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Pronunciation Practice and Students' Oral Performances

**A Case Study of Second Year English Students at the
University of Constantine**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved mother.

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Abstract

The present study deals with the practice of the phonological rules in order to improve students' pronunciation and oral performance in the department of English, University of Constantine. It tackles the issue of pronunciation, its teaching and its status among learners and teachers of Phonetics and Oral Expression; their attitudes and the way they deal with this language aspect. It focuses mainly on the practice of pronunciation and the way it is dealt with in both classes of oral expression and phonetics.

It has been hypothesized, in this study, that students' pronunciation errors are due to the lack of practice of pronunciation aspects during the Phonetics class and lack of pronunciation based practice during the oral expression class. To confirm this hypothesis, we investigated the case of second year students and teachers of phonetics and oral expression at the department of English in order to see the way pronunciation is treated and the main problems facing the teachers. Thus, we administered three questionnaires to be answered by students and teachers.

The study provides a theoretical description of the English sound system, and a review of the different methods and approaches of teaching pronunciation. The practical outcome of the study provides an analysis of data collected from the questionnaires administered to both second year students and teachers of Phonetics and Oral Expression. The study confirms the hypothesis according to the interpreted results and suggests some collected activities and ideas to be used in the Oral Expression class.

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General Introduction

Pronunciation has occupied quite an important place in the field of language teaching; much research has been conducted in the area; however, it has always been perceived as less popular compared to other aspects of language learning, like grammar, vocabulary, writing and so on. The ordinary person is usually unaware of the existence of phonetics. The teacher of a foreign language, on the other hand, is aware of its existence. Nevertheless, teachers face difficulties in teaching pronunciation itself as a subject, or in integrating it in the language class with other aspects.

The present study examines the status of pronunciation as a part of the English curriculum in the department of English, University of Constantine; and the way it is perceived and dealt with by both teachers and learners; the way it is approached in both classes of phonetics and oral expression. It investigates mainly the way pronunciation is practiced, and points out the main problems facing teachers in dealing with this language aspect.

Research Objectives

We seek through this study to draw attention to pronunciation as a language aspect and its importance in language learning.

The study will attempt to reflect teachers' and students' attitudes towards pronunciation and the way it is practiced, as an attempt to raise awareness about pronunciation errors and encourage both students and teachers to make more efforts to make students' pronunciation better through a more meaningful practice.

Research Questions:

1. What is the status of pronunciation in the department of English at the University of Constantine?
2. What do second year students think about pronunciation learning?
3. What are Oral Expression and Phonetics teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation teaching?
4. What can teachers do to provide a better space to practice pronunciation aspects?

Methodology

The research tools which we will employ to conduct such investigation and answer the research questions we mentioned above will be a descriptive and analytic method. The study will be based on the analysis of three questionnaire administered to teachers of Oral expression, teachers of phonetics and students of second year at the English language department of Constantine.

Teachers' questionnaires are to provide information about their backgrounds and beliefs about pronunciation and its practice, and the actual way in dealing with it within the classroom. Students' questionnaires seek to provide information about their attitudes and their beliefs about pronunciation, and the main problems they face.

Hypotheses

In this study we hypothesize that:

1. When pronunciation is not practiced seriously and in a meaningful way, students will develop careless attitudes towards it, and thus face pronunciation difficulties.

2. If teachers of oral expression and phonetics do not collaborate in terms of objectives, they will face problems in designing tasks for their students.

Content of the Dissertation

The present dissertation consists of four chapters; the first one presents the sound system of English; it deals with individual sounds (with a description of the manner and place of articulation), suprasegmental features (stress and intonation), and aspects of connected speech (assimilation, elision, etc). The second chapter is a historical review on the different teaching methods and the teaching of pronunciation.

The third chapter represents the analysis of the findings provided by the questionnaires handed by both students of second year, and teachers of phonetics and oral expression. The last chapter is a review on theoretical findings with pedagogical implications, and general recommendations; it suggests some collected activities for pronunciation practice.

Chapter I: The Sound System of English

Introduction:

In the First chapter, a description of the sound system of English will be presented, with a detailed account of how sounds and other pronunciation features are produced. It includes the place and manner of articulation of the different English sounds. It is of capital importance to the learners to be familiar with these pronunciation features, and hence it will be easier for them to understand and make best use of them.

I.1. Spelling and pronunciation

Before dealing with the English sound system in detail, it is useful to make a distinction between the sounds and the spelling of English. It is not often easy to guess the pronunciation of English since its spelling system often fails to represent the sounds in a clear manner. In other words, there is no one to one correspondence between the sounds as heard and written letter representation. An example of the stated phenomenon is presented by Avery and Ehrlich (2008:03)

In table 1 below, we consider some words, in which the vowel sound is pronounced the same, although it is written differently. The different combinations of the following letters represent the same sound.

The letters: 'wo', 'oo', 'ough', 'ew', 'ue', and 'oe' are all pronounced as /u:/, and hence may mislead the learner who does not master pronunciation features.

See the table below:

The word	The transcription
To	/tu:/
Two	/tu:/
Too	/tu:/
Through	/θru:/
Threw	/θru:/
Clue	/klu:/
Shoe	/ʃu:/
Sioux	/sɪju:/

Table 1: different English letters representing the same sound

On the other hand, there are letters which are written the same way. However, the way they are pronounced is different; consider the following table:

The word	The transcription
Hat	/hæt/
Arm	/a:m/
Any	/enɪ/
Sofa	/səʊfə/
Page	/peɪdʒ/
Safe	/seɪf/
Vision	/vɪʒn/
Design	/dɪzaɪn/

Table 2: same English letter representing different sounds

The same 'a' is used in the words: 'hat', 'arm', 'any', 'sofa', 'page', but it is pronounced differently as: /æ/, /ɑ:/, /e/, /ə/, and /eɪ / respectively. This is an example of how a written vowel can be pronounced in different ways.

This phenomenon can also be found in English consonants which can also be pronounced differently -as it is shown in table 2 above- the letter 's' can be pronounced in three different ways as /s/, /ʒ/, and /z/ in the words 'safe', 'vision', and 'design'.

The lack of correspondence between sounds and letters is also noticed in the silent letters as the followings: 'Knight', 'debt', 'receipt'. The letters 'k', 'b', and 'p' are not pronounced in the previously stated words which would be pronounced as: /naɪ t/, /det/, and /resi:t/.

The pronunciation of particular letters is the same in different contexts; further, a sound is not always represented by the same letter. However, this lack of correspondence between the letter and the sound in English gives no right to generalize. Many letters display consistent relationship to the sounds they represent, as we will see through the description of all the sounds.

I.2. Individual Sounds of English:

It is very important for teachers of pronunciation to be aware of the English sounds' pronunciation. Such awareness will help teachers understand why students make pronunciation errors. Thus, they will be able to take the necessary steps to correct the errors since they know the source of the problem. The study of how these sounds are produced is called articulatory phonetics.

It is necessary to provide how this field describes the sounds of English in terms of place and manner of articulation.

I .2.1. Production of sounds:

Speech sounds are produced when the air moves out from the lungs through the mouth and the nose; hence, different speech sounds are made when the air goes through different parts of the mouth. Here we make a distinction between articulators and the place of articulation.

Articulators include the tip, the blade, and the back of the tongue. 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.

I .2.2. Consonants and Vowels:

It is important to recognize that there is a basic distinction between consonants and vowels, since they are produced differently. Consonants are produced by narrowing the mouth which blocks the air or hinders it, and the active movements of the tongue to touch some parts of the mouth cavity. On the other hand, vowels are produced when the air passes freely via the mouth since there is very little narrowing of the mouth cavity but an active movement of the parts of the tongue without touching any part of the mouth cavity

I .2.2.1. Consonants:

In English, there are six places in the mouth through which the air goes out in order to produce consonants, and they will be discussed next in detail.

I .2.2.1.1. Place of articulation

I .2.2.1.1.1.Sounds made with the lips

-Bilabials: These are sounds formed by using both upper and lower lips. The initial sounds in the words ‘pat’, ‘bat’, and ‘mat’ are bilabials. They are represented by the symbols /p/, /b/, and /m/. Even /w/ in the beginning of words: ‘walk’, ‘way’, and ‘word’ can be described as bilabial. Yule (1985:28)

- Labiodentals: In labiodentals, ordinarily, only the lower lip moves. As the Latin name suggests, labiodentals are produced by lips and teeth as Yule (1985:28) specifies:

“These are sounds formed with the upper teeth and the lower lip. The initial sounds of the words fat and vat, and the final sounds of the words safe and save are labiodentals.”

Yule (1985:28)

When we pronounce the previous sounds /f/, and /v/, we notice that there is an air obstruction when the bottom lip and the top teeth come together and touch.

I .2.2.1.1.2. Sounds made with the tip of the tongue

-Dentals: They are sounds made by the tongue-tip against or close to the front teeth. Collins and Mees (2003:35).The sound ‘th’ in the word ‘three’ is represented by the symbol /θ/, and the sound ‘th’ in the word ‘there’ is represented by the symbol /ð/.

Both of the sounds /θ/ and ð/ are called dentals. Some authors refer to them as interdental: *the sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are referred to as interdental sounds because the tongue is placed between (inter) the teeth (dental).* Avey and Ehrlich (1992:14)

/θ/ and /ð/ generate some erroneous realizations in some words among some Algerian learners, where both sounds are replaced by /t/ and /d/ respectively. An example of this is

the pronunciation of /θ/ as /t/, as in the word 'wealthy' which is sometimes mispronounced as /weltɪ / instead of /welθɪ /. According to Beghoul (2007:141) these substitutions originate from transfer in the use of both consonants which consists of interlingual substitutions from both French and some Algerian dialectal varieties of Arabic.

- Alveolars: Some English sounds are made with the tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth just behind the upper teeth. Yule (1985:28) defines alveolars as sounds formed with the front part of the tongue on the alveolar ridge, which is the rough bony ridge immediately behind and above the upper teeth.

Sounds that are produced this way are: /t/, /d/, /n/, /l/, /s/, /z/, and /r/ which represent the letters 't', 'd', 'n', 'l', 's', 'z', and 'r' respectively.

Avery and Ehrlich (1992:15) add that in languages such as French, Italian, and Spanish these sounds are made with a slight difference than the English; the tongue does not touch the tooth ridge but rather behind the teeth. It might sound trivial difference; however it causes what is known as 'foreign accent'.

I .2.2.1.1.3.Sounds made with the blade of the tongue

-Alveo-palatal: They are sounds that are made with the blade of the tongue approaching the hard palate just behind the tooth ridge. Avery and Ehrlich (1992:15). This place of articulation is referred to as alveo-palatal. Sounds that are produced this way are: /ʃ/ as 'sh' in *'fish'* and /ʒ/ as the final sound in the word as 'beige'.

Two other sounds that are produced by the blade of the tongue at the hard palate are /tʃ/as 'ch' in the word 'French', and /dʒ/ as 'j' in the word 'judge'.

The sounds: /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/ are called alveopalatal sounds as the tongue is behind the alveolar ridge and the hard palate when they are produced.

I .2.2.1.1.4. Sounds made with the back of the tongue

-Velars: They are sounds produced with the back of the tongue against the back part of the mouth momentarily. Yule (1985:29). This place of articulation is referred to as velar. Sounds that are produced this way are /k/ as in the word ‘take’, /g/ as ‘goal’, and /ŋ/ as the final sound in the word ‘raining’.

In general, it is difficult for students to become aware of the airstream obstruction that occurs at the back of the mouth. Thus, it may represent a difficulty for teachers to make their students aware of how to pronounce the sound correctly.

The sound /ŋ/ represents some difficulty of pronunciation to language learners. Some Algerian learners have difficulty in pronouncing /ŋ/ in ‘ing’, thus they substitute it with /ŋg/ or even /n/. This substitution is the result of interlingual transfer from French. Beghoul (2007:141)

One may think that this substitution represents a trivial error; however, such an error may change the meaning of the sentence completely. For example, a student, who has a problem with pronouncing /ŋ/, might pronounce the word ‘sing’ as /sin/ which suggests another word totally different ‘sin’.

A teacher who wants to correct such an error needs to explain to his students how to pronounce /ŋ/ according to its place of articulation; the movement of the tongue (backward) towards the soft palate.

I .2.2.1.1.5.Glottal: A glottal is a sound that is produced without the active use of the tongue and the other parts of the mouth. It is the sound /h/ which occurs at the beginning of the word ‘have’ and ‘house’ and for most speakers as the first sound in ‘who’ and ‘whose’. Yule (1985:29)

/h/ is a strong voiceless version of the following vowel, thus /h/ is made differently depending on the vowel that follows. It is voiceless because there is no vibration of the vocal cords as there is with vowels.

The following table suggested by Avery and Ehrlich (1992:15) summarizes the places of articulation for the different consonant sounds:

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

Table3: Classification of consonants according to place of articulation (Avery&Ehrlich 1992:15)

I .2.2.1.2. Manner of articulation

Manner of articulation refers to the interaction made between the airstream and the articulators which means the way in which the obstruction of air is made. Thus, we can classify the consonants according to the different levels of airstream obstruction and complexity.

I .2.2.1.2.1. Plosives

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

I .2.2.1.2.2. Fricatives

Roach (2009: 48) defines fricatives as consonants that are produced with the air escaping through a small passage and makes a hissing sound. Fricatives are continuant consonants, which means that you can continue making them without an interruption as long as you have enough air in your lungs.

Fricatives include the sounds: /f/ as in 'fly', /v/ as in 'variety', /θ/ as in 'think', /ð/as in 'thus', /s/ as in 'sound', /z/ as in 'zoo', /ʃ/ as in 'fish', and /ʒ/ as in 'beige'.

I .2.2.1.2.3. Affricates

Affricates are produced when the airstream is blocked somewhere in the mouth; there is almost always some degree of air turbulence and hence a friction at the release of the stop
Clark and Yallop (1995:67)

There are two affricates in English: /tʃ/ as in ‘French’ and / dʒ/ as in ‘judge’; they often represent the two complex sounds in English.

I .2.2.1.2.4. Nasals

The sounds that we have stated previously, are made by the air passage through the mouth; however, nasals are sounds in which the air passes through the nose.

Nasals are consonants in which the velum is lowered and there is a closure in the oral cavity somewhere in front of the velic opening. Hence, air from the lungs is directed out through the nasal passage alone. Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996:102).

Nasals are /m/ as in ‘mother’, /n/ as in ‘nurse’, and /ŋ/ as in ‘sing’. The sounds /m/, /n/ seldom cause difficulty to language learners; however, the sound /ŋ/ may because many languages do not have it. Teschner and Whitley (2004:182)

I .2.2.1.2.5.Lateral

Roach (2009: 61) defines a lateral as a consonant in which the passage of the air through the mouth does not go in the usual way along the centre of the tongue; instead there is a complete closure between the centre of the tongue and the part of the roof of the mouth where contact is to be made.

Lateral sound is /l/ as in the word ‘life’. For some English speakers, the /l/ is made with air passing through the mouth over only one side of the tongue. Carr (1999:44-45) makes a distinction between clear /l/ which occurs immediately before vowels as in the word ‘play’,

and dark /l/ which occurs immediately after vowels as in the word ‘shall’. He suggests the following table which represents examples of both clear and dark /l/.

Clear /l/	Dark/l/
Cleve	Bells
Plain	Trail
Look	Pull
Law	Balls
Lie	Pile

Table4: *Clear and dark /l/* (Carr 1999:44)

I .2.2.1.2.6.Approximants

Kelly (2000:53) defines approximants as sounds that are produced when two articulators move close to each other, however not close enough to stop the air or cause a friction. Approximants are /r/ as in ‘red’, /j/ as in ‘yes’, and /w/ as in ‘wood’.

Approximants are often called semi vowels because unlike the other consonants, they are made without a restriction of the airflow.

I .2.2.1.3. Voicing

After the place and the manner of articulation which make consonants differ from each other, there is a third way to distinguish between consonants which is voicing.

The term voicing is used to refer to the vibration of the vocal folds. Jones (2003:581). It is indicated by the presence of low frequency spectral energy or periodicity in the speech signal; whereas in voiceless sounds there is no such periodicity. Eimas and Miller (1981:29).

Voicing can be best understood through comparing between pairs of sounds which have the same place and manner of articulation; however, they differ in terms of voicing since one is voiced and the other is voiceless.

Among all the plosives, the fricatives, and the affricates that have been discussed, there are pairs of voiced and voiceless consonants. Nasals, lateral, and approximants are all voiced.

The following tables suggested by Avery and Ehrlich (1992:25) display the voiced and voiceless sounds.

	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	alveopalatal
Voiceless	f (fish)	θ (think)	s (sale)	ʃ (pressure)
Voiced	v (veal)	ð (these)	z (zone)	ʒ (pleasure)

Table5: Voiced and voiceless fricatives (Avery and Ehrlich 1992:25)

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Velar
Voiceless	p (pay)	t (tell)	k(coal)
Voiced	b (buy)	d (dent)	g(gold)

Table 6: Voiced and voiceless plosives (Avery and Ehrlich 1992:25)

	Alveopalatal
Voiceless	tʃ (chug)
Voiced	dʒ (jug)

Table7: Voiced and voiceless affricates (Avery and Ehrlich 1992:25)

I .2.2.1.4. Consonant clusters

Kelly (2000:57) defines consonant clusters as consonant sounds which occur together, as in ‘machbx’. We can define a consonant cluster as a combination of up to four consonants; usually up to three consonants at the beginning of the word; as in ‘scream’/skri:m/, and up to four consonants at the end of the word, as in ‘sixths’/sɪ ksθs/.

