fallen on these teachers owing to the fact that they have had experience and are immediately concerned with learners' overall language production. The selection of such a sample was based on that those teachers will help us accomplish our research aims.

### **3.1.3. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is made up of 12 questions. In the introduction of the questionnaire, we provide the teachers with information about the work, and ask them to answer the questions via ticking the right box or otherwise depending on the nature of the question as such. The first two questions are dedicated to background information about our sample, their degrees of qualification, and their experiences in teaching at the university. The other 10 questions are designed to explore the teachers' views concerning the use of pronunciation-learning strategies, their importance, and if there are difficulties while producing the English vowels specifically front and back vowels. Do they encourage their students to use certain strategies to improve their pronunciation performance or not?

### 3.1.4. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

#### Q1. Which academic degree do you hold?

Option	PhD	MA (Master's degree/Magister)	BA
Number	5	5	0
Percentage%	50%	50%	0%

**Table 5: Teachers' Academic Degree**

Based on the data presented on the table above, one may notice that five teachers representing 50% have a doctorate degree. Also five teachers representing 50% are Master or Magister degree holder from the total number of the sample that is ten.

This question was asked to know teachers' qualifications. The results show that our sample has a variety of levels, and this can be considered for us as a good factor helps us in getting different points of view.

#### Q2. How long have you been teaching at the university level?

Option	Less than one year	1-5 years	6-10 years	More than 10 years
Number	0	6	2	2
Percentage%	0%	60%	20%	20%

**Table 6: Teachers' Teaching Experience**

According to the table, 60% of teachers have taught from one to five years. 20% representing teachers who have taught more than 6 years and teachers who have more than 10 years expertise. This means that the majority of the teachers in our sample have experience in teaching, allows us to get more concrete information.

**Q3. Are pronunciation-learning strategies (henceforth PLS) important for enabling students attain high pronunciation proficiency?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Table 7: Teachers’ Opinions about the Importance of Pronunciation-Learning Strategies**

From these answers, we notice that all teachers who represent 100% say “yes” to the fact that pronunciation-learning strategies are important for enhancing students’ pronunciation proficiency.

These results reflect the teachers’ certainty of the positive effects of pronunciation-learning strategies on raising students’ proficiency level.

**Q4. If yes, do you raise your students’ awareness about the importance of applying PLS to improve their learning?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Table 8: Raising Students’ Awareness towards the Importance of PLS**

In this question, the answers were 100% “yes”. All the respondents say that they do raise their students’ awareness about how important it is to use pronunciation-learning strategies in their process of learning.

Pronunciation-learning strategies are said to be important for fruitful learning of pronunciation and the same might apply for English vowels mastery. Teachers seem to believe in those strategies and their effectiveness as means for enhancing students’ pronunciation proficiency.

**Q5. If yes, how often do you raise their awareness?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Percentage%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>10%</b>

**Table 9: The Frequency of Raising Students' Awareness towards the Use of PLS**

The result obtained indicates that the majority of the respondents 80%, as the table manifests, state that sometimes they raise their students' awareness to use pronunciation-learning strategies. Only one teacher who represents 10% often raises his students' attention towards the use of those strategies. One other teacher, who also represents 10%, reports that he/she rarely does this.

In the light of what has been said previously, we can deduce that the majority of the teachers lay especial emphasis upon the use of pronunciation-learning strategies by their students. As far as they can, they tend to advise their students for the necessity of using such strategies.

**Q6. Do you encourage them to use certain strategies that may help them in improving their pronunciation performance?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Table 10: Encouraging Students to Use PLS**

The result attests that all the respondents 100%, which represent the total number ten, say "yes" they do encourage their students to use certain strategies to help themselves in improving their pronunciation proficiency. Unsurprisingly, no one of the teachers says "no".

These results are a good sign to the fact that our teachers are aware of the great importance of using certain strategies for learning pronunciation. They, therefore, tend to encourage their students to use them.

**Q7. Do you think PLS can affect students' performance in the production of English vowels specifically front and back vowels?**

Option	Yes	No
Number	10	0
Percentage %	100%	0%

**Table 11: Teachers' Opinions about the Effectiveness of PLS on the Production of English Front and Back Vowels**

The results signal that all the respondents say “yes”, This means that teachers recognize the effectiveness of pronunciation-learning strategies and they are aware of their significant impact upon the production of English vowels specifically front and back vowels. These results confirm the aim of this question

**Q8. If yes, how does pronunciation-learning strategies affect students' performance?**

Teachers	Answers
Teacher 1	They would help them pronounce vowels correctly.
Teacher 2	They help them be consciously aware of their problems via reflecting their pronunciation and checking correctness. Besides, listening, repeating, and practicing are believed to make them perfect.
Teacher 3	It helps avoiding common mistakes in terms of pronouncing “lax” and “tense” vowels that are extremely important in telling the difference in certain words.
Teacher 4	Pronunciation-learning strategies are the practice of every single element in the production of all vowels and consonant.
Teacher 5	Pronunciation-learning strategies affect their performance at the level of right and the correct pronunciation of front and back vowels since they are different each vowel has a strategy to pronounce correctly and exactly.
Teacher 6	Positively.
Teacher 7	It has a positive effect, by using PLS students may learn a good pronunciation their oral skill may be developed. They will be able to distinguish between different sounds.
Teacher 8	They will acquire perfect pronunciation without which they cannot be

	understood.
<b>Teacher 9</b>	Pronunciation-learning strategies help students understand the process of learning the English pronunciation and specifically the acquisition of the English vowels.
<b>Teacher 10</b>	They contribute in the development of students oral skills.

**Table12: Teachers’ Points of view towards the Ways in which PLS affect Students’ Performance**

Teachers’ answers about this question were different, but all of them agree in one point, which is that pronunciation-learning strategies help and have a great impact upon the students’ performance. One of the teachers believes that pronunciation-learning strategies help students be consciously aware of their problems via reflecting their pronunciation and checking their correctness. In addition, teachers consider pronunciation-learning strategies as a guide helps students avoid common mistakes in producing vowels especially front and back vowels.

Depending on the answers represented in the table above, we can notice that pronunciation-learning strategies are of a great value since they enable students to attain good pronunciation, especially when it comes to vowels, as they would know how to produce them correctly because most students fall in quandary when it comes to vowels and their production. Some teachers rank pronunciation-learning strategies as an important factor that may affects students’ performance in a good way, at the level of right and correct pronunciation of English vowels especially front and back vowels. Consequently, all of the teachers claim that pronunciation-learning strategies affect students’ performance positively.