Consonant clusters often provide difficulties to learners, particularly when the cluster in question is not possible in the mother tongue language.

I .2.2.1.4.1.Initial consonant clusters

They can be either two-consonant or three-consonant clusters, the following table illustrates some possible combinations representing both types:

Initial two-consonant Cluster	Initial three-consonant Cluster
<u>B</u> lame / <u>b</u> leɪ m/	<u>S</u> treet / <u>str</u> i:t/
<u>P</u> lay/ <u>pl</u> eɪ :/	<u>S</u> pring / <u>spr</u> ɪ ng/
<u>T</u> ree/ <u>tr</u> i:/	<u>S</u> quirrel/ <u>skw</u> ɪ rəl/
<u>D</u> rive/ <u>dr</u> ɪ v/	<u>S</u> plit/ <u>spl</u> ɪ t/
<u>C</u> rowd/ <u>kr</u> əʊ d/	<u>S</u> cream/ <u>sk</u> ri:m/
<u>F</u> ly/ <u>fl</u> ɪ /	
<u>S</u> mile/ <u>sm</u> ɪ l/	
<u>S</u> nake / <u>sn</u> eɪ k/	

Table8: Initial consonant clusters

I .2.2.1.4.2.Final consonant clusters

They are basically either two or three final consonant clusters. Avery and Ehrlich (1992:58) state that the addition of grammatical endings creates many more final consonant clusters. For example the word glimpse; when the past tense ending /t/ is added, it creates a four-consonant cluster /mpst/. The same thing for the word text, when the plural ending /s/ is added, it creates another four-consonant cluster /ksts/.

Final two-consonant cluster	Final three-consonant cluster
Grant/gra ^{nt} /	Against/ə ^{genst} /
land/læ nd /	Sixth/s ^{ksθ} /
Fifth/fɪ ^{fθ} /	Glimpse/glɪ ^{mps} /
Ask/a ^{sk} /	Prompt/prɒ ^{mpt} /
Best/best/	Text/tek st /

Table9: Final consonant clusters

I .2.2.2. Vowels

A vowel is defined in English Pronouncing dictionary (2003:583) as the class of sound which makes the least obstruction to the flow of the air. Vowels are almost always found at the centre 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.

What differentiates vowels from consonants is the opening of the mouth while the air passes from the lungs out of the mouth. This means that there is little blockage of the air as compared to the consonants.

In the pronunciation of the normal vowel sounds, it is usually the front, the back, or the centre of the tongue which is highest. O'Connor (1973:50) classified vowels according to the tongue position as follows:

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

Vowels can be single, a combination of two-vowel sounds (diphthongs), or a combination of three vowel sounds (triphthongs).

I .2.2.2. 1. The single vowel sounds

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

- Rounded: the lips are pushed forward making a circle, as the sound /ʊ/ in the word ‘good’.
- Spread: both sides of lips are moving from each other in a form of smile, as the sound /i:/ in the word ‘sea’.
- Neutral: the lips are neither spread nor rounded, they are just normal, as the sound /ə/ in the word ‘about’.

Single vowels can be divided into two types; short and long vowels:

I .2.2.2.1.1. Short vowels

English has seven short vowels:

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

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

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

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

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

/ʌ/ lips are neutrally open, and the centre of the tongue is raised to just above the fully open position. As in: 'love', 'flood', 'run', and 'uncle'.

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

I .2.2.2.1.2. Long vowels

There are five long vowel sounds in English:

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

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

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

/ɔː/ lips are loosely rounded, and the back of the tongue is raised to between the half-open and half-closed positions. As in: ‘law’, ‘thought’, and ‘all’.

/ɑː/ lips are neutrally open, and the tongue is between the centre and the back in the fully open position. As in: ‘sart’, ‘class’, ‘clerk’, and ‘memoir’.

I .2.2.2.2.Diphthongs

According to Jones (2003:152), a diphthong is a sound in which there is a glide from one vowel quality to another. A diphthong is also defined as a combination of vowel sounds that acts like long simple vowels in one syllable. However, for some authors like Hill and Ure (1962:53) a diphthong can be a combination of two vowels even if they do not belong to the same syllable; for them the combination of the sounds /ɪ / and /ə/ in the word ‘arial’ is considered as a diphthong, though the two vowels belong to two different syllables: /be rɪ əl/.

Kelly (2000:35-36) groups diphthongs as follows:

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

/ɪ ə/ the lips are neutral, with small movement from spread to open. /ɪ ə/ glides from /ɪ / moving down and back towards /ə/. As in: ‘here’, ‘idea’, and ‘really’.

/ʊ ə/ the lips are loosely rounded, becoming neutrally spread. /ʊ ə/ glides from /ʊ /, moving forward and down towards /ə/. As in: ‘pure’, ‘poor’, and ‘tourism’.

/eə/ the lips remain neutrally open, /eə/ glides from /e/ moving back towards /ə/. As in: ‘square’, ‘fair’, and ‘wear’.

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

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

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

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

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

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

/aʊ / it starts with /ʌ / moving up towards /ʊ /, the lips start neutral then they move loosely to rounded. As in: ‘now’, ‘loud’, and ‘row’ (quarrel).

I .2.2.2. 3.Triphthongs

A triphthong is defined as a vowel glide with three distinguishable vowel qualities. Jones (2003:549)

Roach defines triphthongs as follows:

*“The most complex English sounds of the vowel type are the **triphthongs**. They can be rather difficult to pronounce, and very difficult to recognize. A triphthong is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption.”* Roach (2009: 18-19)

Triphthongs occur when a closing diphthong is followed by /ə/, thus there are mainly five triphthongs, which are composed of the five diphthongs /eɪ /, /aɪ /, /ɔɪ /, /əʊ /, and /aʊ / with the addition of schwa at the end.

1. /eɪ /+ /ə/ = /eɪ ə / as in: layer, player.
2. /aɪ /+ /ə/ = /aɪ ə/ as in: fire, tyre, liar.
3. /ɔɪ /+ /ə/ = /ɔɪ ə/ as in: employer, loyal, royal.
4. /əʊ /+ /ə/ = / əʊ ə/ as in: lower, slower.
5. / aʊ /+ /ə/ = /aʊ ə/ as in: hour, power.

Summary

The production of English consonants have been discussed according to three features that determine the way we pronounce them. First was the place of articulation, second the manner of articulation, and third whether they are voiced or voiceless. Through the descriptions stated above, we aimed to show how it is very common to any language learner to make an error attempting to produce one sound. As for teachers, given they know the three different ways that determine a certain pronunciation, it will be easy for them to determine the nature of the error and thus correct it. When students have enough knowledge about the place, the manner and the position of producing sounds, it becomes easier for them to understand the errors they make, and thus they will know the proper way to deal with them. Thus, it is very important for teachers to make sure at the beginning that students are aware of the way sounds are produced in all aspects because correction becomes easier when errors are made.

I.3. Stress:

I.3. 1.Stress definition

Jones (1991:511) defines stress as a property of syllables which makes them stand out more noticeable than others. Stress can be defined as a stronger muscular effort both respiratory and articulatory, which we can feel in relation with some syllables as opposed to others.

Stress, as an integral part of word shape, is the key of the pronunciation of a word and its localization should always be learnt within the word itself. Stressed syllables tend to be longer, louder, and produced with greater effort than unstressed syllables. Hewings & Goldstein (1999:62). Stress is very important because its position can change the meaning or the function of the words.

I.3. 2.Stress Placement

Since there are no firm rules regarding the placement of stress because there are always exceptions, students should learn every word with its stress. However, there are still some common points to take into consideration when placing stress and they are often useful for language learners.

Grammarians have divided English words into two sections; content and function words. Function words are not stressed; they are words that have little or no meaning in themselves, they are used to express grammatical ideas. Function words include:

-Articles as: a, an, and the.

-Prepositions as: in, at, and on.

-Personal pronouns as: I, she, and he.

-Possessive pronouns as: his, her, and its.

-Relative pronouns as: who, which, and whose.

-Common conjunctions as: and, then, and as.

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

Content words are words that carry meaning in themselves, and they are usually stressed except monosyllabic words, unless we stress them purposefully to call attention on them. Kelly (2000:68-69) summarizes the rules of word stress as follows:

-Prefixes and suffixes: It is useful to know that English prefixes and suffixes are usually unstressed. Thus words including prefixes or suffixes are not usually stressed on the syllable containing the prefixes or suffixes. For example: QUIetly, deFEctive, and inEVitable. Still there some exceptions as: BICycle, DISlocate.

-Core vocabulary: A lot of two-syllable nouns and adjectives tend to be stressed on the first syllable. For example: MOther, SISter, TAble, WAter, and COFfee.

-Compound words: Stress is often regular in compound words; usually the first word in the compound word is stressed. Whether written as one word or separated, this does not affect the stress placement on compound words. For example: DRUG store, CLASSroom, HAIRcut, and AIRplane.

-Words with two grammatical functions: There are some words that can be used as verb and noun. Here, it is the stress that determines which is the verb and which is the noun; nouns will be stressed on the first syllable while verbs on the last syllable. For example:

INcrease (n), inCREASE (v).

IMport (n), imPORT (v).

TRANsfer (n), transFER (v).

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

I.4. Intonation

I.4.1. Definition of intonation

Wells (1996:01) defines intonation as the melody of speech; in studying intonation we study how the pitch of the voice rises and falls.

A comprehensive definition of intonation is provided by Levis (1999:37), he views it as: *“the quality of language that includes both rhythm and melody, and is produced by tonal height and depth along with stress, volume and varying length of pause.”*

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

I.4.2. The importance of intonation

Roach (2001:33-34-35) summarizes the importance of intonation as follows:

1-Intonation can indicate different types of utterance, such as statement and question; when there is a fall-rise of voice, this means a yes or no question, if the voice only falls so it is a statement.

2- Intonation gives the listener a lot of information about what is being said; it can signal politeness. As in the example: Can you lend me some money? When the voice falls in the last word ‘money’, this indicates politeness.

3-Intonation indicates the attitudes and emotions of the speaker; a sentence as “I think it is time to go now” can be said in three different ways, happily, angrily, or sadly.

For Couper-Kuhlen (1986) English pronunciation has six main functions:

(1) informational, (2) grammatical, (3) illocutionary, (4) attitudinal, (5) textual/discourse, and (6) indexical. Chun (2002:48)

I.4.3. Intonation in the classroom

Some teachers think that intonation cannot be taught because it operates at a deep level of consciousness, thus it is acquired in the long run through a wide exposure to the second language. On the other hand, other teachers claim that since we can analyze patterns in grammar and lexis, then we can analyze intonation patterns as well. However, English teachers often ask questions such as, are there any methods or techniques for teaching intonation? If yes, what are the best ones to teach it?

According to Kelly (2004:87): *It is really a question of taking time to listen out for intonation yourself, gaining an understanding on how it works.* While for Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) it is virtually impossible to provide hard and fast rules to teach intonation because it is related to the speaker’s attitude which is unpredictable. Since intonation is related to individual attitudes, it is almost impossible to isolate it out for teaching.

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

I.5. Other aspects of connected speech

I.5.1. Assimilation

1.5.1.1 Definition of Assimilation

Jones (2003:38) defines assimilation as follows:

“Assimilation is what happens to a sound when it is influenced by one of its neighbors; essentially it becomes more similar to a neighbor.”

For Stockwell, Minkova (2001:95), assimilation rules are replacement rules which have the effect of making one vowel or consonant more similar to, or even identical with, another. It can affect both vowels and consonants.

I.5.1.2. Types of assimilation

There are two types of assimilation: anticipatory and coalescent assimilation.

I.5.1.2.1. Anticipatory assimilation

As the term suggests, in anticipatory assimilation the sound is changed to another because of the sound that follows. Laver (1994:383) defines it as the influence exercised from a segment at the beginning of one word to a segment at the beginning of the next. The segments can be made more similar in terms of phonation, place of articulation, nasal aspect of articulation, or degree of stricture.

Kelly (2000:109-10) suggested the following examples of anticipatory assimilation:

1. The phonemes /t/ and /d/ assimilate to /k/ and /g/ respectively before the phonemes /k/ or /g/, for example:

I would like to see that golden ring. (/t/ assimilates to /k/)

What is the price of that car over there? (/t/ assimilates to /k/)

I think this magazine has a bad cover. (/d/ assimilates to /g/)

She is a good girl. (/d/ assimilates to /g/)

2. The phoneme /n/ assimilates to /ŋ/ before /g/ /k/, for example:

He has been gaining a lot of money from his new job. (/n/ assimilates to /ŋ/)

I will travel the east coast by my own ncar. (/n/ assimilates to /ŋ/)

3. The phonemes /t/, /d/, and /n/ often assimilate to bilabial sounds before bilabial consonants, for example:

We would rather finish our work now; I will get busy over next week. (/t/ assimilates to /p/)

She will move to a new apartment by the next month. (/t/ assimilates to /p/)

He is a very good boy. (/d/ assimilates to /b/)

I have been motivated since I started working with Mr. Johns. (/n/ assimilates to /m/)

4. The phoneme /s/ can assimilate to /ʃ/ before /ʃ/, as in:

I like this show, it has very creative ideas.

5. The phoneme /z/ can assimilate to /ʒ/ before /ʃ/, as in:

I prefer those zshoes, they look better on you.

I.5.1.2.2. Coalescent assimilation

Kelly (2000:110) refers to coalescent assimilation as where two sounds are combined to produce one new sound. He suggests the following examples:

1. The phonemes /t/ and /j/ coalesce to form /tʃ /, as in:

I will lend you my book but you need to take care of it.

2. The phonemes /d/ and /j/ coalesce to form /dʒ /, as in:

Would you like to have a cup of coffee?

I.5.2. Elision

Elision is the omission of sounds in connected speech where both consonants and vowels may be affected, and sometimes whole syllables may be elided. Crystal (2003:158)

. For Kelly (2000:110) the term elision describes the complete disappearance of a sound for the reason of economy of efforts in some utterances, and in some instances the difficulty of putting certain consonants sounds together. However, it is important to distinguish between cases of elision which have been established in the language for some time, and those which have become current only recently.

The followings are examples of elision suggested by Kelly (2000:110-11):

1. The phonemes /t/ and /d/ are elided when they are in a consonant cluster. For example:
 - The man you are looking for lives next t door. (/t/ is elided between /ks/ and /d/)
 - When we reached Providence, we stopped for a lunch. (/t/ is elided between /tʃ / and /p/ and between /p/ and /f/)

- We bought a lovely carved statuette. (/d/ is elided between /v/ and /st/)

2. Before consonants, the phoneme /v / is elided in the word ‘of’, as in:

- You can use one of these tools to fix your bicycle.

- My graduating day will be the 13th of March.

- This is the second edition of the same book I gave you.

- Our next meeting will be the 6th of June.

3. Complex consonant clusters are usually simplified.

- This book has a lot of good texts that you can use for your lesson. (/teksts/ can be simplified into /teks/)

- It is strange how Tim changed; he acts as if he never knew me. (/ækts/ can be simplified into /æks/)

4. / ə / can disappear in unstressed syllables.

- I think she would rather call the police. (/ ə / can disappear in the first syllable of police)

- Lidia sounds a very interesting person. (/ ə / is elided in most cases)

I.5.3. Linking and Intrusion

The connection of two groups of words together is referred to as *linking*, which occurs in connected speech when words within the same phrase or sentence often blend together.

Dretzke (1998:112) defines Linking as one of the typical features of spoken English; connecting sounds smoothly. And there is linking between consonants and vowels, vowels of consonants, and vowels and vowels.

-Linking consonants to vowels:

Usually when a word ends with a consonant is followed by another word that begins with a vowel; the consonant in the first word seems to become a part of the following word, as in the following examples:

Catch it, leave early, stand up, and laugh at.

-Intrusive /r/:

When two vowels meet at the edges of two word; usually when the first sound is either /ə /, /ɑ : /, or /ɔ : /, an /r/ is introduced between both of the vowels in order to make the transition easier, as in the followings:

-That is law and order.

- I did not witness the event, but Bob said that he saw it when it started.

-Linking /j/:

When /i:/ or a diphthong which ends with /ɪ / is at the end of the word, a /j/ is often introduced in order to make the transition to the following vowel easier, as in the followings:

-They are very good people.

- I am the only one who does not belong to this city.

-Linking /w/:

When /u/ or a diphthong which ends with /u/ is at the end of the word, a /w/ is introduced in order to make the transition to the following vowel easier, as in the followings:

-You are the kind of person who can understand Julie.

-Whois the tall guy over there?

I.5.4. Contractions

Contractions are the result of the combination of two words to the extent that they are pronounced as one word, or one syllable. They have become conventionalized in written language. Kelly (2000:113). The followings are examples of contractions:

I'm, couldn't, can't, hadn't, you're, wouldn't.

Conclusion

When training students to produce a fluent and correct English pronunciation, we need to work hard on all pronunciation features, not only at the level of vowels, consonants, stress and intonation, but also on all the other aspects of connected speech that have been discussed.

Introducing these features to learners will be of a great benefit in all cases. When students are aware of the presence of these features, they will be aware of how the sound system in English works; hence they will pay more attention to them which will improve their pronunciation of English gradually.

In order to improve students' pronunciation of English and increase their fluency and comprehensibility, it is very important for teachers of ESL to introduce all these features in the classroom.

Chapter II: Teaching Methods and Teaching Pronunciation

Introduction:

This chapter represents a brief description of the basic principles and procedures of the most well known and recognized methods of teaching foreign languages, with particular focus on the importance of the speaking skill and pronunciation. We will present, hence, separately the different methods and approaches used in teaching pronunciation.

II.1. Teaching Methods

II.1.1 Grammar Translation Method

For centuries, there was no basic methodology to teach foreign languages because there were few if any theoretical foundations of language learning. Latin was necessary in any higher education, it was taught by what was known as the classical method.

“Grammar Translation method was called at one time the Classical Method since it was first used in the teaching of the classical languages Latin and Greek.” Freeman (2000:11)

Grammar translation method cannot probably be traced back; it was very popular in Europe from the 1840s to 1940s, Nagaraj (1996:01). The method is mainly based on the memorization of vocabulary, verb paradigms, and grammar rules.

Freeman (2000:12) observed a class taught with grammar translation method, and summarized his notes about the principles of this method as follows:

- 1- The ability to communicate in the target language is not a goal of foreign languages instruction.
- 2- The primary skills to be developed are reading and writing. Little attention is given to speaking and listening and almost none to pronunciation.

- 3- It is important for students to learn about the form of the target language.
- 4- Learning is facilitated through attention to similarities between the target language and the native language.
- 5- Vocabulary and grammar are emphasized.
- 6- The teacher is the authority in the classroom. It is very important that the students get the correct forms.
- 7- Deductive application of an explicit grammar rule is a useful pedagogic technique.

As other languages began to be taught, the classical method was generalized to teach modern languages. Later on in the 19th century the classical method came to be known as Grammar Translation Method.

Grammar Translation Method does not promote the development of speaking skill because almost no attention was given to pronunciation, thus it does not enhance students' communicative abilities in the foreign language. Although there was a lot of reading, there was no focus on correct pronunciation partly because most of the teachers did not have access to phonology of the target language.

II.1.2. The Direct Method

At the turn of the 20th century, it was believed that translation should be excluded in the greatest possible measure, thus the Direct Method became quite widely known and practiced. It was initially developed as a reaction to the Grammar Translation Method; as an attempt to integrate more use of the target language in the classroom. It was based on constant oral interaction, spontaneous use of the target language with no translation and little or no analysis of grammatical rules.

For Stern (1983:456), the main characteristic of the direct method is the use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom, and avoidance of the use of the first language and of translation as a technique.

The direct method was also known as the Natural Method, which argues that a language could best be taught by using it actively in the classroom because students would then "pick it up" as children learn their first language "mother tongue".

Elisabeth (2004:55) summarizes the basic principles of the direct methods as follows:

- 1- Direct association between thought and words. In this method, the learners think and speak by using the same medium.
- 2- Oral practice is a must and the basis of this method.
- 3- Stress is laid on functional grammar and not on theoretical grammar.
- 4- Inhibition of mother tongue: this method propagates the teaching of the foreign language without using mother tongue.
- 5- The unit of speech is a sentence and not a word, emphasis is laid on speaking full sentences.
- 6- This method favors the presentation of limited vocabulary, based on needs and experiments of the learners.

Through the analysis of the basic principles of the Direct Method mentioned above, one may think that this method with a balance of the four skills is an acceptable method of teaching languages to some extent. And, in fact, that is what happened, the Direct Method enjoyed a considerable popularity especially in public language schools, where students were highly motivated to learn, and where it was possible to employ native speakers who

are qualified to speak the target language in class. Since more emphasis is given to the spoken language, which is a primary need, thus classroom instructions should be conducted mainly in the target language. However, it had some difficulties, and it did not do well in public education, where the constraints of budget, classroom size, time and teacher background. Thus, it was criticized for its weak theoretical foundations.

The Direct Method was weak in syllabus design and classroom techniques (Davies and Pearce 2000:190); it was all about really good teachers. While private schools could hire them easily, the method proved problematic in secondary school as it depended heavily on native speakers and on teacher's skills rather than on more readily available resources, such as textbooks. Schank (1998:11)

II.1.3. The Reading Method

The Reading Method focuses more on silent reading for comprehension purposes, and emphasizes the transfer of linguistic understanding of English. Stern (1983:461) notes that the main objective of the reading method is to restrict the goal of language instruction to one practical attainable utility, and vocabulary control is of a great importance.

The main characteristics of the Reading method can be summarized as follows:

- 1- It prioritizes studying the target language and the reading ability.
- 2- Under this approach Grammar necessary for reading comprehension and fluency is taught.
- 3- Minimal attention is paid to pronunciation or gaining conversational skills in the target language.
- 4- Students are exposed to a great amount of reading in the target language, both in and out of class.

- 5- The vocabulary of the early reading passages and texts is strictly controlled for difficulty, and it is expanded as quickly as possible, since the acquisition of vocabulary is considered more important than grammatical skill.
- 6- Translation reappears in this approach as a respectable classroom procedure related to comprehension of the written text.

Under the reading approach, there was no attention paid to pronunciation and gaining conversational skills in the target language. In other words, the speaking skill was totally ignored; it was not practiced in the texts previously read. Byram (2000:267). Most of the emphasis was put on the reading skill. Any language learning particular skill- let it be reading, writing, or listening- is somehow obliged to use speaking and hence articulate the language sounds.

II.1.4. The Audio-Lingual Method

After the World War II, there was a need to become orally proficient in languages; thus a revolution for language teaching was needed. The U.S army funded special language courses that focus on oral skills; these courses were known as the Army method. The army method was developed to be later known as the audio-lingual method.

Schank (1998:13) notes that audiolingualism had a strong impact on language learning because it addressed a strong demand for oral proficiency and combined widely accepted theories of language and learning. He summarizes its principles in three main points:

- 1- Foreign language learning is similar to other learning.
- 2- We can learn from experience.
- 3- Language learning is a mechanical habit formation.

The major characteristic of this method is a great deal of oral activity with pronunciation

and pattern drills. Grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than deductive explanation, and vocabulary is learnt in context.

The Audio-Lingual method enjoyed many years of popularity, but it was then discovered that language was not really acquired through a process of habit formation and over learning, and that errors were not necessarily to be avoided.

Audiolingualism began to fall into disfavor when Chomsky (1959, 1966) proposed that language is an innate aspect of the mind and that it is separate from other behaviors, and so it is learnt differently. He showed that behaviorism and structural theories did not account for creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences. Schank (1998:13)

II.1.5. The Silent Way

The silent way is a method developed by Cattegno in the late seventies, it is had its roots in the cognitive approach, and it rejects the behaviorist view. Cattegno believed that learners should develop independence, autonomy, and responsibility. Thus, the silent way's goals are self expression in the target language, learner independence and the development of the learner's own facility to assess correctness. Candlin and Mercer (2001:152-153)

Richards and Rogers (1986:99) summarize the principles of the silent way as follows:

- 1- Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than repeats and remembers, and by a company of physical objects; problem solving involving the material to be learnt.
- 2- In a Silent Way classroom, the teacher is silent; he sets up classroom situations, while students do most of the talking and interaction among themselves. The teacher's silence helps to foster self-reliance and students' initiative, thus the

teacher has to resist his instinct to spell everything and let students to work out solutions.

- 3- In a language classroom, the silent way typically used rods to teach vocabulary, verbs, and syntax, and charts are used to teach pronunciation patterns.

The silent way was criticized as too harsh, and failing to encourage communicative atmosphere since the teacher is silent, thus distant.

II.1.6. The Natural Approach

The result of the debate over the theories of Stephen Krashen about second language acquisition (1982-1997) was embodied in the development of what came to be known as the Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

Krashen and Terrell believed that learners would benefit from the delay of production until speech emerges. This means that learners listen to the teacher while he is talking in the target language, and they need to say nothing until they are ready to do so (they stay silent). Thus the main task of the teacher is to provide a comprehensible input; an understandable language to all learners.

According to the Natural Approach, communication and acquisition are much important than analyzing. It aims at developing the basic communication skills; the common activities like everyday activities.

Under the Natural Approach, the learners move through three stages defined by Krashen and Terrell (1983) as follows:

- 1- The preproduction stage: Learners develop their listening skills, and they basically do nothing else.

- 2- The early production stage: Teachers focus on meaning as opposed to form, and errors are not considered as important if they do not hinder the communication.
- 3- The extended Production stage: Fluency is produced through open discussions and dialogues.

The Natural Approach was criticized basically because of the silent period (the delay of speech production) as students have different occasions of speech production which will make it difficult for teachers to manage the classroom efficiently.

II.1.7. The Communicative Approach

In the 1980's, approaches began to emphasize on communicative properties of language and real world simulating tasks. The Communicative Approach, as a very recent approach, was widely used; it expanded the creation of communicative competence, and aimed at creating a realistic context for language acquisition in the classroom.

Richards and Rogers (1986:72) underline three elements that characterize the CLT classroom:

One such element might be described as the communication principle: Activities that promote real communication promote learning. A second element is the task principle: Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning. A third element is the meaningfulness principle; Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process

(Richards and Rogers 1986:72)

Nunan (1991:279) explains the same principles underlined by Richards and Rogers and talks about Communicative Language Teaching as an approach that emphasizes communication through interaction in the target language, the use of authentic materials, thus learners' personal experiences are considered as an important element in the classroom

learning and thus encouraged, as an attempt to connect language learning in classroom with language activation outside the classroom.

II.2. Teaching Pronunciation

Teaching pronunciation is fundamental to teaching speaking. Therefore, it is necessary that teachers pay a good attention to pronunciation. To be effective in teaching pronunciation, a teacher needs to have a good knowledge about the sound system of the language, good background knowledge about the pedagogy of pronunciation, and some information about his learners and their backgrounds.

Before dealing with teaching pronunciation, we find it important to refer to the distinction Burgess and Spencer' (199:191) made between pronunciation and phonology. They state that phonology is the theory and the knowledge about how the sound system in the target language works while pronunciation in language learning is the practice and meaningful use of the target language phonological features in speaking supported by practice in interpreting those phonological features in the target language discourse.

II .2.1. Factors Involved in learning pronunciation

When it comes to teaching Pronunciation in the ESL classroom, there are two opposing views, Avery and Ehrlich (2008, X). One view holds that teaching pronunciation is important as it makes students aware of the differences between the mother tongue and the foreign language and thus eradicates the traces of the mother tongue accent through the use of drills. On the other hand, some researchers believe that pronunciation cannot be taught pointing out several factors, rather than instruction, that are responsible for the acquisition of good pronunciation, such as age, and other social and psychological factors that we will examine below.

II .2.1. 1. The Age Factor

Although many adult learners of a second language often show an ability to acquire a native-like proficiency in morphology and syntax, they often find it difficult to acquire a native-like pronunciation. This fact has often raised several questions among linguists and non-linguists.

Adults learning a second language tend to have a foreign accent while children succeed in most cases to achieve a native-like pronunciation. This is explained by the ‘Critical Period Hypothesis,’ which explains how languages are learned differently by children and adults as a result of the maturation of the brain. The Critical Period Hypothesis states that there is a limited developmental period during which it is possible to acquire a language, be it the mother tongue language or the foreign language, to normal, native like levels. When the window of this opportunity passes, the ability to learn languages declines. Birdsong (1999:01)

Further research findings suggest that it is almost impossible to improve one’s pronunciation after adolescence. An example of this fact is found in the research findings of Oyama (1976) who examined the pronunciation skills of 60 Italian immigrants with different ages of arrival (6-20). He found out that the length of residence effects less the pronunciation skills as opposed to the age of arrival; hence, he found out that children spoke with native-like pronunciation, on the other hand, the others who arrived older than 12, did not. Han (2004:47)

To emphasize the role of the maturational constraints as crucial in the development of good pronunciation skills in a second language, Celce-Mercia, Brinton, and Godwin (1996:15) stated the example given by Scovel (1969, 1988). Scovel exemplified the lack of adult facility in acquiring second language pronunciation by the so called the “Joseph

Conrad phenomenon”. The Polish-born poet, Joseph Conrad, had a brilliant control over the English lexis, syntax, and morphology; which is displayed in his literary works. However, he never reached the same level of perfection in the acquisition of English phonology “*Conrad’s speech, in fact, remained partly unintelligible to English speakers throughout his life.*” Cece Mercia, Brinton, and Godwin (1996:15)

Many other researches (Krashen et al (1981) and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) hold the same position as Scovel about the fact that it is almost impossible to improve one’s pronunciation in the foreign language after adolescence. Thus adults are unable to achieve a perfect of near-native pronunciation in the target language.

Many experienced ESL teachers agree that adults do have difficulty in the process of foreign language acquisition, and thus there is some truth in the critical period hypothesis. However, it is also believed that there are some adults who attain the near-native pronunciation, and the degree of pronunciation accuracy varies according to individuals. Despite of its degree of correctness, teachers should not base their work on the belief in the critical period hypothesis because that would make them ignore or give less attention to teaching pronunciation; instead teachers should devote the classroom time to improve students’ pronunciation.

II .2.1. 2. Socio-cultural factors

Another factor to which many researchers have attributed success or failure in achieving native-like pronunciation is the socio-cultural factor. Many researchers went on claiming that the more learners of a foreign language are associated with native people of the foreign language and their culture, the more they will sound native-like.

Guiora et al (1972) introduced a new concept ‘the language ego’ which is based on the idea that foreign language learners should take a new identity. He suggested that changes in ego states can improve pronunciation ability in a second language.

“To learn a second language is to take a new identity...we propose that the most sensitive index of the ability to take on a new identity, i.e. the degree of permeability of language ego boundaries, is found in the ability to achieve native-like pronunciation in a second language.”

Guiora et al (1972) cited in Singleton and Ryan (2004:186)

Guiora et al (1972) suggested that good or native-like pronunciation can be achieved only if learners of the foreign language take the same social and cultural characteristics of the native speakers of the same language.

II .2.1. 3. Personality factors

Avery and Ehrlich (1992: xiv) agree that the acquisition of the sound system of a second language can be affected by the personality of the learner. They think that learners, who are out-going and confident, are more likely to take risks, and probably have more opportunities to practice the second language since they are more willing to interact with native speakers. On the other hand, learners who are introverted and inhibited are usually unwilling to take risks and thus they lack opportunities of practice. They suggest that ESL teachers should be aware that these personality factors can affect the progress in a second language and they should create non-threatening atmosphere in their classrooms to encourage their students’ participation. However, students who are not ready to participate should not be forced to do so.

Dornyei (2005:13) summarized the personality traits that interfere in the learning process into five characteristics presented with respective examples of personal adjectives

in the following table which reflects some personality traits and their effects on learners' production. Thus, knowing the learner and his personality characteristics can be of great help for the teacher; in terms of designing classroom activities.

Character Traits	Adjectives	
	High scores	Low scores
Openess to experience	Imaginative, curious, flexible, novelty seeking, original	Conservative, unartistic, conventional, practical.
Conscientiousness	Systematic, meticulous, Efficient, reliable, self-disciplined	Aimless, careless, Disorganized, negligent, Weak-willed.
Extraversion-Introversion	Sociable, active, passionate, Talkative	Passive, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, restrained
Agreeableness	Friendly, good-natured, Trusting, cooperative, Modest	Cold, cynical, critical, uncooperative, antagonistic, rude
Neuroticism-Emotional Stability	Worrying, anxious, insecure, moody, motional, unstable	Calm, unemotional, content, comfortable, self-satisfied

Table 10: The 'Big Five' model according to Doneyi (2005:15) Burger (2009:13)

After examining the biological, socio-cultural, and personality factors that affect the process of pronunciation learning, and thus may hinder the learners from achieving a native-like pronunciation in a second-language, we agree that it is hard for adults to attain a native-like pronunciation, but we believe that it is possible for them to improve their pronunciation.

We assume that learners also should take some of the responsibility in their pronunciation learning of the second language, they should be aware of the aspects of

pronunciation that may hinder the comprehensibility.

“Learners can indeed acquire intelligible pronunciation in the second language when they become active participants in their own learning and the teacher supports their efforts by employing a wealth of techniques to aid students in their efforts to improve their pronunciation.” Scarcella and Oxford (1994:225)

We agree that learners should take an active role in the learning of pronunciation; this means they are more aware about the learning process. Thus, the responsibility and the awareness of learners will help the teachers to plan lessons and design activities successfully, so this will help in improving learners’ pronunciation.

II.2.2. Approaches to Teaching Pronunciation

It is often mentioned that there was a remarkable absence of theory about pronunciation teaching, and most of the techniques were driven from linguistics knowledge. According to Kelly (1969:87), linguists have studied vocabulary and grammar longer than pronunciation which had not been studied till the beginning of the twentieth century, and that is the reason why language teachers have understood them better than pronunciation.

According to Bygate (2001:14), it was not until the last two decades that teaching speaking started to emerge as a branch of teaching and learning in its own right. He attributes this delay to mainly three reasons:

. The First is tradition; Grammar-translation approaches still have a huge influence on language teaching, marginalizing the teaching of communication skills. The second is technology; only since the mid-1970s has tape recording been sufficiently cheap and practical to enable the widespread study of talk. The third is for its secular development which might be termed as “exploitation”, which means most approaches to language

teaching exploited oral communication centrally as a part of their methodology; not as a discourse skill but as a special medium for providing language input.