**Q9. In your perspective, do English vowels, specifically front and back vowels pose difficulties to your students?**

Option	Yes	No
Number	10	0
Percentage %	100%	0%

**Table13: Teachers’ Opinions Concerning the Difficulty of Acquiring English Front and Back Vowels by their Students**

From the result obtained from the table, 100 % of teachers’ answers were “yes” this means that English front and back vowels are not easy to learn, and producing this kinds of vowels can be a barrier that hinders students to pronounce words correctly.

We can notice not only tutors of Phonetics and Oral Expression are thankfully aware that English vowels specifically front and back vowels are not always easy to learn, learners make mistakes or, otherwise errors, when producing them. This may be the result of the fact that students do not pay much attention to their pronunciation and they do not practice it, and this has adverse influence on their performance.

**Q10. Do your students find difficulties when producing them?**

Option	Yes	No
Number	10	0
Percentage %	100%	0%

**Table 14: The Difficulties Students Find in Producing Vowels**

All the respondents (100%) entertain a germane view; that is, English vowels are not easy segments to learn, and no one say that they give rise to no learning barriers. These results are surely signs reflect EFL learners’ difficulties in producing vowels. This raises a question about the source of those difficulties and the reasons behind this failure to pronounce vowels, and what are the teachers’ reactions in such situation. Similarly, we may deduce that teachers are thankfully aware of their students’ problems.

**Q11. What are the most problematic vowels that the students face during their production?**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>Teacher 1</b>	Most students find difficulties with long and short vowels besides front and back vowels. They get confused on how they should pronounce them correctly.
<b>Teacher 2</b>	All of them.
<b>Teacher 3</b>	/ɪ/ /æ/ /ʊ/.
<b>Teacher 4</b>	I think the most challenging task for student is telling the difference between /æ/ and /ʌ/.
<b>Teacher 5</b>	/ɪ/ /æ/ and the semi-vowel /y/.
<b>Teacher 6</b>	/ɑ/ /ʊ/ /ɒ/.
<b>Teacher 7</b>	/ɪ/ like in ‘introduction’, ‘information’, ‘linguistics’ pronounce it like /æ/ or /ʌ/.
<b>Teacher 8</b>	The most problematic vowels are /ɑ/ and /o/.
<b>Teacher 9</b>	The majority of students find difficulties with almost all the English vowels.
<b>Teacher 10</b>	/ʌ/ /æ/ /ʊ / and /e/.

**Table 15: The most Problematic Vowels that the Students face during their Production according to Teachers’ Points of View**

All the teachers admit that the most problematic vowels that their students struggle to pick up are long and short vowels along with front and back vowels. They are confused about how they should be pronounced correctly. One teacher claims that EFL learners find problems or have difficulties while producing all the English vowels. They do not produce them in appropriate ways and this leads into a negative impression upon students’ pronunciation performance, a failure in communication, i.e. students may fail to convey messages clearly, others will not understand them and they may even lose their self-confidence completely.



**Q12. What do you suggest for enhancing students' pronunciation of the English vowels?**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>Teacher 1</b>	By repetition, practice their muscles using authentic audio or videos listen and repeat after native speakers, teaching pronunciation in labs so that students can acquire the right pronunciation of vowels .
<b>Teacher 2</b>	First, by correcting them and making them aware of their pronunciation and advising them to listen a lot and speak out.
<b>Teacher 3</b>	Listening, repeating aloud, practicing, reading out problem sound in words and then in sentences.
<b>Teacher 4</b>	By providing students with tricks to tell, the difference and also constantly providing quizzes and I always recommend practice on all aspects. Describing different English vowels and doing some IPA transcription tasks.
<b>Teacher 5</b>	I suggest listening to natives as a method for enhancing and push student to pronounce the vowel as natives do.
<b>Teacher 6</b>	I suggest encouraging them use some strategies like listening and imitation.
<b>Teacher 7</b>	Repetition, imitation, listening to natives.
<b>Teacher 8</b>	The first thing I would suggest is raising their awareness about how much PLS are important and by including them in their curriculum.
<b>Teacher 9</b>	Listening to and watching authentic spoken discourse.
<b>Teacher 10</b>	Provide them with some good reliable sources to read and strategies to follow.

**Table 16: Teachers' Suggestions for Enhancing Students Production of English Vowels**

Teachers provide us in their answers with different suggestions that may help students avoid or face the difficulties that they have in producing vowels. All teachers suggest raising students' awareness about pronunciation-learning strategies and their importance. Encouraging them to use those strategies appropriately. In addition, some teachers think that it is important

to highlight the role that pronunciation-learning strategies play in the acquisition of good pronunciation.

Others name different strategies for students to apply: for example, students try to transcribe words to know their pronunciation; using dictionaries to check the pronunciation correctness; listening and repeating aloud after native speakers; practicing, consciously reflecting reading out; listening and watching authentic spoken discourse; imitation and repetition after native speakers. Another teacher suggests correcting students' mistakes, making them aware of their presence by asking them to check their pronunciation and advising them to listen a lot and speak out, providing them with the necessary feedback that they need and here appears the role of the teachers.

Finally and no less importantly, one teacher suggests teaching pronunciation in labs so that students can acquire the right pronunciation of vowels and including pronunciation-learning strategies in their curriculum. Therefore, the majority of teachers lay emphasis on the use of pronunciation-learning strategies as the best practice for gaining high pronunciation proficiency and good one.

### **3.1.5. Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire Results**

The main aim of the teachers' questionnaire is to know teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation-learning strategies, and their impacts upon the production of the English front and back vowels. We wanted to investigate their opinions about the use of those strategies, do they see it important or not. We wanted also to know whether they are aware of the effectiveness of those strategies in raising students' pronunciation levels or not.

The analysis of teachers' questionnaire reveals that not only teachers of phonetics and oral expression are aware of the students' difficulties in producing the English front and back vowels. In fact, they all argue that not only front and back vowels pose difficulties to their

students, but all of the English vowels do. This means that teachers attempt to find out the students' problems in pronouncing English vowels, and it seems that their learners fail to master the pronunciation of those vowels; this may be due to the limited exposure to the language, or the result of the lack of practice and insufficient instructions.

The results of the questionnaire show the awareness of the English teachers about the importance and the great role that pronunciation-learning strategies play in mastering the English pronunciation, and their effectiveness on the students' performance.