Pronunciation has been taught through two general approaches Intuitive-imitative approach and an analytic-linguistic approach.

II.2.2. 1.The Intuitive-imitative Approach

As its name suggest, this approach depends heavily on imitation and repetition without the intervention of any explicit information. It assumes that students will develop an acceptable pronunciation and speaking skills when exposed to the target language through accurate models. In the Intuitive-imitative approach, the learner listens to and imitates the sounds and rhythms of the target language without the assistance of explicit instruction. Pascoe and Wiburg (2003:246)

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996:02) summarize the approach as follows:

“It depends on learner’s ability to listen to and imitate the rhythms and sounds of the target language without the intervention of any explicit information; it also presupposes the availability of good models to listen to, a possibility that has been enhanced by the availability first of phonograph records, then the tape recorders and language labs in the mid-twentieth century, and more recently of audio- and videocassettes and compact discs.”

We can summarize, that the effectiveness of this approach depends on two main factors:

- 1- The ability of learner to listen and imitate; learners need to have a good listening skill and enough capacity to imitate.
- 2- The availability of good resources; teachers need to provide learners with good listening material to enhance their listening skill, and motivate them to imitate what they listen to.

II.2.2. 2.The Analytic-linguistic Approach

The analytic approach dominated in the academic discussion of art and theory roughly from the 1950's to the 1970's. Thompson (1990:503). For Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996:02) an analytic approach is summarized as follows:

“It utilizes information and tools such as phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions, charts of vocal apparatus, contrastive information, and other aids to supplement listening, imitation and production. It explicitly informs the learner of and focuses attention on the sounds and rhythms of the target language. This approach was developed to complement rather than to replace the intuitive-imitative approach, which was typically retained as the practice phase used in the tandem with the phonetic information.”

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996:02)

Unlike the Intuitive-imitative approach, here students are provided with explicit information about the production of sounds and rhythms of the target language. So, a variety of tools could be employed for that, as charts, phonetic alphabets, articulatory descriptions and contrastive exercises, and so on.

II.2.2. 3.The Reform Movement

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, educators began to recognize the need for speaking proficiently rather than reading comprehension, grammar, or literary appreciation as the goal for foreign language programs. The efforts of language teaching specialist to promote alternative approaches to language teaching resulted in what came to be known as the Reform Movement in language teaching. (Richards and Roggers2001:09). It is considered as the first linguistic contribution to the teaching of pronunciation, and it was influenced greatly by Phoneticians such as Henry Sweet, Wilhelm Victor, and Paul Passy,

who formed the International Phonetic Association in 1886 and designed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), that enabled Phonetics to stand as a science. They had also had experiences in teaching foreign languages, and thus influenced modern language teaching.

The goals of the International Phonetic Association are summarized by Richard and Rogers (2001:10) as follows:

- 1- The study of the spoken language.
- 2- Phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habits.
- 3- The use of conversation texts and dialogues to introduce conversational phrases and idioms.
- 4- An inductive approach to the teaching of grammar.
- 5- Teaching new meanings through establishing associations within the target language rather than by establishing associations with the native language.

Howatt and Widdowson (2004:189) summarize the main principles of the reform movement as follows:

- The primacy of speech.
- The centrality of the connected text as the kernel of the teaching-learning process.
- The absolute priority of an oral classroom methodology.

II.2.2. 4.the 1940's and 1950's

The Reform Movement contributed to the development of Audiolingualism and the Oral Approach in Britain during the 1940s and 1950s, where pronunciation was very important and thus was taught explicitly. The teacher often uses a technique derived from the notion of contrast in structural linguistics: the minimal pair drills.

It was believed that the practice of individual sounds has a limited value in the process of learning pronunciation. Instead, the learning of pronunciation was considered useful when it makes use of phonemic contrast, and when it gives students an opportunity to relate between different phonemes. Wilkins, (1973, 56-57).

“I would not deny that a completely new sound might be isolated to begin with, while muscles are brought into play together for the first time, but everything argues that practice must be, above all, of sounds integrated into syllables, words and sentences.”

Wilkins (1973:57)

Wilkins states clearly that he doubts transcription to have a great benefit for learning Pronunciation. He believes that the most important thing in the learning of pronunciation system is the mastering of sounds, which is the most important thing in the learning process. He also suggests that the best way to teach pronunciation is through contrasting minimal pairs, to make sure that the learner does not substitute the nearest sounds in his mother tongue language. This makes the learner aware at the very beginning of the learning process of the similarities between sounds, and hence it enables him to discriminate the phonemic contrasts of the foreign language.

Thus the use of minimal pairs remained one of the most common techniques used to develop the production of individual sounds. As the term suggests, it is based on the idea of presenting two words with different meanings and having only one sound different pronunciation.

If we consider the words: ‘seat’ and ‘sit’, both of the words consist of a one vowel and two consonant syllable; while the consonants in both words are the same, there is a difference in the vowel sound; seat / si:t/, and sit/sɪ t/; this is an example of how to use minimal pairs as a technique to make a clear distinction between /i:/ and /ɪ /.

The same technique can serve to make a distinction between two consonants, as in the words: ‘sip’ and ‘zip’, for example; where the vowel sounds and the last consonant sound are the same, there is a difference between the first consonants in both words.

This technique can be of a great use when the students fail to make a distinction between two vowel or consonant sounds. The contrast makes the target sounds more eminent in the two words, enabling students to recognize the difference between both sounds.

II.2.2. 5. The 1960s and the 1970s

In the 1960s both structuralism and behaviorism views of language learning were criticized heavily. Pronunciation was deemphasized in favor of grammar and vocabulary and it was believed that native like pronunciation was an unrealistic objective that could not be achieved (Scovel1969) and time would be better spent on teaching grammatical structures and vocabulary as they were considered more learnable. Consequently, the time allocated to pronunciation in class was remarkably reduced.

On the other hand, humanistic approaches to language teaching were increasingly recognized. The Silent Way and Community Language Learning continued to exhibit interesting differences in the way they dealt with pronunciation, which was considered very important in the process of language learning.

In the Silent Way, as its name suggests, the teacher stays silent for most of the time, using gestures when necessary to indicate for learners what they should do. It attributes a particular attention to accurate production of sounds, stress, and intonation from the very beginning. Thus, there is a tendency to focus not only on individual sounds, but also on how words are combined in phrases, and on how both of stress and intonation shape the production of an utterance. This tendency was believed to enable learners to sharpen their own inner criteria for accurate production; that is what makes the difference between the

Silent Way and Audiolingualism. Thus, learner's attention is focused on the sound system without having to learn a phonetic alphabet or a body of explicit linguistic information.

II.2.2. 6. Community Language Learning

Developed by Charles A Curran, and inspired from the humanistic approach by Carl Rogers, it is a learner-centered method for foreign language teaching. It is marked by a strong emphasis on repetition with pronunciation developed through an intuitive imitative approach, and it is heavily based on pronunciation practice. The teacher acts as a counselor who provides the students with words in the target language, then students are asked to repeat them until they are able to produce them fluently. The learners are asked to practice the words they have learnt until they are satisfied with the accurate pronunciation of the utterance.

The main tools used in the Community Language learning class are an audiotape that allows students to record their utterances so that they can compare them later with the utterances provided by the teacher/ counselor, and thus make the difference between both utterances.

For Both the Silent Way and the Community Language, pronunciation is very important. While the Silent Way prioritizes accurate production of sounds, stress and intonation, Community Language Learning prioritizes practice. The main principle, both approaches share is that the success in learning is dependent on learners with a sense of responsibility. Carter and Nunan (2001:57)

II.2.2. 7. Communicative Approach to Pronunciation Teaching

The Communicative Language Approach appeared in the 1980s by the growth of research showing the significance of pronunciation as a tool of communication, particularly at the level of interaction (Brown and Yule 1983). Currently it is still the dominant approach in the field of language teaching, especially with the growing awareness by teachers and writers of the importance of pronunciation. Gardner and Miller (1994:90). It is based on the principle that the purpose of language is to communicate, thus communication should be the main focus in the language classes and thus a focus on pronunciation as an integrated part of communication.

“Language was seen as being used for communicative purposes in situations with other people, which all call on the learner to pay attention to both the content of the language and its appropriateness with respect to formality, non-verbal behavior, tone, and so on.”

Hall and Hewings(2001:184)

The communicative Language approach emphasize the use of language in context, and this gives more significance to the speaking skill, and thus pronunciation. The techniques and materials that are used under this approach are derived from other teaching methods and approaches like audiolingualism, they are well listed by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996:08-09) as follows:

1. Listen and imitate: a technique used in the Direct Method in which students listen to a teacher-provided model and repeat or imitate it. This technique has been enhanced by the use of tape recorders, language labs, and video recorders.
2. Phonetic training: use of articulatory descriptions, articulatory diagrams, and a phonetic alphabet.

3. Minimal pair drills: a technique introduced during the Audio-lingual era to help students distinguish between similar and problematic sounds in the target language through listening discrimination and spoken practice. Minimal pair drills typically begin with word-level drills then move on to sentence-level drills.
4. Contextualized minimal pairs: Bowen's (1972, 1975) attempt to make minimal pair drills responsive to Cognitive Approach criticisms of meaninglessness and lack of context. In the technique, the teacher establishes the setting and presents key vocabulary; students are then trained to respond to a sentence stem with the appropriate meaningful response.
5. Visual aids: enhancement of the teacher's description of how sounds are produced by audiovisual aids such as sound-color charts, Fidel wall charts, rods, pictures, mirrors, props, realia, etc. These devices are also used to cue production of the target sounds.
6. Tongue twisters: a technique from speech correction strategies for native speakers. (e.g., "She sells sea shells by the sea shore.")
7. Developmental approximation drills: a technique suggested by first-language acquisition studies in which second language speakers are taught to retrace the steps that many English-speaking children follow as they acquire certain sounds in their first language.
8. Practice of vowel shift and stress related to by affixation: a technique based on rules of generative phonology (Chomsky and Halle 1968) used with the intermediate or advanced learner. The teacher points out the rule-based nature of vowel and stress shifts in etymologically related words to raise awareness.

Vowel shift; mime (long i) mimic (short i)

Stress shift: PHOtograph phoTOGraphy

9. Reading aloud/ recitation: passages or scripts for learners to practice and then read aloud, focusing on stress, timing, and intonation. This technique may or may not involve memorization of the text, and it usually occurs with genres that are intended to be spoken, such as speeches poems, plays, and dialogues.

10. Recordings of learners' production: audio- and videotapes of rehearsed and spontaneous speeches, free conversations, and role plays. Subsequent playback offers opportunities for feedback from teachers and peers as well as for teacher, peer and self-evaluation.

Summary

It is very important for pronunciation to have the necessary space to be taught; otherwise it would be considered with less care or totally neglected. Thus, a separate class of pronunciation is crucial in the process of learning pronunciation; however, pronunciation should be integrated in other aspects of language and thus in all classes.

In a separate classroom of pronunciation, learners need to listen to authentic sounds in order to be expected to produce good pronunciation. Thus, language laboratories are necessary as they help students to get access into tape recorders in order to improve production and be able to record conversations.

Finally, in order to teach pronunciation effectively, an understanding of the sound system of English is required. When committed and have access to solid resources, teachers can be effective in teaching pronunciation. Naiman (1992:165) suggests that teachers should emphasize on the following areas which are considered as important in all forms of communicative language teaching:

1. Meaningful practice beyond the word level.
2. Task orientation of classroom activities.

3. Development of strategies for learning beyond the classroom.

4. Peer correction and group work.

5. Student-centered classroom.

Conclusion

Through the examination of the above mentioned methods, we notice that pronunciation was dealt with in different ways according to the different approaches and methods. Yet, we assume that the communicative approach is the one that emphasizes more the importance of the oral skill in students learning. Thus, it stresses the need to teach communicative competence as opposed to linguistic competence. The communicative approach is closely related to what is known as communicative language teaching. The latter, we think, is the richest one in terms of techniques as it proposes a set of varied materials which enables teachers to design communicative activities in a more meaningful context.

Introduction:

This chapter is designed to analyze the findings obtained through the investigation tools in the current case study. As the objective of this investigation is to shed light on the importance of practicing the phonological rules in order to improve learners' pronunciation by coordinating Phonetics and Oral Expression classes. The study is conducted through investigating a sample of second year's students of English at the University of Constantine and a sample of teachers of both Phonetics and Oral Expression at the same university.

III.1. Population/Sample

The population we have investigated is a sample of second year students in the Department of English at the University of Constantine, ranging from 19 to 23 years old. The sample population consists of 100 students, 89 of which have answered the questionnaire. These students have the same level, since all of them received English courses in more or less identical public Algerian institutions during an average of six years (in middle and secondary schools). They are supposed to provide thus a homogeneous sample as far as cultural background and instructional input are concerned.

In addition, a number of teachers of both Phonetics and Oral Expression have answered two questionnaires. These teachers teach second year students Phonetics and/or Oral Expression, or have taught the subject matters in the past.

III.2. Methodology/tools

The first questionnaire was administered to the students in order to check their backgrounds, attitudes and their learning styles towards learning phonetics. The collected information is impartial since the respondents' answers were anonymous. There are mainly three sections in this questionnaire. The first section is to collect basic information about

the participants. The second investigates students' attitudes towards Phonetics and the difficulties they encounter. The last section is about the class of Oral Expression; it investigates students' personal attitudes towards the class.

The second questionnaire was administered to the teachers of Phonetics in order to know about their methods of teaching, how they make them practical in the classroom, and how they deal with students' pronunciation problems.

The third questionnaire was administered to the teachers of Oral Expression in order to investigate the main objectives of the course, and the way they are related to Phonetics classes and pronunciation practice.

III. 3. Students' questionnaire

The first questionnaire was given to second year students of English. It contains 30 questions gathered under three major sections. It is meant to gather data about students' personal characteristics, motivation and attitudes towards learning English in general and learning pronunciation in particular, and their expectations from the courses they are taking. All the information is converted into numerical data to facilitate the interpretation of the findings. At the end, we will provide a summary of these findings.

III.3.1 Students' Identity / Personal Characteristics

Question 1: was meant to determine students' age categories. The results are gathered in *Table 1* below.

Age	Number	Percentage
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19	07	07.86%
20	38	42.69%
21	23	25.84%
22	07	08.13%
23	05	05.61%
24-36	04	04.49%
No answer	05	05.61%
Total	89	100%

Table11. Students' age.

This table displays the age categories; they vary from 19 to 36 years old. And there are 5 students who did not mention their ages. One can notice that the majority of learners are 19 to 23 years old; 19 years old students went to school early and never failed. However, 20 years old are regular students who went to school at a normal age and never failed. The other age differences can be explained by either a failure, more probably, in the baccalaureate exam, or a change in the field of study.

Question 2: Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	25	28.08%
Female	64	71.91%
Total	89	100%

Table 12. Students'Gender

The results show that 71.91% of the students are females who tend to study languages in Algeria in general, as opposed to males who represent only 28.08% of the sample population.

III. 3.2. Learners' backgrounds in learning English

Question 3: For how long have you been studying English?

Years	Number of students	Percentage
07	50	56.17%
08	25	28.08%
09	07	07.86%
10-14	07	07.86%
Total	89	100%

Table13. Students' course length background in English

It is important to know about the differences in years of experience studying English; it helps us know for how long students have been practicing English, and it can show differences in level between the students.

As the answers show in table 13 above, the majority of students have been studying English for 7 years (56.17%), which is the traditional situation in Algeria, in general, for students who started English in the second year at the middle school. Then, students who mentioned 8 years (28.08%) and 9 years (7.86%) have possibly repeated one year, or two years respectively. On the other hand, there are only 7.86% of students who have spent between 10-14 years studying English. This can be explained by the fact that they have possibly started learning English at the primary school. These students are supposed to have

a good level in English as they are supposed to have been exposed to English for a longer time than the traditional students.

Question4: How was your choice of English?

choice	Number of students	Percentage
Personal	73	82.02%
Parental	11	12.35%
Other	05	05.61%
Total	89	100%

Table14: Students' choice of English

The results of this question are optimizing; it is good to know that the majority of the students (82.02%) were not obliged to learn English. This means that at least they have some degree of motivation, which is supposed to have a positive effect on the process of language learning. Some students (12.35%) followed parental advice, and 5.61% had their own reasons, which could be their general average didn't fit the required one for their first choice, so they had to accept English as second, third or fourth choice.

Question5: What is the type of your Baccalaureate?

The reason why we included this question is to see the background of the students to help to define their English learning backgrounds. Most of the students (69.66%) had a literary stream Baccalaureate, 21.34% had a scientific one, 4.49% had other, and 1.12% had a technical Baccalaureate. The stream of learning determines the course density (number of hours per week), and hence tells us about the rate of learning. It is commonly known that literary stream learners have a higher course density in English than the other streams.

Baccalaureate Type	Number of students	Percentage
Scientific	19	21.34%
Literary	62	69.66%
Technical	1	1.12%
Other	4	4.49%
No answer	3	3.37%
Total	89	100%

Table15: Type of Students' Baccalaureate stream

Question6: Do you do something else besides studying English?

Yes/No	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	30	33.70%
No	59	66.29%
Total	89	100%

Table16: Students' status (Full time students)

Being a full time student matters a lot in the process of learning English at the University of Constantine. Usually full time students attend classes and have full attention and focus on their studies while part time students are distracted by work or studying something else besides English.