### **3.2. The Students' Questionnaire**

#### **3.2.1. The Aim of the Students' Questionnaire**

We have stated before a hypothesis claims that vowels are the most difficult aspects of English pronunciation to master for EFL learners at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila. We have emphasized specifically on the production of English front and back vowels, and we have mentioned that for facing those difficulties, different pronunciation-learning strategies can be used. For the aim of testing that hypothesis, we need to have a touch with the students themselves to know their points of view. A student's questionnaire and an analysis of its findings is all what we need to achieve this goal.

#### **3.2.2. Sample and Population**

The sample of our study is the third-year students of English at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila. We have randomly chosen 44 students from our population who belong to four groups in the academic year 2018-2019. We have chosen the third-year students specifically because:

Firstly, they have had courses in phonetics in the first and the second year, so they know exactly now what the English front and back vowels are, and what pronunciation learning strategies are.

Secondly, since they were beginners, they surely passed by difficulties in the process of learning those new vowels and surely they tried to find ways or apply strategies to help them pass those difficulties. Therefore, they are familiar with this subject and have experience that might be useful for us.

To minimize as possible as we can the undesirable impacts of some variables, such as noise, insufficient amount of time, and seriousness of the respondents, the copies were administered under the supervision of their teacher. They were allowed fifty minutes to handle the task with comfort.

### **3.2.3. Description of the Students' Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire consists of (30) questions arranged in a logical way, and classified into two parts. Each part focuses on specific aspects. The provided questions are varied between questions needing a "yes" or "no" answer, questions need selecting the appropriate answer, and questions require students to give their own response.

In the first part that consists of five questions, we attempt to identify the most problematic part of English pronunciation system to EFL learners, if they encounter difficulties in producing the English front and back vowels or not, with a curiosity aimed at knowing in which ways they learn the English pronunciation, alone, depending on the teacher, or both. Do they use and include strategies in that process of learning, and what are their points of view concerning the positive impact of pronunciation learning strategies?

The second part consists of twenty-five questions and is devoted to gather information about the degrees of the use of PLS by EFL learners. Those questions are related to the

different types of PLS as classified by Oxford (1990) and taken from PLS questionnaire produced by Calka (2011, as cited in Rokoszewska, 2012).

### 3.2.4. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

**Part one:**

**Q1: Which part of the English pronunciation system has proved to be the most problematic for you over the years?**

	<b>consonants</b>	<b>Vowels</b>	<b>None of them</b>
<b>respondents</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>percentages</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>4%</b>

**Table 17: The Problematic Part of English Pronunciation System for Students**

This question aims at clarifying student's points of weaknesses. Through the answers, we are going to know whether students face problems in their acquisition of English pronunciation, or it seems an easy task for them. We are going also to know if they share the same problematic area that seems to be the most difficult one for the majority of them or it does not exist.

The results, as shown in the above table, clarify that the majority of the participants (89%) claim that vowels have proved to be the most problematic part of the English pronunciation system for them over years. This means that vowels form a common problematic area for the students. This can be the result of the specific characteristics that English vowels are widely known by. On the other hand, 7% of the participants argue that consonants make their acquisition of the English pronunciation more difficult, whereas only 4% of the respondents say that neither consonants nor vowels pose difficulties to them.

**Q2: Do you encounter difficulties in producing English front and back vowels?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>respondents</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>percentages</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b>

**Table18: Students' Views towards the Production of English Front and Back Vowels**

The aim behind asking this question is to know how 3<sup>rd</sup> year students find the production of the English front and back vowels. Do they encounter difficulties in their production or not. As it is presented in the table above, 70% of the answers, confirm that students do encounter difficulties in producing those vowels, whereas 30% declare that they do not. These findings confirm that English front and back vowels are difficult sounds for students to produce.

**Q3: In your process of learning English pronunciation, do you usually rely on:**

	<b>The teacher</b>	<b>Yourself</b>	<b>Both</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>20,5%</b>	<b>70,5%</b>

**Table19: The Ways in which Students Learn English Pronunciation**

We asked this question to know about the ways students learn English pronunciation. Do they attempt to learn it in classrooms only by relying on the teachers' instructions, or outside classrooms relying on yourself, or both?

The results show that the majority of the respondents (70,5%) follow two ways in their learning process. In addition to the teachers' instructions, they depend on themselves and learn alone, whereas 20,5% declare that they do this alone. Only 9% state that they rely only on the teacher.

These percentages seem to be significant; they lead us to say that English pronunciation is a difficult task for students and makes them rely on other ways to acquire it.

**Q4: Do you use strategies to enhance your pronunciation?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>27%</b>

**Table20: Students' Usage of Strategies**

This question is designed to know whether 3<sup>rd</sup> year students use strategies in their process of acquiring the English pronunciation or not. Most respondents (73%) declare that they do use strategies in their learning process, whereas few of the respondents (27%) do not do so. These findings confirm that students use strategies to help them acquiring good levels of pronunciation proficiency and those strategies are with positive effects.

**Q5: Do you think that using various strategies is more useful for learning pronunciation?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>18%</b>

**Table 21: Students' Views towards the Positive Effects of Varying Strategies in Learning Pronunciation**

This question is set mainly to look into the efficiency of the use of different learning strategies. Through the answers, we want to know the students' views towards varying strategies in learning pronunciation. Do they find it worthy or not?

The findings gleaned from the respondents inform us that the majority of the answers (82%) are with the positive effects of varying strategies in learning pronunciation, whereas the remaining 18% of the answers see the opposite.

Perhaps we can legitimately draw from the data offered in the table above that students are aware of the usefulness of varying strategies for meeting their different needs in learning pronunciation.

The questions of this part are designed to investigate the types of pronunciation-learning strategies that 3<sup>rd</sup> year English students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center use. Additionally, they are set mainly to know whether students are aware of the importance of applying these strategies or not.

Questions from one up to four aim to investigate students' frequency of using memory strategies.

Questions from five up to thirteen were set mainly to look into the students' amounts of using cognitive strategies.

Questions fourteen and fifteen seek to know the students' degrees of using compensatory strategies.

Question sixteen up to question nineteen were formed specifically to look into the student's use of metacognitive strategies.

Question twenty up to question twenty-two were designed to investigate the students' frequency of using effective strategies.

Questions twenty-three and twenty-four aim at knowing the students' frequency of using the social strategies.

Question twenty-five aims at investigating other ways that 3<sup>rd</sup> year English students apply in pronunciation learning.



**Q1: In order to memorize the pronunciation of a given word, I try to associate it with the pronunciation of another word in another language or with certain sounds.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>09%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>14%</b>

**Table22: Frequency Use of Auditory Association**

The table attests that a small number of the subjects (9%) do not use association of words with others or with certain sounds; only 16% declare that they do as such but rarely. 6% confirm that they always follow this way, and 5% usually do so. The highest percentage (50%) belongs to those who say that they sometimes apply this tactic.

These findings indicate that even though the majority of the informants turn only sometimes to using this memory strategy in their learning, it clarifies that they are aware of its advantages in memorizing some words in certain situations. This little use of this strategy may be the result of the fact that our learners are not auditory learners.

**Q2: In order to memorize the pronunciation of a given word, I associate it with an image or a picture.**

	Never	rarely	sometimes	Usually	always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>percentages</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>04%</b>	<b>11%</b>

**Table23: Frequency Use of Visual Association**

The table shows that, hardly surprisingly, 41% of the respondents ticked off the “never” box and declare that they do not use visual association. 13% say that they rarely use it, 29% of the subjects do so sometimes. A small number (4%) usually follow that way for learning, and 11% always do so.

This is perhaps a sure sign that one could justifiably take into account that students do not agree about the usefulness of applying this strategy in learning pronunciation. This may be the result of the fact that our learners are not familiar with this strategy, or simply they are not visual learners who use imagination.

**Q3: I repeat a word several times to memorize its pronunciation.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>00%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>66%</b>

**Table24: Frequency Use of Repetition of Words**

This table indicates that a little more than half of the respondents (66%) always use repetition of words in order to memorize them; 21% turn only sometimes to using it; 11% do as such usually, and a diminutive percentage (2%) ignore this way in their pronunciation learning, whereas no single subject ticked off the “rarely” box.

The data presented in this table stands for the fact that repetition of words several times is a useful and a preferable way for learners who highly value it, and deem it very important for memorizing the pronunciation.

**Q4: I memorize the pronunciation of a given word by putting it in a context, such as a sentence or a story.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>

**Table25: Learners’ Frequency of Putting Words in Contexts**

We can notice from the data represented in the table above that a good percentage (34%) stands for the fact that the respondents do sometimes put words in contexts in order to memorize them. The table also signals that 14% of the informants usually use that strategy, and the same percentage belongs to the “always” box. It is, likewise, noticeable that 20% never have interest to use such a strategy, and 18% do so but rarely.

We can immediately deduce from these findings that learners' attitude towards using this strategy differs, but it seems clearly that the majority of them turn to using this strategy even with different degrees starting from "rarely", arriving at "always". It can also be said that even learners are aware of the usefulness of this memory strategy; it seems to be unsuitable for all of them taking into account learners' individual differences.

**Q5: I repeat sounds and words after a native English speaker.**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>39%</b>

**Table26: Frequency Use of Repetition Sounds after Natives**

This table clearly exhibits that not a big percentage of the subjects (39%) always uses repetition after natives as a strategy for enhancing their pronunciation level. Additionally, 18% of the informants usually apply such a tactic, whereas 23% of the answers were "sometimes", 13% "rarely" and a mere 7% "rarely".

According to these results, we can assume that learners turn to using this type of PLS to help them acquire good pronunciation. They tend to repeat after natives to avoid acquiring mispronunciations that can be a result of the teachers' lack of knowledge or wrong interpretations.

**Q6: Before I say a word aloud, I practice its pronunciation in my mind**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>61%</b>

**Table27: Learners' Degrees of Practicing Pronunciation in Minds**

This table demonstrates that a considerable percentage of the informants (61%) claim that they always practice pronunciation in their minds before producing their utterances, 12% say that they usually do so, 18% declare that they sometimes apply it. On the other hand, a mere 7% rarely turn to do as such, and only 2% have never deployed this kind of practice.

These results can be interpreted in the way that learners have a strong relation with the use of this cognitive strategy. They are used to practicing pronunciation in their minds for the purpose of retrieving the stored information, realizing the proper way of pronouncing words, and confirming that information before sounding it.

**Q7: I listen to foreigners speaking English.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>00%</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>45%</b>

**Table28: Learner’s Frequency of Listening to Foreigners in English**

This table shows that a little less than half of the informants (45%) always listen to foreigners, 23% do so usually, 30% “sometimes”, a diminutive percentage 2% pronounce that they rarely listen to them, and no single subject claims that he/she is never used to listen to them.

The interpretation that could be calculated from this data is that substantial percentages alleged that listening to foreigners is a widely used strategy amongst learners. It reflects their awareness of the fact that building aural skill is of great importance to acquiring good pronunciation and that cannot be achieved depending only on classroom activities.

**Q8: I imitate mouth movements of English speakers in the mirror when speaking English.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>05%</b>	<b>16%</b>

**Table29: Frequency Use of Imitation of Mouth Movements of English Speakers**

We can notice from the data represented in the table above that a moderately considerable number of the respondents (45%) argue that they sometimes imitate mouth movements of English speakers in the mirror, 16% say that they always practice this exercise.

A small number (5%) say that they usually do this, 14% panned that they rarely imitate those movements, while 20% ticked off the “never” box.

The data tabulated above indicates that imitating mouth movements of English speakers is not a commonly used strategy amongst learners. It seems that they have a wrong idea about the effectiveness of such a cognitive strategy in identifying the place and the manner of articulating sounds. This negative attitude results in difficulties in pronouncing words.

**Q9: I do exercises in order to make my tongue, lips, and jaw more flexible.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>09%</b>	<b>16%</b>

**Table30: The Amount Use of Exercises**

According to this table, 41% of the subjects say that they sometimes do exercises in order to make their tongue, lips, and jaw more flexible, 16% claim that they always do such exercises. 9% ticked off the “usually” box, while 23% agree that their usage of those strategies was rare. The remainder of the informants (11%) report that they never do these exercises.

The data offered above stands for the fact that the use of this cognitive strategy is not very likeable among learners who seem to be careless about the importance of doing exercises to make the lips, jaw, and the tongue more flexible in pronouncing those unfamiliar words.

**Q10: I practice pronunciation by reading aloud and pay attention to my pronunciation.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>55%</b>

**Table31: Frequency Use of Reading Aloud with Paying Attention to Pronunciation**

This table reports that more than half of the respondents (55%) always read aloud and pay attention to their pronunciation, 14% usually do so, whereas 27% only sometimes apply this tactic. A few number (2%) do as such but rarely, and the same number says “never”.

Depending on the previous data, we can assume that learners tend to apply this cognitive strategy to help them listen to what they produce to recognize their mistakes and work on correcting them.

**Q11: I try to identify and use pronunciation rules.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>11,5%</b>	<b>11,5%</b>

**Table32: The Amount of Using Pronunciation Rules**

This table reveals that 18% of the respondents never identify or use pronunciation rules in their learning process, while 16% rarely use it. A considerable number of them (43%) pronounce that they only sometimes do this. 11, 5% say that they usually do as such, and the same number (11, 5%) stands for those who always follow this way in learning English pronunciation.