Results show that 33.70% of the students' sample are not full time students. This suggests that most of them are not likely to focus on their studies since the time schedule of second year students (LMD) is tight and attendance is necessary especially in modules such

as Phonetics and Oral Expression, which are supposed to be an appropriate milieu for practicing the language. 66.29% of the students' sample are full time students who are expected to have full attention and focus on learning

Question 7: Besides learning English, I:

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Study something else	16	53.33%
Work	08	26.66%
Other	05	16.66%
No answer	01	03.33%
Total	30	100%

Table17: Students' activities besides learning English

As table 17 shows, among the 30 students who do some other activities besides learning English, 53.33% study in another field, 26.66% work and study at the same time, and 16.66% do something else; one student did not precise what he does besides learning English.

Among the 16 students studying a second branch in addition to English, 5 students study computing in addition to English, which suggests that they find it necessary for to study English and more probably they need it for this specific purpose of technology need. One student studies law, one studies business, one studies biology, and another one studies medicine. Four students study foreign languages (French and Spanish), this latter category is supposed to be more aware about the language and the learning strategies. The other two sub-categories of students who do something else besides learning English represent three students work as an administrator, a teacher, and a government employee, and two students

who do other things like being a member in an organization, or a musical group; such activities do not hinder the student' attendance. Two students did not specify their activities.

III.3.3. Students' expectations and evaluations of their learning of Oral Expression and Phonetics

Question 8: Speaking a very good English means:

-Speaking quickly and fluently

-Speaking correctly using the rules learnt in phonetics

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Speaking quickly and fluently	54	60.67%
Speaking correctly using the rules learnt in phonetics	30	33.70%
Both	05	05.61%
Total	89	100%

Table18: Students' self-estimations of speaking requirements

Results show that 60.67% of students think that speaking a very good English means speaking quickly and fluently without any interruption. In this case, they would focus on the whole picture and forget to be more precise in employing the rules they have studied. However, 33.70% think that very good English is more importantly related to practicing the rules and always pronouncing correct English. Only 5.61% recognize that they have to practice the rules and speak quickly to have very good English.

We can notice here that speaking quickly can be easy through practice and repetition. However, the most important thing is to employ the rules regularly, so that learners develop

automaticity in the long run through practice; and a lot of students do not pay attention to this requirement, though.

Question 9: How good is your Spoken English?

The results are quite noticeable- see table 19 below-; as only 1.12% of the students think that they have excellent Spoken English, and only 4.49% think that their Spoken English is very good. 31.46% of the students think that their Spoken English is good. Most of the students think that their Spoken English is just average (60.67%), while 3.37% think that they are really weak and probably need some help.

This self-evaluation cannot be very reliable but it tells us to what extent learners are confident in their pronunciation and oral production of utterances in English

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Excellent	01	1.12%
Very good	04	4.49%
Good	28	31.46%
Average	54	60.67%
Weak	02	2.24%
Total	89	100%

Table19: Students' self-evaluation of their speaking proficiency

Question 10: Learning English means: (the choices are stated in table 20 below)

It is important to know students' objectives and goals for learning a language, and a teacher should take that into consideration in every step he makes in the process of

teaching. Students will be kept interested and motivated when learning makes sense for them.

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
A personal wish, I just love it	46	51.68%
A formal requirement	29	32.58%
A means of getting access to science and technology	11	12.35%
Other	03	3.37%
Total	89	100%

Table20: Students' Reasons for Learning English

The results show that a lot of students (51.68%) love to learn English, thus they are expected to work on it and be motivated enough to care about the language and all its aspects. Then, 32.58% need it in their works or careers, 12.35% need it to access to science and technology, and 3.37% need it for other reasons. This means that the three last categories of students think of English as a means to an end. As their objectives would be, in many cases, to read and understand articles and convey messages, they would probably care just for understanding English in general

Question 11: How important is Phonetics in learning and speaking English?

The state of awareness about the importance of something determines the more attention one would pay to it. We can notice that a lot of student (56.17%) recognize that

Phonetics is very important in learning and speaking English, 29.21% think that it is just important, and only 14.60% think that it not important.

We can say here that the majority (the former two categories) consider the importance of Phonetics while only a minority does not consider it so.

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Very important	50	56.17%
Important	26	29.21%
Not important	13	14.60%
Total	89	100%

Table 21: Students' awareness of phonetics' importance in speaking

Question 12: Explain why?

Students who answered Very important (56.17%) had different reasons, some said because Phonetics is the best way to know how to pronounce words, and thought that it makes them aware of the rules they need to follow to speak correct English, and that Phonetics improves the skill of speaking.

Students who thought of Phonetics as important (29.21%) were quite similar to those who thought of it as very important. However it is noticed that they were less enthusiastic about how they attribute importance to Phonetics.

On the other hand students who thought that Phonetics is not important (14.60%) argued that the most important thing is to convey a message no matter how you pronounce it, some argued that comparing it to other modules -like grammar-, phonetics is less important.

Question 13: What do you dislike in Phonetics?

Most students mentioned that they dislike transcription; some students said that they do not like the fact that there is no rule and it is full of exceptions. Some others said that they prefer the American pronunciation to the PR pronunciation; others do not like the way the lesson is presented; one student reported: “I dislike that the teacher does not give us the opportunity to speak in the class”. A lot of students did not seem to be satisfied with the section of stress and syllables. However, there are some students who seem to be more optimistic and said that they like everything.

Question 14: How do you find lessons of Phonetics?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Interesting	40	44.94%
Ordinary	15	16.85%
Boring	34	38.20%
Total	89	100%

Table22: Students’ appreciation of Phonetics’ lessons

Some students (44.94%) think that Phonetics is an interesting module; others (16.85%) think that is it just ordinary, while (38.20%) think that it is boring.

Two major categories 44.94% and 38.20% have completely opposite views, respectively. This means that almost a majority of learners do not appreciate phonetics lessons for some reasons that we investigate in the question below.

Question 15: Justify your question.

- Students who answered 'Interesting': justify that what makes the class of Phonetics interesting is the fact that they are interested to learn how words are pronounced; they have a good teacher who explains well; they study a lot of different and new things that they have not studied before. Others said that every time they discover their mistakes, they automatically learn a lot of new things. Some said that it enables them to know how to pronounce English correctly, and in every session they learn at least some new correct pronunciation

- Many students who answered 'ordinary' say that there is nothing special as Phonetics is just a part of the curriculum, and some others said it depends on the teacher. Most of the students who answered Ordinary do not give a justification, and a lot of them think that it is nothing more than listening to the teacher talking, and taking some notes.

- Students who answered 'Boring' argue that there are many unnecessary things; the teacher keeps just explaining, no time for practice at all, and there are a lot of rules that do not attract them. However, the majority of students are upset with the fact that there is no practice. They add that the class is theoretical and is all about transcription which is very boring; one student quotes: "because I study a lot of rules and we never apply them, we just write during this class, it is boring."

Question 16: Do you have any difficulties in Phonetics?

The majority of students (80.89%) have difficulties in Phonetics, while a minority of them (19.10%) states that they do not have any difficulties.

Yes/No	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	72	80.89%
No	17	19.10%
Total	89	100%

Table23: Students' difficulties in learning Phonetics

Question 17: State the encountered difficulties.

The majority of students state that their major problems are transcription, stress, and intonation; they state that it is difficult for them to apply the rules of stress. A few of them said that they encounter difficulties when it comes to the division of syllables.

Question 18: Do you often talk during the Phonetics' sessions?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	26	29.21%
No	63	70.78%
Total	89	100%

Table24: Students' rate of participation in Phonetics sessions

The majority of students (70.78%) do not talk during the Phonetics' session, which means they are less productive as they do not practice by imitation and repetition in order to master pronunciation. A few students (29.21%) state that they do not face any difficulties.

Question 19: Do you often practice the newly introduced features?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	49	55.05%
No	40	44.94%

Table25: Students' practice of newly introduced features

More than half of the students (55.05%) state that they do practice the newly introduced features and this is expected from them. However, almost half of them (44.94%) state that they do not. This demonstrates that practice is not generalized to all the learning population.

Question 20: If yes, how do you practice them?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Through written exercises	30	61.22%
Through oral practice	19	38.77%
Total	49	100%

Table26: Students' manners of practicing the new feature sin phonetics

Among the students who state that they practice the newly introduced features (55.05% of the total number of students), 61.22% of them say that they practice through written exercises which is in most cases transcription while 38.77% of students said that they practice them orally. This situation shows to what extent the oral practice of Phonetics is neglected.

Question 21: How often do you make pronunciation errors?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Always	11	12.35%
Often	43	48.31%
Sometimes	25	28.08%
Rarely	10	11.23%
Total	89	100%

Table27: Students evaluation if errors frequency in pronunciation

In order to see how students assess themselves, we asked them how often they make pronunciation errors. The highest number of students (48.31%) said that they make pronunciation errors often, 28.08% said that they sometimes make pronunciation errors. However, some (12.35%) said that they always make pronunciation errors while 11.23% said they rarely make pronunciation errors.

If we consider categories that often (48.31%) and/or sometimes (28.08%) make errors, we can say that both represent a majority of learners whose errors in pronunciation are frequent.

Question 22: Do you feel much bothered about them?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	19	21.34%
No	70	78.65%

Table28: Students' awareness about their pronunciation errors

It is noticeable that the majority of students (78.65%) do not feel bothered when making pronunciation errors; this means they do not see them as a problem; hence, they will not make efforts to get rid of them. A minority of 21.34% says that they feel bothered about them, so they are aware of their problems, and this means they are more likely to make more efforts to improve their pronunciation.

Question 23: When you learn a new pronunciation feature, you:

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Make use of it when you speak in the other sessions	32	35.95%
Use it just when you are tested	57	64.04%
Total	89	100%

Table29: Students' use the learnt pronunciation features

The purpose of this question is to see whether students make use of the rules they study in different language situations. However, it is not the case for all of the students because 64.04% state that they do use the rules only when they are tested, which means that they do not practice them at all unless they are asked to. Generally speaking, this is the attitude of most of the students who know the rules in most cases, but do not apply them whenever they use English; they just stick to their basic knowledge about pronunciation. 35.95% of the students use the rules and apply them in all the other language situations: this category of learners makes a better use of what they learn in phonetics.

Question 24: Do you still remember the phonetic rules you studied during the first year?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	36	40.44%
No	53	59.55%
Total	89	100%

Table30: Students' memorization of Phonetics' background knowledge

As students are introduced to first year phonetics and pronunciation, they are supposed to accumulate a minimum background knowledge which can be determined by memorization of basic pronunciation rules. Their answers to the above mentioned question indicate that 59.55% of the students' sample forget about them while only 40.44% remember the rules they studied during the first year.

Question 25: As a foreign language learner, you think that you are supposed to:

A majority of the students (59.55%) thinks that, as foreign language learners, they are supposed to speak correctly and exactly without any errors. However, 40.44% think that the most important thing is to convey and understand English speech.

Although the choices are distinct, they show that students care about gaining accuracy and appropriateness in their speech.

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Convey and understand English speech	36	40.44%
Speak correctly and exactly without any errors	53	59.55%
Total	89	100%

Table31: Students' purposive roles in foreign language learning

Question 26: In your opinion why do you study Oral Expression?

The majority of the students state that through Oral Expression, they can improve their pronunciation, and that the class of Oral Expression is the best way for them to learn how to speak without hesitation and express themselves freely. Learners want to test their English pronunciation and correct it when it comes to pronunciation mistakes.

Question 27: Do you think that Oral Expression helps you to improve your pronunciation?

Yes/No	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	88	98.87%
No	01	1.23%
Total	89	100%

Table32: Students' purposes in Oral Expression and pronunciation

The majority of students (98.87%) thinks that Oral Expression helps them improve their pronunciation while only 1.23% thinks that it does not. So most students know about the importance of Oral Expression in improving their pronunciation, but they do not know how to make better use of its practice (as determined in the previous questions: see question 10, 11 and 22 for awareness, and questions 16, 18, 20, and 23 for difficulties and practices.)

Question 28: If yes, state how?

Most students suggest that they need to make mistakes and get corrected in order to learn the accurate pronunciation; hence, they need to talk and practice in classroom situation. Oral Expression provides the context of gradual improvement.

Question 29: What is your favorite activity during the session of Oral Expression?

The answers:	Number of students	Percentage
Listening	15	16.85%
Speaking	32	35.95%
Role-playing	10	11.23%
Dialogues	17	19.10%
Others	00	00%
No answer	15	16.85%
Total	89	100%

Table33: Students' favorite activities during the Oral Expression sessions

Students' answers are varied; each student has his own favorite activity during the class of Oral Expression. 35.95% of the students prefer speaking, which is a good activity for practicing English. This category of students is more likely to be motivated and productive, since they can talk in different topics and in different situations. 19.10% of the students prefer dialogues, which can give them a chance to talk and practice according to the limited topic; these students prefer a company when it comes to practice as to keep them motivated. 16.85% of the students prefer listening, which can help students recognize the differences in sounds and help to teach pronunciation when the student is focusing on the speech to be listened to. However, students who prefer listening tend to be less productive, and hence their chances to speak and practice are reduced or limited. 11.23% of the students prefer role playing which is not very different from dialogues, but it gives the student more space and freedom; role playing is a good way to practice and it makes students productive. 16.85% of the students' sample do not seem to have any preferences

Question 30: When you speak in the classroom, you give priority to:

Answers	Number of students	Percentage
Expressing yourself using correct English	36	40.44%
Conveying interesting and original ideas	29	32.58%
Making yourself understood by other	10	11.23%
No answer	14	15.73%
Total	89	100%

Table34: *Students purposes and motives in Oral Expression class*

While speaking English, students have different points of view about what they should focus on while speaking in the classroom. Some students (40.44%) think that they should speak correct English while expressing themselves. Others (32.58%) state that they give priority to conveying interesting and original ideas; which means that they care less about form as opposed to meaning. Few students (11.23%) bother about neither the form nor the meaning as long as the message is conveyed to others while 15.73% did not answer. We can observe that the two big categories of learners who represent a majority do care about expressing themselves in acceptable English.

Question 31: Do you feel satisfied about the way you were taught Oral Expression?

Yes/No	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	36	40.44%
No	53	59.55%
Total	89	100%

Table35: Students' satisfaction of the Oral Expression class

It is always important to know about the satisfaction of students as it plays a major role when it comes to motivation. When students are satisfied, they usually remain motivated and productive; and if they are dissatisfied, they will be less productive and less motivated.

Results show that 40.44% of the students are satisfied while 59.55% are dissatisfied.

III.3.4. Summary of findings from students' questionnaire

The data analysis from the answers to the questionnaires provides us with a number of insights:

-Students who participated show an interest in learning Phonetics and a positive attitude towards learning English. Through their answers, we can see the way they consider learning pronunciation and speaking English.

-Students have generally problems during the Phonetics' class since they are not able to practice the pronunciation rules.

-The actual problem is that students do not make use of the rules they learn during the Phonetics' sessions.

-Students do not care much about making pronunciation errors and when it comes to practice, they either have inappropriate practice (written practice through transcription in most cases), or insufficient oral practice.

-Because of the lack of practice, students develop indifferent attitudes towards errors. They care less about them and in the long run they maintain them in what is known fossilization.

-Students favor fluency over accuracy.

-Students show dissatisfaction with the way they are taught Oral Expression and they state that they prefer activities where they interact and speak during the Oral Expression class.

We consider that learners are willing to practice and improve their pronunciation, they have enough motivation (question 4), but they need help. Students need a more guided program of learning and practicing pronunciation; they need more practice rather than knowledge since all of them state that they are tired of transcription and written exercises, (question 20), which is not always effective for improving pronunciation.

III.4. Questionnaire for Oral Expression teachers

The second questionnaire was designed for teachers of Oral Expression teaching Second year students at the department of English in the academic year 2007/2008. The data collected is intended to provide information about the teachers' opinions as far as teaching Oral Expression is concerned, methods and approaches, and the program they follow.

The analysis of the data would be combined with the data found from the previous questionnaire and the next one, in order to provide some suggestions for the teaching of both Oral Expression and Phonetics.

III.4. 1. Teachers' information

Six teachers at the department of English who teach Oral Expression contributed in this study by answering the questionnaire.

Question 1: For how long have you been teaching Oral Expression for second year students?

Three teachers answered that they have been teaching Oral Expression to second year students for only one year; one said for two years, and two said for three years.

Question 2: What are your qualification(s)?

Answers	Licence	Magistère	PhD
Number	5	1	-

Table36: Oral Expression teachers' qualifications

Among the six teachers, five of them have a BA degree, and only one has a Magistère degree.

Question 3: Have you received any training or carried out a research on teaching Oral Expression?

Here, four teachers stated they have neither received training nor carried out a research. Two teachers, however, stated that they carried out researches about teaching Oral Expression, which means that they are more likely to have experience about teaching Oral Expression.

Question 4: If you have carried out a research, what was your topic?

One teacher stated that his/her research was entitled "Risk taking and Oral Performance." The other one's was: "Taboo topics never discussed before."

III.4. 2. Teachers' attitudes towards Oral Expression

Question 5: What are the objectives of the Oral Expression course at this level (2nd year)?