The data provided in the table above makes it clear that 3<sup>rd</sup> year students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila are aware of the great advantages of understanding and using the pronunciation rules in getting a strong basic foundation in correct pronunciation.

**Q12: I use phonetic symbols.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>45,5%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>27,5%</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>02%</b>

**Table33: The Frequency Use of Phonetic Symbols**

The above table demonstrates that the highest percentage was 45,5% and was rated by the respondents who say that they never use phonetic symbols in learning pronunciation. This was followed by a rate of 27,5% for those who answer by “sometimes”, 18% for those who

answer by “rarely”. A mere 7% belongs to those who say “usually”, and only 2% to those who pronounce “always”.

These findings can be interpreted in the way that students are careless about the importance of phonetics symbols for producing correct sounds. They ignore the fact that some letters in English have more than one sounds, and the same sound may be represented by different letters.

**Q13: I use dictionaries to look up the pronunciation of unknown words.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>46%</b>

**Table34: The Amount of the Use of Dictionaries**

As displayed in the table above, only 2% of the respondents deny the use of dictionaries, whereas 7% acknowledge that they use it but rarely. A great number of them (45, 5%) reply by always. 18% by “usually”, and 27, 5% by “sometimes”.

The students’ answers to this question reveal their awareness of the great importance of using dictionaries in checking and learning the correct pronunciation of the new words, and becoming more independent of the teacher.

**Q14: I f I do not know the pronunciation of a word, I guess it.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>09%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20,5%</b>	<b>45,5%</b>

**Table35: The Amount of Using Guess**

As provided in the previous table, 45, 5% was the highest rate and scored by the informants who say that they always guess the pronunciation of unknown words, followed by 20, 5% for those who usually use this strategy. 23% for those who choose “sometimes” box and a much lesser rate (2%) for “never” box whilst “rarely” box (9%).

From all these statistics, we can deduce that the majority of the students try to guess the pronunciation of unknown words by making an analogy with words they already know. This compensatory strategy seems to be a prevalently used strategy amongst learners in pronunciation learning.

**Q15: If I do not know the pronunciation of a word, I try to avoid using it altogether.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>11%</b>

**Table36: The Frequency of Avoiding Words with Unknown Pronunciation**

Regarding the data presented in the table above, we note that students' answers varied. 11% of them report that they always avoid using words when they do not know their pronunciation, while 30% say that they usually apply this tactic. 25% claim that they sometimes do as such. On the other hand, 20% pronounce that they rarely avoid those words, while 14% never do as such.

These results stand for the fact that students have different points of view towards the usefulness of avoiding using words with unknown pronunciation and replace it with others they know to avoid misunderstanding and to overcome limitations in speaking.

**Q16: Before practicing my pronunciation, I revise my theoretical knowledge.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>

**Table 37: The Amount of Using Revision of the Theoretical Knowledge before Practicing Pronunciation**

As the table above shows, the percentages of students' answers to this question vary: 18% of the respondents declare that they never revise their theoretical knowledge before practicing pronunciation. 29% of them pronounce that they sometimes do revise it, while 14% say that they usually do as such, and 18% ticked the "always" box.



The data indicate that despite the fact that a considerable number of the students do (always or usually) revise their theoretical knowledge before practicing pronunciation, a great number of them do not do as such. This may be the result of their carelessness about the importance of retrieving, evaluating, and confirming their existing knowledge before starting to use it. This metacognitive step seems to be important for directing ones' learning.

**Q17: I make plans for pronunciation learning. I set time, select materials and strategies.**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>04%</b>	<b>07%</b>

**Table38: Students' Use of Plans in Learning Pronunciation**

The table attests that, hardly surprisingly, 34% of the respondents ticked off the “never” box and declared that they do not set plans in learning pronunciation. 23% of this sample say that they rarely make such plans. While 32% of them use the word “sometimes” to describe their frequency of this kind of use, 4% opted for using the word “usually”, and 7% the word “always”.

Depending on these findings, we could justifiably say that students hold wrong views towards the importance of self-monitoring in achieving their objectives.

**Q18: I try to identify my phonetic problems, and pay attention to them when someone is speaking English.**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>05%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>39%</b>

**Table39: Students' Frequency of Identifying the Phonetic Problems**

The findings gleaned from the respondents inform us that a colossal percentage of the subjects always try to identify their phonetic problems and pay attention to them when someone is speaking English. Additionally, 16% of them turn usually to follow that way,

whereas the same percentage (20%) stands for those who use this strategy sometimes or rarely. While only 5% of our sample say that they never use it.

The statistics revealed by this question allow for the conclusion that students are careless about the advantages that they may gain from applying this metacognitive strategy. Using self- evaluation and setting objectives to be achieved are the main steps needed to be followed for enhancing pronunciation proficiency.

**Q19: I evaluate my progress in pronunciation by recording myself.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>09%</b>	<b>25%</b>

**Table 40: Students’ Degrees of Recording Themselves**

The results as shown in the above table clarify that, noticeably, the same percentage (25%) stands for those who always record themselves and those who never do so. The highest percentage was 27% and scored by those who sometimes do record themselves. 14% of the answers was “rarely” and 9% was “usually”.

These results clearly reflect diversity in students’ opinions and even their uncertainty about the advantages of self-evaluating in identifying the problematic areas in pronunciation acquisition and in developing better oral and aural skills.

**Q20: I try to relax when I read aloud or speak in English.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>50%</b>

**Table 41: Students’ Amount of Using Relaxation when Speaking English**

The above table exhibits that half of the respondents (50%) always use relaxation when speaking English, while 18% of them usually try to do so when speaking. On the other hand. 16% of them declare that they sometimes turn to apply this tactic. Additionally, 11% of those informants pronounce “rarely” and only 5% pronounce “never”.

This perhaps is a sure sign that one could safely say that students hold positive attitudes towards the usefulness of using relaxation when speaking for avoiding hesitation that results in wrong pronunciation.

**Q21: I encourage myself to work on my pronunciation**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>57%</b>

**Table 42: Students’ Frequency of Encouraging Themselves to Work on their Pronunciation**

As shown in the table above, more than half of the respondents (57%) declare that they always encourage themselves to work on their pronunciation. 23% of them assert that they usually do so, while 18% claim that they sometimes do apply this technique in learning pronunciation. A mere 2% say that they rarely turn to using this technique, and no single subject declares that he/she never does so.