Some teachers state that the objectives of Oral Expression at the second year level are: to be able to express one's opinions and thoughts about a variety of real life topics; to be able to speak spontaneously, i.e. to improvise.

-Other teachers agreed that the main objectives are to be able to speak fluently and without hesitation, and to be able to argue.

- The main purposes were all around the aspect of speaking itself rather than pronunciation and error free utterances.

Question 6: Do you follow any specific program in teaching oral expression (2nd year)?

Four teachers state that they do not follow any specific program while teaching Oral Expression to second year students. Two teachers state that they do follow specific program, however.

Question 7: If yes, what are the main points of this program?

Among the two teachers who previously answered that they follow a program while teaching Oral Expression, One stated that the program is about free discussions and role plays, which does not really sound as a program itself. The other teacher stated that the followed program is divided into two sections; the first section is about different topics of discussion: home and relationships, jobs, travel and tourism, advertising, and internet. The second section is students' presentations, where students have the choice to choose topics, develop them, and then present them in class.

Question 8: Does the program emphasize any pronunciation aspects?

One teacher answered yes, and all the rest of teachers answered no, including the teacher who has a specific program to follow.

Question 9: If yes, what are they?

The teacher, who stated that the program he follows emphasizes pronunciation aspects, did not state them.

Question 10: Does it require the use of any specific pedagogical materials?

All the teachers stated that the Oral Expression course requires the use of some pedagogical materials. The materials will be stated in the following question.

Question 11: If yes, state them.

The pedagogical materials stated are television, headsets, flashcards, tape recorders, and computers.

Question 12: Are they available?

All the teachers stated that the previously mentioned pedagogical materials are not available. This is the same thing we have noticed in the department; a noticeable lack of material such as television tape recorders, computers, which are very necessary for the teaching of speaking, listening, and pronunciation. (the basic components of Oral Expression classes.)

Question 13: How many hours per week are allocated to the course of oral expression?

The number of hours allocated to the class of Oral Expression is three hours per week. It is a double amount of time, if compared to the amount of time allocated to the class of Phonetics which is only one hour and a half.

Question 14: How do you find the allocated time in comparison to the objectives?

Answers/ Teachers	Enough	Just sufficient	Insufficient
Teacher1	X		
Teacher2		X	
Teacher3	X		
Teacher4	X		
Teacher5	X		
Teacher6	X		

Table37: Time-objectives correlation according to Oral Expression teachers

According to the results displayed in table 37 above, almost all teachers (five of them) answered that the time allocated to the class of Oral Expression is enough, which means that they are supposed to fulfill all the objectives without any troubles. One teacher states that the time allocated is just sufficient, which means he needs to manage it wisely otherwise it would not be sufficient.

Question 15: How many students do you have per group?

Teachers' answers are varied, which means there is no standard number of students in each group of learners. However, the number of students per group, as indicated by the teachers, varies between 34 and 42. One may ask how teachers can cope with such big

groups, manage oral expression tasks and provide enough opportunities to every learner to speak.

Question 16: Do you think that the number of students is appropriate to achieve the objectives?

One teacher answers that the number of students is appropriate to achieve the objectives. Five teachers, however, state that the number is not appropriate to achieve the main objectives. It is always recommended to have smaller groups when it comes to practicing languages; small groups show better results than large groups. Moreover, it is easier to practice the language in the laboratory which is designed for a small number of students. Once the groups are overcrowded, it becomes difficult for teacher to manage them and for students to practice.

III.4. 3. Teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation

Question 17: Do you think that there should be some room for teaching pronunciation in the Oral Expression session?

All teachers agree that there should be a room for pronunciation teaching during the Oral Expression session. Teaching how to pronounce is usually attributed to the teachers of Phonetics, however, it would be even better if the teachers of Oral Expression share the responsibility.

Question 18: Do you correct pronunciation errors during the Oral Expression session?

All teachers state that they do correct pronunciation errors during the Oral Expression class.

Question 19: If yes, how often do you correct the learners' pronunciation errors?

Answers/ Teachers	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
Teacher1			X
Teacher2		X	
Teacher3			X
Teacher4		X	
Teacher5	X		
Teacher6			X

Table38: *teachers' frequency of correcting pronunciation errors*

According to the results displayed in the table above, one teacher answers that s/he always corrects learners' pronunciation errors; this means that s/he does not tolerate pronunciation errors, so his/her students are supposed to be more aware about their utterances in order to speak correctly. Two teachers state that they sometimes correct pronunciation errors, which means that they care about speaking correctly but they do not take it as a priority. They probably favor other aspects, as one teacher stated previously that one of the objectives of Oral Expression in his class was to speak without hesitation, to be able to argue, etc. Three teachers state that they rarely correct pronunciation errors. Here, it is a matter of priority, as well. It means that teachers do not focus on pronunciation errors, and that is why they rarely correct them. Actually a lot of teachers of Oral Expression focus more on speaking as a communicative task rather than a pronunciation task. They tend to

require from students to speak freely and talk about different topics rather than focus on pronunciation errors and the quality of speech production.

Question 20: What are the most encountered pronunciation errors at this level?

Six teachers state that the frequently encountered error is stress; students tend to completely ignore stress placement and never pay attention to it. In most cases, students never put stress while speaking although there is a large portion of the program of Phonetics which is devoted to stress aspects. So, even if all students learn theoretically about stress, they almost never apply it.

Teachers also state that students tend to have a lot of problems with the pronunciation of some sounds, like /ʒ/ and /dʒ/, /ʃ / and /tʃ /, and this is mainly because they rely heavily on the French pronunciation; they tend to pronounce /tʃ /; / as /ʃ /, for example.

Teachers also stated that they face a huge problem with students when it comes to accent and intonation. Students tend to maintain either their local accent or in the best cases the French accent, taking into account that French is the second language almost all of them have studied before English.

Question 21: According to you, the errors made by the learners may be the result of:

- Lack of theoretical knowledge (students do not know about the rules).
- A lack of practice (they know the rules, but do not practice them).
- The influence of other languages.

Answers/ Teachers	Lack of theoretical knowledge (students do not know about the rules)	A lack of practice (they know the rules, but do not practice them)	The influence of other languages.
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Teacher1		X	
Teacher2	X		
Teacher3		X	
Teacher4		X	
Teacher5		X	
Teacher6			X

Table 39: Teachers' reasons for students' sources of pronunciation errors

One teacher answers that students do not know about rules, so due to the lack of knowledge they make such pronunciation errors. Another teacher thinks that most of the pronunciation errors are made due to the influence of other languages. Four teachers state that students know about the rules; however, they do not practice them and that is the reason why they make pronunciation errors.

Question 22: Do you collaborate with the teachers of phonetics?

All the teachers answered that they did not collaborate at all with teachers of Oral Expression.

Question 23: If yes, what is the nature if this collaboration?

No collaboration.

III.4. 4. Summary of findings from oral expression teachers' questionnaire

After analyzing the answers of teachers of Oral Expression, we found out that the class of Oral Expression at this level (2nd year) is mostly dedicated to the skill of speaking rather than pronunciation.

The objectives, as stated by the teachers, revealed that fluency is the first priority. Although teachers do correct some pronunciation errors from time to another, students are encouraged to talk without hesitation, have various ideas and express themselves freely. Hence, students focus more on fluency rather than accuracy. Consequently, there is no room for teaching pronunciation.

Teachers of Oral Expression did not complain about the time issue since they all said that three hours were either enough or at least sufficient to fulfill the objectives of the class. They did, however, complain about the lack of materials and over-crowded groups which hinder the practice of Oral Expression. They attributed the problems of pronunciation facing students to the lack of practice and the absence of teaching pronunciation during the class, though they all agreed that there should be some room for teaching pronunciation.

III.5. Phonetics Teachers' Questionnaire

The third questionnaire was designed for teachers of Phonetics teaching Second year students at the department of English in 2007/2008 academic year. The data collected was intended to provide information about the teachers' opinions about teaching Phonetics, methods and approaches, the difficulties they encounter while teaching, the time allocated, and how they manage the program. The analysis of the data would help us to suggest useful information for both teachers and learners; for students to learn and practice pronunciation, and for teachers to teach phonetics aiming at a better English pronunciation.

III.5. 1. Teachers' information

Only five teachers at the department of English answered the questionnaire. Other teachers did not want to answer the questionnaire and hence the sample population is limited to five.

Question 1: For how long have you been teaching Phonetics for second year students?

Three teachers have been teaching Phonetics for 4 years, one for 3 years, and one for 2 years. The reason we asked this question is to see how much experience teachers have in teaching Phonetics in particular and English in general.

Question 2: What are your qualifications?

Answers	BA	Magistère	PhD
Number	3	2	-

Table40: Phonetics teachers' qualifications

Three teachers hold a BA degree; they are employed as part-time teachers. Two teachers are Magistère holders; which means that they are permanent teachers and have finished a post-graduate research in English.

Question 3: Have you received any training in teaching Phonetics/ pronunciation?

Generally speaking, teachers need some kind of training to teach before they start their careers; it can be workshop or intensive learning days. That would give them at least an idea about teaching the subject matter. None of the five teachers has received any training in teaching Phonetics or pronunciation. This means that they need some information about teaching the subject.

Question 4: If yes, state it.

As already mentioned, no one has received any training in teaching Phonetics or pronunciation.

III.5. 2. Teachers' attitudes towards pronunciation

Question 5: Do you think that your students are motivated to learn pronunciation during the class of Phonetics?

All the teachers state that their students are motivated to learn pronunciation during the Phonetics' class, which means that they are interested in pronunciation. It would be easier for teachers to deal with motivated rather than unmotivated students.

Question 6: Do you tolerate pronunciation errors?

All the five teachers answered that they do not tolerate pronunciation errors in their classes. Students who are constantly corrected by the teacher tend to pay more attention to their errors while they speak; hence, they are less likely to repeat the same errors. However, when students' errors are not corrected, students will tend to continue making the same errors.

Question 7: If no, do you correct them immediately?

Here teachers do not have the same response, some (3 teachers) say that they correct the pronunciation errors immediately, which means that each time a student makes a pronunciation error, the teacher stops him at the error and corrects it at that time, probably by making the student repeat the word correctly. Two teachers, however, say they prefer to correct the errors later on, by drawing students' attention to the errors they made earlier, and give them feedback.

Question 8: Do you look for reasons of pronunciation errors?

All teachers answered yes, which means that they tend to look for the reasons which lead students to make the pronunciation errors.

Question 9: If yes, do you attribute the reason to:

- 1- Lack of practice
- 2- Course density
- 3- The interference of other languages

Answers/ Teachers	Lack of practice	Course density	Interference of other languages
Teacher1	1	2	3
Teacher2	1	3	2
Teacher3	1	3	2
Teacher4	2	3	2
Teacher5	1	3	2

Table41: Answers to the question about the Reasons for pronunciation errors

Teachers ordered the reasons of the pronunciation errors as displayed in table 41 as follows:

-Lack of practice:

Four teachers consider the lack of practice as the primary reason for pronunciation errors while one teacher thinks that it is the second reason for the errors. When students do not practice, they forget about the rules and they tend to make errors

-Course density:

Four teachers think that course density is the third reason for pronunciation errors. The time allocated to the phonetics class is not sufficient enough (as it is revealed in question 18) for the students to focus on the so many features and rules of pronunciation. Consequently, there would not be enough time for practice, and thus more chances to make pronunciation errors. One teacher considers course density as the third cause for students' pronunciation errors, though.

-The interference of other languages:

Four teachers consider language interference as the second reason for pronunciation errors, which may be a valid explanation of the source of errors in some cases. When students use negative transfer, they tend consciously or unconsciously to produce speech in a foreign language according to some mother tongue properties which have a negative effect on their foreign language production.

Question 10: What are the main objectives of the course of Phonetics at this level (2nd year)?

Teachers state that, at this level, students are expected to be aware of the sounds through studying the pronunciation of single sounds, connected words and sentences with the application of other pronunciation features such as stress and intonation. Students are expected to be aware of the pronunciation of the whole speech rather than single words.

Question 11: Do you follow any specific program in teaching Phonetics?

All the teachers answered that they follow a specific program given by the Department of English at the University of Constantine.

Question 12: If yes, what are the most important points?

Teachers answered that the most important aspects of the Phonetics program at the second year level are:

-Words in connected speech: linking, elision, assimilation and juncture.

-Stress and intonation: covering word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, and basic intonation patterns.

Question 13: Does this program require the use of some pedagogic material?

All the teachers answered that the program requires the use of certain pedagogical material. Because in connected speech, stress and intonation students need to listen to authentic material so that they can grasp the way words and sentences are pronounced. Since those aspects are complicated, it is recommended to listen to tapes illustrating the stated phenomena.

Question 14: If yes, state which kinds of material do you need to use in order to enhance learners' level of pronunciation?

Teachers did not provide a list of materials.

Question 15: Do you use this material during the session of Phonetics?

All teachers state that they do not use the teaching material they need in the phonetics classes. In the following question we will see the reasons.

Question 16: If no, state why?

The teachers declare that there is no specific material provided by the department to accompany the teaching program they are provided with. Some teachers state that, besides the unavailability of specific teaching material, there would not really be enough time to listen to materials because the time allocated to the class is already insufficient.

Question 17: How many hours per week are allocated to the course of phonetics at this level (2nd year)?

The time allocated the class of Phonetics at this level is one hour and a half per week.

Question 18: Do you find that the allocated time sufficient to cover most of the aspects and achieve the main objectives?

All the teachers state that the time allocated is not sufficient. Actually, it is reasonable to consider that one hour and a half per week is insufficient to cover all the aspects of the program. For this reason, we do not doubt that the teachers will need to let down some aspects of the course, and in the question that follows, we will see what aspects the teachers would sacrifice.

Question 19: If no, what do you have to dispense with? (order the answers in terms of priority (1) and (2).

- The use of material.
- Learners' practice in the classroom.

Teachers' answers as displayed in table 42 below.

In order to cover most of the aspects of the program, four teachers say that they would dispense with students' practice in the classroom at the first place, then the use of material in the second place. This means that in order to cover a big portion of the program, teachers would favor just explanation over student practice and the use of listening material.

One teacher answered that s/he would let down the use of material then students' practice.

Answers/ Teachers	The use of material	Learners' practice in the classroom
----------------------	------------------------	--

Teacher1	1	2
Teacher2	2	1
Teacher3	2	1
Teacher4	2	1
Teacher5	2	1

Table 42: Phonetics aspects that teachers dispense with

Question 20: Do you think that it would have been better to increase the allocated time to Phonetics?

All the teachers consider that increasing the time allocated to the Phonetics' class is of primary necessity to cover all the aspects of the Phonetics course.

Question 21: Have you ever added extra sessions for practice purposes as a remedy to some pronunciation errors?

Since all the teachers state that time allocated to the Phonetics' session is not sufficient, we expected that some teachers might think to add some extra sessions which would help to cover everything and enable students to practice. However, none of the teachers state that s/he ever added some extra sessions.

Question 22: If yes, have you achieved good results?

Since teachers never added any extra sessions, thus there is no result to be expected.

Question 23: Explain

No explanation is provided either.

Question 24: How many students do you have per group?

The number of students is between 38 and 43; we consider this as an over-load of students' population per group which makes it impossible to teach such a module. Phonetics requires practice, and the more students are numerous, the less chances they will have to practice.

Question 25: Do you follow any specific method in teaching pronunciation?

It is expected from teachers to have some method to follow while teaching phonetics. It was surprising to know that all the teachers answered no.

Question 26: If yes, state it.

There is no teaching method to be followed as it is stated above.

Question 27: In teaching, which techniques do you prefer best?

According to results shown in table 39 below, two teachers say that they prefer to explain orally and to write on the board. Hence, students can either listen or take some notes. Writing the transcription on the board is very important for pronunciation.

Three teachers say that they prefer oral explanation with repetition. These teachers would rather repeat rather than write on the board. By repetition students can get an immediate model to listen to (their teachers) and repeat afterwards in order to improve their pronunciation.

None of the teachers state that s/he explains and makes the students practice. This is expected since they already mentioned that the time allocated to the Phonetics class is insufficient, and if they would let down some aspects that would be students' oral practice (Question 19).

Answers/ Teachers	Just Oral explanation	Oral explanation and writing on the board	Learners' Practice in class
Teacher1		X	
Teacher2		X	
Teacher3	X		
Teacher4	X		
Teacher5	X		

Table43: Teachers' preference of phonetics teaching techniques

Question 28: Do you think that a better pronunciation depends on intensive practice?

All teachers consider that a better pronunciation depends on intensive practice. Pronunciation is an important language aspect, and students need a lot of practice to improve their speech production's accuracy.

Question 29: What type of exercises do you focus on in the class of phonetics?

All teachers state that they focus on written exercises while in the classroom; and no one of them refer to oral exercises. We already noticed during the phonetics' classes that there is no oral practice. The teacher usually gives, in most of the cases, transcription and stress placement exercises. Students do them at home or sometimes in class when they are short exercises, they correct them on the board by writing the transcription, or by placing the stress on its position.

Question 30: Whatever your choice is, state the reasons.

Teachers answering written exercises (transcription):

Teachers argued that in teaching Phonetics, the time allocated is very short, and they usually cannot do both written and oral exercises. Some add that usually the nature of Phonetics is very theoretical and it is the Oral Expression class that is supposed to provide space for practice, and help students improve their pronunciation.

Question 31: Have you met any difficulties in teaching pronunciation? And

Question 32: If yes, state them.