Depending on these results, it seems that students have positive attitudes towards the usefulness of this effective strategy in raising motivation and preparing students for a good reception of the information.

**Q22: I use sense of humour about my mispronunciation.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>39%</b>

**Table 43: The Frequency of Using Sense of Humour about Mispronunciation**

Data embodied in the table above exhibits that students’ use of this strategy differs. The highest percentage was 39% and is scored by those who always use sense of humor about their mispronunciation, followed by a rate of 20% for those who sometimes do so, then 16% for those who rarely turn to it, and 14% for the “usually” box, and finally 11% for the “never” box.

According to these percentages, students do not agree about the great importance of working on the psychological level for managing emotions and reducing anxiety.

**Q23: I ask others to correct my pronunciation.**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>27%</b>

**Table 44: Students’ Degrees of Asking Help**

The table above demonstrates that 27% of the subjects declare that they always ask others to correct their pronunciation. The same number of them (27%) inform us that they do the same sometimes. On the other hand, 12% of them confirm that they usually ask correction from others, While 16% say that they rarely turn to do this. The remaining number of the informants (18%) argue that they never ask for that kind of help.

The widely distributed responses to this question lead to one conclusion: There is a little agreement among students concerning the importance of asking help from others for correcting wrong pronunciation and confirming the right ones when it becomes difficult to do so alone.

**Q24: I learn with my friends, and practice pronunciation with them.**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>
<b>Respondents</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>34%</b>

**Table 45: Students’ Frequency of Learning with Others**

The table above shows that a considerable number of the respondents (34%) always tend to learn and practice pronunciation with their friends. The same number of the informants say that they sometimes do this, while 16% declare that they usually interact with others in order to learn pronunciation. A small number of them (7%) pronounce “rarely” and 9% pronounce “never”.

The interpretation that could be taken from these results is that 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of English at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center use this social strategy for the purpose of helping themselves develop a better pronunciation. Through interaction with others, exchanging ideas, communicating and asking for explanations.

**Q25: I use other way(s) of learning strategies (explain what to do).**

<b>students</b>	<b>Answers</b>
<b>Student 1</b>	<b>I listen to natives and try to imitate them by repeating the same words aloud. I also use the language with my friends.</b>
<b>Student 2</b>	<b>I listen carefully to my teachers and always try to correct and evaluate my pronunciation.</b>
<b>Student 3</b>	<b>I listen to natives and try to imitate them.</b>
<b>Student 4</b>	<b>I listen to authentic videos.</b>
<b>Student 5</b>	<b>I watch English movies</b>
<b>Student 6</b>	<b>I practice exercises of pronunciation.</b>
<b>Student 7</b>	<b>I watch BBC channel.</b>
<b>Student 8</b>	<b>I listen to music.</b>

**Table 46: Students' Use of other Learning Strategies**

This table shows the students' ways of learning English pronunciation. As is represented, the students' answers all go hand in hand with our previous suggestions. All the students who answer this question say that they are used to listen to natives, imitate them, listen to teachers, practice pronunciation with friends and do exercises to raise their pronunciation level. In addition to this, some students pronounce that they watch movies and listen to music for achieving the previous goal.

**3.2.5. Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire Results**

The results of the students' questionnaire indicate that the 3<sup>rd</sup> year English students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila face problems in pronunciation acquisition. All students agree that vowels are the most difficult part of English pronunciation to be acquired, specifically the English front and back vowels. Those students also agree with the

effectiveness of using pronunciation-learning strategies in learning the English pronunciation, and their frequency of such use confirm this point.

Students' difficulty in producing the English front and back vowels or all the English vowels is due to the variation of vowels that English language has in addition to the specific characteristics that it holds with. These two factors make acquisition a little bit more difficult and complex.

For solving these problems, many pronunciation-learning strategies are suggested. Depending on the results that we obtained, it seems that students do use those strategies but with different degrees of frequency. Students use more of memory strategies, such as repetition; cognitive strategies, such as repeating after natives, practicing pronunciation in minds, listening to foreigners, and reading aloud with paying attention to pronunciation. Moreover, some of the effective social strategies, like encouraging themselves and asking for help. On the other hand, students do not prefer to use metacognitive and compensatory strategies.

All these findings confirm that students are aware of the importance of varying strategies for learning pronunciation. They are also aware of the fact that teachers' classroom instructions are insufficient for building a basic foundation for correct pronunciation.

### **3.3. Limitations of the Study**

Our research has limitations as any research work does. For instance, the fact that the study was conducted by means of a questionnaire might not give truthful results, because students may not invariably furnish objective answers. As regards the teachers' questionnaire, the analysis was made on only 10 teachers, which is considered an insufficient number for covering all teachers' points' of view. In addition to the fact that the number of Phonetic and Oral Expression teachers in the University Centre-Mila who serve the aim of our dissertation

was not enough, so that the questionnaire was not given only to those teachers but to other teachers as well. The other limitation was time, which was a big challenge while making this research. The study got constantly interrupted and the annoying situation that the country passes through. For those reasons, it was difficult to investigate the opinions of both students and teachers. And does not allow us for using other research instruments.

### **3.4. Recommendations and Suggestions**

In the light of what has been presented in this thesis, we will try under this rubric to consider a number of recommendations that might come in handy and prove highly beneficial for both learners and teachers alike. We will, likewise, attempt to throw some light upon a number of recommendations that future researchers might draw upon:

- Teachers should motivate their students to use certain strategies not only inside the classroom but also outside the classroom.
- Teachers ought to raise students' awareness about the importance of applying PLS to enhance their learning.
- Students should be knowledgeable about PLS and vary their use of those strategies to suit their needs.
- For researchers, although the research still is lacking in many things and is far from being perfect, we hope that it will be useful and can be used as a reference to others who will conduct and develop a similar study.
- For learners, we suggest that they pay attention to their study of English pronunciation, especially their process of acquiring the English vowels. They should be aware of their problematic areas and difficulties.

### **Conclusion**

This fieldwork has been carried out to investigate the impact of using PLS upon the production of the English front and back vowels, by third-year English students at Abdelhafid

Boussouf University Centre-Mila. It is particularly concerned with investigating students' and teachers' points of view about the difficulties that occur while producing the English vowels, specifically front and back vowels. We have tried to know if there are difficulties or not and if students use PLS to solve those problems.

Throughout the analysis of the data yielded by these instruments, it appears that English students at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre-Mila do genuinely encounter difficulties in producing the English vowels generally and the front and back vowels specifically. In addition, we have deduced that students do employ PLS in learning English vowels. The results confirm that they are not unaware of the importance of using such strategies and are aware of the necessity for varying their use of them. It also reveals the positive effects of PLS upon the production of English front and back vowels.