All the teachers state that they meet difficulties in teaching pronunciation. They consider that students come with no background about Phonetics and its different aspects. Teachers take much time in introducing the basics since the students have no idea about them. This is explained that as the secondary school students do not usually learn a lot about Phonetics; in most cases they learn few things.

Teachers stated that it is hard to keep students motivated. They are always faced with the problem of time, as they find it insufficient to cover all the pronunciation aspects. As far as the class is concerned, one teacher states that he finds it always difficult to manage the class since it is overcrowded and it is usually hard for him to control students' attention.

Question 33: How often do you test students' pronunciation?

Three teachers state that they test students' pronunciation sometimes. One teacher says that he often tests his students, and one says that he always does.

Answers/ Teachers	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Teacher1		X			

Teacher2	X				
Teacher3			X		
Teacher4			X		
Teacher5			X		

Table44: Frequency of test administration by phonetics teachers

Question 34: In exams, what is the type of your testing?

All the teachers state that they test their students through written exercises which stand as a general testing method for all teachers during the exams. We have examined several examples of second year exam questions of Phonetics, and observed that they contain transcription, stress placement, and some theoretical questions.

Question 35: Which method of testing has enabled you to get more information about the learners' level?

Since all the teachers answered that they used only the written exercises when testing, they all answered that the test type that gave them more information about the students' level is through written exercises.

Question 36: Do you collaborate with teachers of Oral Expression?

The reason behind asking this question is that we already know that the time provided to Oral Expression class is the double of the one provided to the Phonetics classes. Thus we expected some kind of collaboration with teachers of both subjects' in terms of designing tasks and more especially in the class of Oral Expression where it is possible to practice the features of pronunciation after they have been introduced in the Phonetics' class. However,

all teachers of Phonetics answered negatively, and hence our assumptions of collaboration between both teachers of Phonetics and Oral Expression turned to be right.

Question37: Did you achieve good results from this collaboration?

Since there was no collaboration, no results can be expected.

Question 38: Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of pronunciation teaching at the department of English in Constantine?

All the teachers have some suggestions for the improvement of the pronunciation teaching class and they will be stated in the next question.

Question 39: If yes, please state them

Teachers' suggestions are as follows:

-The number of students per group should be reduced into smaller groups. For example, making two sub- groups when it comes to Phonetics' class; if there is a group of 40 students, it should be divided into two sub-groups of 20 students each taught separately. By making such a procedure, at least teachers would have more space to focus on students separately and enabling them to practice.

- Other teachers suggested that the time allocated should be extended, three hours instead of one hour and a half. They think it would provide more space to practice, and it would be a good idea to divide the session then into two parts. One part is for theory; by explaining the pronunciation features through transcription, and another part for practice where the students will be exposed to authentic material, doing listening exercises, and oral practice.

III.5. 3.Summary of findings from phonetics teachers' questionnaire:

After analyzing the answers of teachers of Phonetics, we found out that the class is purely theoretical. And in most cases, it lacks oral practice due to insufficient time, crowded groups, and lack of authentic materials.

We found out that at this level (2nd year), Phonetics gets a bit complicated as it deals with the features of speech as a whole, thus it requires even more attention, and practice.

Teachers rely heavily on theoretical explanation and even when it comes to exams they always test students theoretically through transcription in most cases. When it comes to teaching, most teachers find it hard to keep students motivated; especially because many of them did not receive any training or did any research about teaching pronunciation or Phonetics.

III.6. Discussion of results and findings:

Considering the results we got from analyzing the three questionnaires, we confirm our hypothesis, which states that the main problem of students' mispronunciation is the lack of practice which is demonstrated by students' answers, who state clearly that they do not practice the pronunciation rules which they study. Students show an interest and motivation to learn pronunciation, they also reveal that they would like to improve their pronunciation, but they are not given chances to help them do so.

In addition to students, teachers also confirmed that there is no planned and guided practice of pronunciation aspects in a meaningful oral way. On one hand, Phonetics teachers argued that Phonetics class is designed in a purely theoretical way, another hypothesis which is confirmed, and they attributed that to the impossibility to practice orally because of the insufficient time allocated to phonetics class. Teachers of Oral Expression, on the other hand, consider that the class of Oral Expression is a space for speaking tasks; speaking is prioritized over pronunciation. Thus the activities are designed

to promote fluency, confidence, speaking without hesitation rather than pronunciation activities.

Examining all the shortages, we think that they could be covered to an extent if teachers collaborate and work together to achieve both objectives. Pronunciation is a very important aspect for a successful communication, and hence, good pronunciation cannot be achieved unless practiced in a meaningful and communicative context.

We thought that it would be a useful idea to have both teachers of Phonetics and Oral Expression collaborating. Collaboration would be achieved by discussing both classes' objectives and combining the goals through designing Oral Expression activities according to what has been taught in the Phonetics' class. Practice at this point would make great sense to students, and thus they would be kept motivated in both classes.

Conclusion:

After analyzing all the data gathered from the answers provided through the questionnaires by both teachers of Oral Expression and second year students, we have found out that students tend to make pronunciation errors because they pay less attention when they pronounce since no priority is given to pronunciation in both classes. Phonetics class is purely theoretical with a lack of oral practice due to several reasons such as insufficient time, and crowded groups. On the other hand, the Oral Expression class is dedicated to fluency where teachers consider the class as a space to talk freely and fluently, and consequently they do not focus on pronunciation errors. Moreover, oral expression teachers do not have a specific program to follow particular topics/themes, language functions or other social conversational contexts. Thus if both teachers collaborate in terms of objectives and design activities accordingly, practice will be more meaningful on one hand, and they will be guided on their planning of lesson and activities, on the other hand.

Chapter VI: Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

We would like to present in this chapter the main concluding elements of the study in order to suggest some appropriate techniques that can be related to our actual case of study. The suggested activities are based on some experienced teachers, and are meant to enhance students' awareness about pronunciation during the oral expression classes.

VI .1. Review of the theoretical findings

As we have already stated earlier in this research, our main concern is the practice of the phonological rules in a way that makes students aware about what they are being taught and thus practice the pronunciation aspects in a meaningful way rather than in a mechanic way. We have found this to be the case of the Phonetics' class, where there is almost no oral practice, and that was explained, according to the results we got from both questionnaires, by insufficient time and crowded groups.

When we talk about oral practice in a meaningful way, we are talk about giving students an opportunity to practice pronunciation beyond the word level and classroom context; this can be best embodied through adopting a communicative approach to teaching pronunciation. This approach is considered to be the most recent and the most used approach.

We can begin to answer the question of how to teach pronunciation as part of the communicative approach by reviewing the techniques and practice materials that have traditionally been used and are still being used to teach pronunciation.

As opposed to teaching pronunciation in isolation, the communicative approach emphasizes the fact that pronunciation should be taught in second language classes through a variety of activities, where the teacher provides his learners with the necessary tools to enable them to take the primary responsibility to improve their pronunciation. The characteristics of this approach can be best summarized by Scarcella and Oxford (1994:225) as follows:

- the goal is to gain sufficient pronunciation skills so that the quality of pronunciation will not inhibit communication.
- instead of putting the emphasis on sounds teachers concentrate on stress and intonation.

- the emphasis of instruction is on teaching pronunciation communicatively.
- the teacher provides students with phonetic descriptions only when they are helpful to students in tutorials.
- the student's motivation is seen as central to successful language instruction. The student plays a primary role in improving pronunciation. Self-monitoring skills and awareness strategies are taught.

Thus, it is very important to help students become increasingly independent. We think that students, in our case of study, need independence and awareness because many of them are unaware about the rules they study and thus the mistakes they make. In the followings we will suggest some techniques and activities to enhance students' independence and raise their awareness of pronunciation.

VI .2.Pedagogical Implications

We thought to suggest some activities to be used in both Phonetics' and Oral expression classes, but since our main purpose is to exploit Oral Expression time, these activities could be of a good benefit for students during the Oral expression class. It is noticeable that most of the following exercises are of a pair/ group work categories because we believe as does Brazil (1994:03) that pair work is the best way for creating opportunities of the necessary practice; moreover, in our current case study, where there are overcrowded groups, pair and group work can be very useful.

VI .2.1. Activities for practicing pronunciation

When considering pronunciation practice, it is useful to think about a few key principles recommended by Geoffrey Broughton, Verchese (1989:69) which are summarized them as follows:

- The sounds to be heard and spoken should be clearly highlighted in short utterances.
- Students should be given the opportunity to hear the same things said by more than one voice as the model.
- The English sounds can be demonstrated with other English sounds or else in contrast with sounds from the native language.
- The target sound contrast should be shown to function meaningfully; students should realize that it makes an important difference to their intelligibility. The followings are activities suggested by some authors for teaching pronunciation:

Sample 01

The teacher writes on the board or provides the students with a list of the words stated in the following table 45, in order to practice the following sounds in pairs: /ɪ /, /i:/, /e/, /æ/.

1. Students are then asked pronounce each line separately, in order to mark the minor differences between the vowel and consonant sounds.
2. They need to repeat each line three times, with increasing the speed of pronunciation each time.
3. Every student needs to work with a partner who will listen to him, and then they exchange roles.
4. Students are asked to create sentences using the same words, the longer the sentences are the better they will be.
5. Students are asked to think about similar words, and create their own minimal pairs of the target sounds, and then use them in sentences. The same technique can be used with consonants and diphthongs

Bit	Beat	Bet	Bat
Zip	Zeal	Zeppelin	Zap
Tip	Teeth	Tell	Tap
Did	Deed	Dead	Dad
Pill	Peel	Pet	Pat
kit	Keep	Kept	Cat
Sit	Seal	Set	Sat
Hit	Heat	Help	Hat
Chip	Sheep	Chess	Chat

Table 45: Pronunciation pairs

Sample 02

Practicing minimal pairs can be used in the form of answer and question in pairs. Gilbert (2001) employs this technique throughout his book *Clear Speech from The Start*, an example can be as follows:

Students work in pairs; one student asks his partner how to spell a word, or what does a word mean like:

1. a. How do you spell “made”? M A D E

b. How do you spell “mail”? M A I L

2. a. How do you spell “road”? R O A D

b. How do you spell “roll”? R O L L

3. a. How do you spell “wade”? W A D E

b. How do you spell “whale”? W H A L E

Another example to practice minimal pairs, is to make students listen to a dialogue or a text, then ask them to choose which word is the one they hear, an example is suggested by Baker(2004: 68):

-Students are asked to listen to the dialogue then answer the following exercise:

-Tick the words you hear in the sentences:

1- a) fern, b) phone

2- a) or , b) Oh

3-a) ball, b) bowl

4- a) burn, b) bone

5-a) walk, b) work, c) woke

Sample 03

The following is a rhythm and Intonation activity suggested by Bennett (2007:14).

Material: a short dialogue is written in a poetic meter, using vocabulary and syntax that is familiar to the students.

Procedure: the teacher models the poem for the class, then students repeat trying to keep the same rhythm and the same intonation as the teacher’s model.

Example: (beats are indicated by underlines, this is where the teacher taps. Syllables and words between the beats are unstressed.)

A: I'm going to the bank, what about you?

B: I'm going to the store, I need new shoes.

A: Then get your money and come along too!

B: That's a great idea for this beautiful day.

A: Let's stop for lunch at that small café.

For more fun, the teacher makes 'A' team's students shout their lines, and 'B' team's students whisper them; then they switch.

Sample 04

Students are asked to listen to Sting's song 'An English man in New York' for example; this song can be used in an Oral Expression class, it makes a good topic of discussion about manners, cultures and taboos, at the same time students need to focus first on some pronunciation aspects before given the chance to talk about the topic.

Activities can be designed from this song as the following example:

Activity 1:

The teacher replaces some of the rhythms in the song with gaps and then students listen and fill in the gaps; this will make students more attentive and help them develop their listening skill; it is already fun to listen to music, and because they will be looking for specific words, they will be more attentive.

An example of this will be as follow:

Fill in the gaps with the missing words, which can be words containing sounds under focus, the teacher of oral expression should be informed by his colleague- the teacher of Phonetics- about the sounds being taught; for example diphthongs.

I don't drink coffee _____ my dear
I like my toast done on the side
and you can hear it in _____

I'm an Englishman in New York

See me walking down Fifth Avenue
A walking cane _____

I take it everywhere I walk
I'm an Englishman in New York

I'm an _____, I'm a legal _____
I'm an Englishman in New York
I'm an _____, I'm a legal _____
I'm an Englishman in New York

If "manners maketh man" as someone said
Then he's the hero of the day
It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile
Be yourself _____

Modesty, propriety can lead to notoriety
You could end up as the only one
Gentleness, sobriety are rare in this society
At night a candle's brighter than the sun

Takes more than combat gear to make a man
Takes more than license for a gun
Confront your enemies, _____

A gentleman will walk but _____

If "manners maketh man" as someone said
then he's the hero of the day
It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile
Be yourself _____

Activity 2: After listening to the song a couple of times students are asked to fill the table with words that contain the corresponding sounds on the table:

ɔ :	eɪ	ʌ
Talk	Say	Run
Walk	Day	Sun

Activity 3:

Students are asked to highlight important words in the song, and then asked to sing the song with the important words, and replacing the rest with mmm, this will enable them to focus on stress, and the correct pronunciation; it will train them to focus and pay more attention to the sounds.

Sample 05: Using tongue twisters:

Tongue twisters can be effective in improving consonant and vowel sounds. A good activity can be as follows:

-The teacher writes in a piece of paper the tongue twister and gives it to a couple of students before class; or at the end of the class, so that they will have the opportunity to practice it at home.

-Once in the classroom, students are asked to read the tongue twister loudly. If students make mistakes, it is not necessarily that the teacher interrupts them at this point; he could rather take notes, basically about the odd pronunciations.

-The teacher can later on provide the correct reading; line by line, while the students repeat after him, and then they are given a chance to try once again, it is usually fun even if they mess up with the words, it is still encouraging.

Another way of using tongue twisters is that the teacher gives his students a tongue twister, and once students practice it, they are asked to create their own tongue twister, in a collective way; for example, every student takes the first word of his own tongue twister from the name of his next sitting colleague and makes a whole tongue twister based on that name. By this, the teacher gives students a chance to play with sounds, be creative, and this remains always fun.

Betty Botter's Better Batter

Betty Botter had some butter,

"But," she said, "this butter's bitter.

If I bake this bitter butter,

It would make my batter bitter.

But a bit of better butter,

That would make my batter better."

So she bought a bit of butter –

Better than her bitter butter –

And she baked it in her batter;

And the batter was not bitter.

So 'twas better Betty Botter

bought a bit of better butter.

Sample 06: Dialogue to teach the sound /i:/

Dialogues and role plays can be very useful in practicing sounds, stress, and intonation.

Baker and Goldstein (2008:13-14), suggest the following activity to teach the sound /i:/

Step 1: Students are asked to listen to the dialogue, and circle the correct answer:

1. Steve doesn't eat (cheese, beans, meat)

2. They order (two cheese pizzas, and one meat pizza/ tow meat pizzas and one cheese pizza)

3. Three people order (Greek salad/coffee)

Step 2: Students are given the written form of the dialogue and asked to check their answers for step one.

The dialogue:

Deena: What are you getting to eat, Lee?

Lee: The meat pizza and the Greek salad, and a cup of coffee.

Deena: Me, too. Are you getting the meat pizza, too, Steve?

Steve: No, the cheese pizza. I don't eat meat.

Lee: Really?

Waitress: Good evening, are you ready to order?

Deena: Let's see...We'd like two meat pizzas and one cheese pizza.

Waitress: Bean soup or Greek salad to start?

All three: Greek salad.

Waitress: And would you like coffee or tea?

Deena: Three coffees, please.

Steve: Make that tow coffees, tea for me please.

Waitress: (*repeating the order*) Three Greek salads...two meat pizzas...one cheese pizza...two coffees...one tea

Sample 07: A game to teach stress:

The following activity is suggested by Mark Hancock in his book 'Pronunciation Games' to determine stress pattern in simple nouns, it is used in pairs, and it requires approximately 25 minutes.

I. Rules

1. The aim of the game is to win more cards than the other partner.
2. Cards are divided equally between the two partners, and cards should be kept face down in a pile.
3. Students take turns to turn the cards face on the table, making sure that the player cannot see the cards before the others.
4. If one student notices that the stress pattern of the word in a card is the same as the card before, he can win all the cards in the pile. To do this, he has to put his hand on the pile quickly and say Snap!
5. After one has won the pile, he puts the cards aside and begins again taking turns to put the cards on the table. The student shuffles and deals with the cards on the table again when he no longer has any cards in his hands.
6. The player with most cards when the cards have been paired off is the winner.
7. When the two partners do not agree about stress patterns of words, they can ask the teacher.

II. Preparation

1. The teacher copies and cuts out a set of cards for each pair of students in the class.
2. The teacher writes the following words with their stress patterns on the board:

RIght, QUEstion, misTAKE, SALary, poLLUtion.
3. He asks students to suggest other words with the same stress pattern, and then he writes these words on board under the appropriate stress pattern.

4. He reads out some of the words from the game and he asks students which stress pattern they correspond to.

- Conducting the game

The teacher divides the class into pairs and gives each pair a set of cards. (The game could also be played by students in groups of three if necessary.) Then he explains the rules.

Sample 08

The following is an activity suggested Hancock (1995:35)

Point: Intonation for shared and new information.