## **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

Regarding the greatly big importance that pronunciation enjoys, learning and teaching this aspect of the language must be given precedence. Although it is widely assumed that having good pronunciation results in successful communication, it seems that the way EFL learners acquire good English pronunciation is full of obstacles.

The specific characteristics that English sound system holds, its variation between consonants and vowels, their different places and manners of articulation, are the main reasons of those difficulties. Vowels are, nonetheless, rated the most difficult aspects of English pronunciation system to acquire.

The current research is founded on a number of objectives: the following are the main ones:

- 1- Identifying the English sound system, giving more interest to the English vowels, their classification, places and manners of articulation.
- 2- Identifying the English front and back vowels as they pose difficulties to our EFL learners at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre- Mila.
- 3- Offering some explanations about the pronunciation-learning strategies that EFL learners might use in such a process.

Our research starts by providing a general overview about phonetics and phonology as well as the approaches that are concerned with the study of the human sound systems. The second key section of the first chapter looks at the English sound system. We consider under this heading the definition of English consonants and English vowels. We have provided the reader with the different types of vowels that the English language sound inventory possesses, and have explained to them the places and the manners of articulating these different types.

The second chapter is designed to highlight the great importance of pronunciation in language learning and teaching. We have attempted to define the term pronunciation,

discussed the issue of teaching pronunciation, mentioned the major approaches used in pronunciation teaching, and the variables affecting pronunciation acquisition.

The second key section of the second chapter looks at the pronunciation-learning strategies, the actions that the language learners use for learning pronunciation and solving their problems. We have tried also to mention the different types of these strategies.

The third chapter addresses the empirical aspect of the research. It provides a description of the research tools used, namely the teachers' and students' questionnaire. It dwells upon the description of the sample of teachers and that of students. The findings yielded by these tools are described and analyzed, and the conclusions drawn are then critically considered.

The methodological procedure adopted has proven the hypothesis valid. The English learners at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre- Mila suffer from a host of difficulties in producing the English vowels, especially the English front and back vowels. Moreover, for facing these difficulties, they use different types of pronunciation-learning strategies. This means that PLSs have positive impacts upon the production of the English vowels, especially the English front and back vowels, and the more diversified PLSs students employ, the more error-free their production of English front and back vowels will be.

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# **Appendices**

## Appendix (1): Teachers' Questionnaire

**Dear Teacher,**

You are cordially requested to answer the following questions to help us in our endeavor at accomplishing the myriad requirements of our research. Your answers will be of a great value and huge significance in our undertaking.

Please answer the following questions via ticking off the right box, using the space allotted or otherwise, depending on the nature of the individual question.

1. Which academic degree do you hold?

a. PhD

b. MA (Master's degree/Magister)

c. BA

2. How long have you been teaching at the university level?

a. Less than one year

b. 1-5 years

c. 6-10 years

d. More than 10 years

3. Are pronunciation-learning strategies (henceforth PLS) important for enabling students to attain high pronunciation proficiency?

a. Yes

b. No

4. If yes, do you raise your students' awareness about the importance of applying (henceforth PLS) to improve their learning?

a. Yes

b. No

5. If yes, how often do you raise their awareness?

a. Never

b. Rarely

c. Sometimes

d. Often

6. Do you encourage your students to use certain strategies that may help them in improving their pronunciation performance?

a. Yes

b. No

7. Do you think PLS can affect students' performance in the production of English vowels specifically front and back ones?

a. Yes

b. No

8. If yes, how does pronunciation-learning strategies affect students' performance?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. In your perspective, do English vowels, specifically front and back vowels, pose difficulties to your students?

a. Yes

b. No

10. Do your students find difficulties when producing English vowels?

a. Yes

b. No

11. What are the most problematic vowels that the students face during their production?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. What do you suggest for enhancing students' pronunciation of the English vowels?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you so much for your ever so timely contribution!

## Appendix (2) : Students' Questionnaire

**Dear Student,**

We would be immensely grateful if you take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire whose primary aim is to gather information about pronunciation- learning strategies and their impact upon the production of English front and back vowels.

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your ideas and experiences, your input is very important and greatly appreciated.

Part one:

Read the statements below and put a tick in the corresponding box

1- Which part of the English pronunciation system has proved to be the most problematic for you over the years?

a - Vowels

b - Consonants

2- Do you encounter difficulties in producing English front and back vowels?

a- Yes

b- No

3- In your process of learning English pronunciation, do you usually- rely on?

a- The teacher

b- Depending on yourself

c- Both

4-Do you use strategies to enhance your pronunciation?

a- Yes

b- No

5- Do you think that using various strategies is more useful for learning pronunciation?

a- Yes

b- No

Part two:

Read the following statements and choose the response that indicates how often you use a given way of learning English pronunciation according to the following scale:

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

1- In order to memorize the pronunciation of a given word, I try to associate it with the pronunciation of another word in other language or with certain sounds.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

2- In order to memorize the pronunciation of a given word, I associate it with an image or a picture.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

3 –I repeat a word several time to memorize its pronunciation.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

4- I memorize the pronunciation of a given word by putting it in a context, such as a sentence or a story.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    |                          |            |                          |

5- I repeat sounds and words after an English speaker.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |

e- Always

6- Before I say a word aloud, I practice its pronunciation in my mind.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- usually

e- Always

7- I listen to foreigners in English.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

8- I imitate mouth movements of English speakers in the mirror when speaking English.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

9- I do exercises in order to make my tongue, lips, and jaw more flexible.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e - Always

10- I practice pronunciation by reading aloud and pay attention to my pronunciation.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

11- I try to identify and use pronunciation rules.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

12- I use phonetic symbols.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

13- I use dictionaries to look up the pronunciation of unknown words.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

14- If I do not know the pronunciation of a word, I guess it.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- usually

e- Always

15- If I do not know the pronunciation of a word, I try to avoid using it altogether.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

16- Before practicing my pronunciation, I revise my theoretical knowledge.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

17- I make plans for pronunciation learning, I set time, select material, and strategies.

a- Never

b- Rarely

c- Sometimes

d- Usually

e- Always

18- I try to identify my phonetic problems, and pay attention to them when someone is speaking English.

a- Never

b- rarely

c- Sometimes

d- usually

e- Always

19- I evaluate my progress in pronunciation by recording myself.

a- Never

b- rarely

c- Sometimes

d- usually

e- Always



20- I try to relax when I read aloud or speaking in English.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

21- I encourage myself to work on my pronunciation.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

22- I use sense of humour about my mispronunciation.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

23- I ask others to correct my pronunciation.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

24- I learn with my friends, and practice pronunciation with them.

- |              |                          |            |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| a- Never     | <input type="checkbox"/> | b- Rarely  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c- Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> | d- Usually | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e- Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> |            |                          |

25- I use other way(s) of learning pronunciation (explain what to do).

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## Phonetic Symbols

A representation of the English vowels depending on the International Phonetic Alphabet which are devised by the International Phonetic Association (henceforth IPA) is to figure shortly below.

Remark: both the association and the alphabet are shortened to the same initialism, universally known by IPA.

### BBC Accent's Pure Vowels

Vowel	Description	Example word
ɪ	Close, front, unrounded	It
ɛ	Half-open, front, unrounded	Bed
æ	Open, front, unrounded	Bad
ʌ	Half-open, central, unrounded	buzzy
ɒ	Half-open, back, rounded	consonant
ʊ	Close, back, rounded	good
i:	Close, front, unrounded	Feel
ɑ:	Open, back, unrounded	Car
ɔ:	Half-open, back, rounded	thought
u:	Close, back, unrounded	food
ɜ:	Mid, central, unrounded	bird
ə	Mid, central, unrounded	about

### BBC Accent's Diphthongs

Diphthong	Example word
eɪ	Way
aɪ	Lie
ɔɪ	Boy
ɪə	Year

eə	Hair
ʊə	Poor
əʊ	Go
aʊ	Allow

### BBC Accent's Triphthongs

Triphthong	Example word
eɪə	layer
aɪə	Higher
aʊə	Hour
əʊə	Lower
ɔɪə	Lawyer

### BBC Accent's Consonants

Consonant	Description	Example word
p	Voiceless, bilabial, plosive	Point
b	Voiced, bilabial, plosive	boy
t	Voiceless, alveolar, plosive	at
d	Voiced, alveolar, plosive	add
tʃ	Voiced, palate-alveolar, affricative	researcher
dʒ	Voiceless, palate-alveolar, affricative	judgement
k	Voiceless, velar, plosive	king
g	Voiced, velar, plosive	sage
f	Voiceless, labio-dental, fricative	safe
v	Voiced, labio-dental, fricative	voice
θ	Voiceless, dental, fricative	Theatre
ð	Voiced, dental, fricative	They
s	Voiceless, alveolar, fricative	sister
z	Voiced, alveolar, fricative	buzz

ʃ	Voiceless, palate-alveolar, fricative	Show
ʒ	Voiced, palate-alveolar, fricative	pleasure
m	Voiced, bilabial, nasal	mouth
n	Voiced, alveolar, nasal	night
ŋ	Voiced, velar, nasal	language
r	Voiced, palate, approximant	ring
j	Voiced, velar, approximant	year
h	Voiceless, glottal, fricative	hello
l	Voiced, alveolar, lateral	allow
w	Voiced, bilabial, approximant	water

## Résumé

La prononciation est sans doute l'une des sous-compétences les plus importantes qui contribue de manière significative à la croissance progressive et la maturité éventuelle des compétences linguistiques. Les praticiens ont mis en œuvre une foule de stratégies d'apprentissages différents pour donner aux apprenants les moyens de développer une telle compétence de manière plus satisfaisants au fil des ans. L'objectif principale des travaux de recherche actuels est d'examine l'efficacité du déploiement de stratégies d'apprentissage de la prononciation sur la production de voyelles avant et arrière en anglais. Il s'est efforce de dévoiler les attitudes des enseignants et des étudiants vis-à-vis de l'utilisation de stratégies d'apprentissage de la prononciation. L'étude de cas concerne les étudiants anglais de troisième année des Départements de Langues étrangères du Centre Universitaire Abdelhafid Boussouf de Mila au cours de l'année universitaire 2018-2019. Pour tester l'hypothèse de recherche, deux questionnaire ont été administrés, l'un pour les enseignants et l'autre pour les étudiants. Les données rassembler révèlent que les étudiants ont une attitude positive à l'égard de l'utilisation se stratégies d'apprentissage de la prononciation pour l'apprentissage des voyelles anglais. Les résultats abstenus permutent de confirmer l'hypothèse. A partir des résultats, la recherche montre qu'il faudrait accorder une plus grande attention à l'une utilisation des stratégies d'apprentissage de la prononciation. La conclusion générale tirée dans la présente étude affirme que les stratégies d'apprentissage de la prononciation ont impact significatif sur la production des voyelles anglaises. De plus, plus les stratégies d'apprentissage de la prononciation utilisée par les étudiants sont diversifiées, plus leur production de avant voyelles anglais et voyelles arrières sera exempte d'erreur.

## المخلص

يعتبر التلطف واحدا من اهم المهارات الفرعية التي تساهم في الكفاءة اللغوية. لتطوير هذه المهارة تم تطبيق مجموعة كبيرة مختلفة من استراتيجيات التعلم.

الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو فحص فعالية تطبيق واستعمال استراتيجيات التعلم لإتقان حروف العلة الامامية والخلفية للغة الإنجليزية. تسعى هذه الدراسة الى معرفة اراء الأساتذة والطلبة اتجاه استعمال استراتيجيات تعلم التلطف. كان طلبة السنة الثالثة لغة انجليزية لمعهد اللغات الأجنبية بالمركز الجامعي عبد الحفيظ بوصوف ميللة هم الحالة المدروسة.

لاختبار صحة فرضية البحث، تم إدارة استبيانين اثنين، وجه الأول للأساتذة بينما الثاني للطلبة. اثبتت البيانات المتحصل عليها من خلال هاته الاستبيانات ان للطلبة مواقف إيجابية تجاه استعمال استراتيجيات تعلم التلطف لإتقان حروف العلة الامامية والخلفية للغة الإنجليزية. كما أكد الأساتذة من جهة أخرى أهمية هاته الاستراتيجيات وتأثيرها الإيجابي لإتقان تلك الحروف.

مكنت النتائج المتحصل عليها من تأكيد صحة الفرضية كما حثت على إعطاء أهمية كبيرة لاستعمال استراتيجيات تعلم التلطف.

تتميز استراتيجيات تعلم التلطف بامتلاكها لتأثير بليغ في إتقان حروف العلة الامامية والخلفية للغة الإنجليزية، بالإضافة ان الاستعمال المتنوع لهذه الاستراتيجيات يؤدي الى إتقان أكبر للحروف المذكورة سالفا وهذه الخلاصة هي اهم ما يمكن استنتاجه من خلال هذه الدراسة.