Game type: a guessing game for two players.

Approximate time: 30 minutes.

Rules

- 1- The object of the game is to win as many cards as possible.
- 2- Play the game in pairs. Take turns to be speaker and listener.
- 3- The speaker takes a card from the pack and reads the questions.
- 4- The listener should respond by saying yes after each question.
- 5- If the listener can guess the end of the speaker's story after the speaker has made six statements, he or she can say don't tell me ... and gives the end of the story. If it is correct, the listener wins the card. If it is incorrect, the speaker reads the end of the story from the card.

6- If the speaker reads the end of the story, he or she wins the cards. At the end of the story, the listener must make an appropriate exclamation such as how terrible or how wonderful.

Presentation

1- The teacher writes the following dialogue on the board (without the intonation marked to begin with):

A: you know john?

B: yes

A: well, you know the street where he lives?

B: yes

A: well, you know that big house at the end?

B: yes

A: you remember it was for sale?

B: yes

A: and I said I was thinking of buying it?

B: yes

A: well, I have

B: oh, how fantastic!

This dialogue is an exaggerated example of a style of speaking in which speaker A tries to build up suspense before giving some news. It demonstrates that intonation tends to fall-rise on old or shared information and fall on new information. The rise-fall on the final exclamation is also typical of exclamation; it indicates emotions such as A's surprise and disgust.

- 2- The teacher concentrates first on yes. He models saying it with a falling intonation and then with a fall-rise intonation and asks students to mimic him. He indicates that they should use the fall-rise version in the dialogue.
- 3- The teacher focuses on the exclamation oh, how fantastic! And models the rise-fall intonation, then he asks students to mimic him.
- 4- He reads read through the whole dialogue with the class. He takes part 'A' himself. Then, he draws attention to the fall-rise on questions and draws the arrows onto the dialogue.
- 5- He asks various students to read part A and the rest of the class to read part B.
- 6- He introduces as an alternative response for b after A's fifth question. Don't tell me; you've bought it! Then A would respond something like yes, that's right. How did you know? He drills the dialogue again using this version.

Conducting the game

- 1- The teacher divides the class into pairs and gives each pair a pack of cards. He makes one group of three if there is an odd number of a student in the class. He asks these students to take turns reading and responding
- 2- He explains and/or gives out the rules.
- 3- During the game, the teacher moves around the class helping students to resolve any disputes. This will be especially necessary in deciding whether a player's guess is close enough to the right answer.

VI .3.General recommendations

In our case of study, we suggest that, it would be useful if both teachers of Phonetics and Oral Expression collaborate. Collaboration would be by discussing both classes' objectives and combining their goals, through designing Oral Expression activities according to what has been taught in the Phonetics' class. Practice at this point would make great sense to students, and thus they would be kept motivated in both classes.

While the Phonetics' class remains more theoretical, the Oral Expression class will provide space of practice for students in terms of the rules being studied in the Phonetics' class. Thus, teachers can work together, and this will be useful for both classes; on one hand the rules being taught in the phonetics class will find more space to be practiced, and on the other hand the teachers of Oral Expression will have a guided program to follow since they already work randomly and without any program to be followed. So if they consider the rules taught in the Phonetics' class while designing the tasks and the exercises for the Oral Expression class, they will still meet their objectives of the class (fluency, talking in various topics and without hesitation), yet in a more meaningful way, which is about the rules being taught. The pronunciation rules will move from an unconscious status to a more conscious and organized status. Students will be more aware about the rules and more attentive and thus they will pay more attention to them. They will be able to practice them better during the Oral Expression class since the time is sufficient and the session is meant for students to talk and practice. By doing this, there will not be a lot of changes in the Oral Expression itself; it will be more organized and it will make better meaning for practice- not practicing randomly. For example, when a Phonetics' teacher introduces a new feature such as assimilation, the Oral Expression teacher will design tasks and activities that deal with assimilation, and thus students will be more conscious about the

phenomenon since it moves from theoretical to practice level. Practice will make more sense and thus will keep students motivated.

Teachers should focus on students' reception as much as they focus on their production; there is always a tendency among teachers to consider production as the main problem of pronunciation. However, research shows clearly that the problem is more likely to be reception. In a lot of cases, the sound of English is either not well received or received with less attention to be substituted by the closest sound in the mother tongue language. This is one reason to focus more on listening skills and listening activities- what you do not hear, you cannot say. One other reason is that listening helps students to acquire language subconsciously even if teachers do not draw attention to special features; exposure to appropriate listening material enables students to get vital information about pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, pitch and stress. Harmer (1998:98)

When designing exercises, teachers must make sure that each exercise is simple, accessible, fun, and it combines reception and production. They also need to be aware about what elements of English phonetics and phonology are likely to cause problems.

Conclusion

There are various techniques and activities to be employed by teachers during the Oral Expression class in order to give a better chance for students to practice. Teachers need to take into consideration their actual case, and the backgrounds of their students. They need to select activities that fit their class (students' background, classroom size, time constraints) carefully. It is always useful to design a simple and fun activity to keep students motivated.

General Conclusion

Pronunciation practice is a very important element in Oral comprehension and performance of students at the department of English; it is a key to overcome pronunciation difficulties and problems, and to improve students' pronunciation. When students are not given chances and appropriate contexts to practice, they become less aware of their pronunciation, and hence they do not focus on their pronunciation errors. This fact was not recognized until recently because academic research in linguistics didn't pay much attention to Phonetics and how to acquire pronunciation, thus teachers did not have much theory about how to teach it until recently.

Students at the department of English, University of Constantine have two classes where they can deal with pronunciation separately; Phonetics and Oral Expression classes. The former is purely theoretical while the latter is dedicated to practice. Thus, students are supposed to practice the theoretical knowledge they acquire in order to make it useful to their oral performances, but it is not the case. On one hand, the Phonetics class does not provide any opportunities for oral practice due to many constraints as the insufficiency of time and the crowded groups. On the other hand, the Oral Expression class is directed towards the speaking skill with less focus on pronunciation, thus there are little chances to practice the theoretical knowledge acquired in the Phonetics class.

This study is specific and limited to LMD second year students of English at the University of Constantine where students have one hour and a half of Phonetics class, and three hours of Oral Expression class per week. The students' sample belongs to the academic year 2007-2008, and represents two groups of 89 students. The teaching environment is characterized by a lack of the materials needed for practice as language laboratories, insufficiency of time, and the over crowdedness of groups- all this make it difficult for teachers to provide students with more practice chances.

We are hoping that this study will give more ideas for pronunciation teachers including both Phonetics and Oral Expression teachers to collaborate and discuss the courses' objectives in order to design a more appropriate syllabus of Oral Expression course by integrating the pronunciation theoretical knowledge into the Oral Expression class through meaningful practice. Thus, the Oral Expression class can serve as a useful space for practicing pronunciation aspects and speaking.

The value of this study is to investigate the current situation of pronunciation, and how it is practiced in order to improve students' oral performances. It focuses on the practice of

the phonological rules as a key to improve student' oral production, and it suggests that practice should be taken as a priority. This study can be considered as an introduction to the idea of collaboration between Phonetics and oral expression practice.

A further and broader study can suggest a new syllabus for teaching Oral Expression through the idea of collaboration and discussion of objectives. This study may also open debate in future on the phonological problems and their effects on the oral proficiency, as fossilization for example.

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Appendix

Questionnaire for students

This questionnaire is a tool for investigating "the correlation between pronunciation practice and learners' oral performance", which is a Magistère research work. We will be very grateful if you provide us with full answers or tick the appropriate answer among the provided ones. Your answers will be kept anonymous and will only be used for research purpose.

Questions:

1. Age:
2. For how long have you been learning English?years
3. Your choice of English was a-Personal

B-Parental (family)

c-Other

4. Specify the type of baccalaureate you hold:

a- Scientific

b- Literary

c- Technical

Other

5. Do you do something else besides learning English? Yes

No

6. If yes, what is it?

a-Study something else.....

b- Work as.....

Other.....

7. In your opinion, speaking very good English means:

a- Speaking quickly and fluently like a native speaker.

b- Speaking correctly using the rules learnt in phonetics.

8. How good is your oral English? a- Excellent

b. Very good

c- Good

d- Average

e- Weak

9. Learning English is for you:

a- A personal dream- you just love it.

b- A formal requirement- you think it will help you in other fields.

c- A means for getting access to science and technology.

Other.....

10. In your opinion, how important is phonetics in learning and speaking English?

- a- Very important.
- b- Important.
- c- Not so important.

11. Explain

why.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. What do you dislike in phonetics?.....
.....
.....

13. How do you find the lectures of phonetics? a- Interesting
b- Ordinary
c- Boring

14. Justify your answer.

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

15. Do you face any difficulties in phonetics? Yes
No

16. If yes, state them.

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

17. Do you often talk during the lectures of phonetics? Yes
No

18. Do you practice the newly introduced features? Yes

No

19. If yes, how do you practice them? a- Through written exercises
b- Through oral practice

20. How often do you make pronunciation errors? a-Always
b-Often
c-Sometimes
d-Rarely

21. Do you feel much bothered about them? (Errors) Yes
No

22. When you learn a new pronunciation feature, you:
a- Make use of it when you speak in other sessions
b- Use it just when you are tested.

23. Do you still remember the phonetic rules you have studied during the first year? Yes
No

24. As a foreign language learner, you think that you are supposed to:
a- Convey and understand English speech.
b- Speak correctly and exactly without any errors

25. In your opinion, why do you study oral expression?

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

26. Do you think that oral expression helps you improve your pronunciation? Yes
No

27. If yes, state how?

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

28. What is your favorite activity during the lecture of oral expression?

a-Listening

b-Speaking

c-Role-playing

d-Dialogues

Others.....

29. When you speak in the classroom, you give priority to:

a-Expressing yourself using correct English

b-Conveying interesting and original ideas

c-Making yourself understood by others

30. Do you feel satisfied with the way you have been taught oral expression? Yes

No

Thank you so much for your collaboration.

Questionnaire for Oral Expression teachers

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is a tool for investigating "the correlation between pronunciation practice and learners' oral performance", which is a Magistère research work. We will be very grateful if you provide us with full answers or tick the appropriate answer among the provided ones. Your answers will be kept anonymous and will only be used for a research purpose.

Questions:

1. For how long have you been teaching Oral Expression for second year students?

2. What are your qualification(s)?

Licence (BA)

Magistère (MA)

Doctorat (PhD)

3. Have you received any training or carried out a research on teaching Oral Expression?

Yes

No

4. If you have carried out a research, what was your topic?

.....

5. What are the objectives of the oral expression course at this level (2nd year)?.....

.....

.....

6. Do you follow any specific program in teaching oral expression (2nd year)?

Yes

No

7. If yes, what are the main points of this program?

.....

.....

.....

8. Does the program emphasize any pronunciation aspects? Yes

No

9. If yes, what are they?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. Does it require the use of any specific pedagogical materials? Yes

No

11. If yes, state them.

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

12. Are they available? Yes

No

13. How many hours per week are allocated to the course of oral expression?

..... Hours per week.

14. How do you find the allocated time in comparison to the objectives?

a- Enough.

b- Just sufficient.

c- Insufficient.

15. How many students do you have per group?

....Students per group.

16. Do you think that the number of students is appropriate to achieve the objectives?

Yes

No

17. Do you think that there should be some room for teaching pronunciation in the oral expression session? Yes

No

18. Do you correct pronunciation errors during the oral expression session? Yes

No

19. If yes, how often do you correct the learners' pronunciation errors?

a- Always.

b- Sometimes.

c- Rarely.

20. What are the most encountered pronunciation errors at this level?

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

21. According to you, the errors made by the learners may be the result of:

- a- A lack of theoretical knowledge (the students do not know the rules).
- b- A lack of practice (they know the rules, but do not practice them)
- c- The influence of other languages.

22. Do you collaborate with the teachers of phonetics? Yes

No

23. If yes, what is the nature if this collaboration?

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

Thank you so much for your collaboration.

Questionnaire for Phonetics teachers

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is a tool for investigating "the correlation between pronunciation practice and learners' oral performance", which is a Magistère research work. We will be very grateful if you provide us with full answers or tick the appropriate answer among the provided ones. Your answers will be kept anonymous and will only be used for a research purpose.

Questions :

1. For how long have you been teaching phonetics to second year students?

2. What are your qualification(s)?

Licence (BA)

Magistère (MA)

Doctorat (PhD)

3. Did you receive any training about how to teach phonetics/pronunciation? Yes

No

4. If yes, state what kind of training it is.....

5. Do you think that your students are motivated to learn pronunciation during the class of phonetics? Yes

No

6. Do you tolerate pronunciation errors? Yes

No

7. If no, do you correct them immediately? Yes

No

8. Do you look for reasons of pronunciation errors? Yes

No

9. If yes, do you attribute the reasons to: (Give an order of importance from 1 to 3)

a- Lack of learning attention.

b- Course density.

c- The interference of other languages.

10. What are the main objectives of a course of phonetics at this level (2nd year)?

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

11. Do you follow any specific program in teaching phonetics?

Yes

No

12. If yes, what are the most important points?

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

13. Does this program require the use of some pedagogic materials?

Yes

No

14. If yes, state which kinds of material do you need to use in order to enhance learners' level of pronunciation?

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

15. Do you use this material during the class of Phonetics?

Yes

No

16. If no, state why?

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

17. How many hours per week are allocated to the course of phonetics at this level (2nd year)? Hours.

18. Do you find that the allocated time sufficient to cover most of the aspects and achieve the main objectives? Yes

No

19. If no, what do you have to dispense with?

The use of materials

Learners' practice in the classroom

20. Do you think that it would have been better to increase the allocated time to phonetics?

Yes

No

21. Have you ever added extra sessions to practice as a remedy to some pronunciation errors? Yes

No

22. If yes, have you achieved good results? Yes

No

23. Explain.....
.....
.....
.....

24. How many students do you have per group?

...students

25. Do you follow any specific method in teaching pronunciation?

Yes

No

26. If yes, state it

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

27. In teaching, which strategies do you prefer best?

a- Just Oral explanation

b- Oral explanation and writing on the board

c- Learners' practice in the classroom

28. Do you think that a better pronunciation depends on intensive practice?

Yes

Not really

29. What kind of exercises do you focus on in the class of phonetics?

a- Written exercises (transcription)

b- Oral exercises (oral performance)

30. Whatever your choice is, state the reasons.

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

31. Have you met any difficulties in teaching pronunciation? Yes

No

32. If yes, state them.

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

33. How often do you test students' pronunciation?

a- Always

b- Often.

c- Sometimes

d- Rarely

e- Never

34. In exams, what is the nature of your testing?

a- Written

b- Oral

c- Both

35. Which method of testing has enabled you to get more information about the learners' level? . a-Written

b- Oral

36. Do you collaborate with teachers of Oral Expression?

Yes

No

37. Did you achieve good results from this collaboration?

Yes

No

38. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of pronunciation teaching?

Yes

No

39. If yes, please state them.

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

Thank you so much for your collaboration.

Résumé

La présente étude traite de la pratique des règles phonologiques afin d'améliorer la prononciation et la performance orale des étudiants dans le département d'anglais, à l'université de Constantine. Elle aborde la question de prononciation, son enseignement et son statut chez les apprenants et les enseignants de phonétique et expression orale, leurs attitudes et manières dont ils traitent cet aspect linguistique. Cette étude se base principalement sur la pratique de la prononciation et la façon dont elle est traitée dans les deux modules de l'expression orale et de la phonétique.

Dans cette étude, nous émettons comme hypothèse, que les erreurs de prononciation des étudiants sont en raison du manque de pratique de la prononciation durant les cours de la phonétique et de l'expression orale. Pour confirmer cette hypothèse, nous avons étudié le cas des étudiants de la deuxième année universitaire, ainsi que les enseignants de la phonétique et de l'expression orale au département d'anglais pour mieux cerner le traitement de la prononciation et les principaux problèmes rencontrés par les enseignants.

Pour ce fait, nous avons fait appel aux trois questionnaires destinés aux étudiants ainsi qu'aux enseignants de la phonétique et de l'expression orale. Notre étude fournit une description théorique du système de son de l'anglais, et un examen des différentes méthodes et approches dans l'enseignement de la prononciation. L'analyse des données recueillies et l'interprétation des résultats des questionnaires confirment notre hypothèse de départ et nous mènent à suggérer certaines activités et idées pour améliorer l'enseignement de la prononciation.

ملخص الرسالة

تعالج هذه الدراسة التي بين أيدينا أطر تطبيق القواعد الصوتية بهدف تحسين النطق والأداء الشفهي لطلبة قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة قسنطينة . وقد تعرضت هذه الدراسة لقضية تعليم النطق في حالة المتعلمين المتلقين وأساتذة مقياسي علم الأصوات و التعبير الشفهي والطرائق التي يعالجون بها هذه الخاصية اللسانية . وترتكز هذه الدراسة بالأساس على ممارسة عملية النطق والطريقة التي تتم بها معالجة هذه المسألة في مقياسي التعبير الشفهي وعلم الأصوات.

لقد افترضنا في دراستنا هذه أن أخطاء النطق لدى الطلبة ما هي إلا نتيجة لنقص الممارسة اللفظية الشفهية للغة في حصص مقياسي التعبير الشفهي وعلم الأصوات. ولتأكيد صحة هذه الفرضية ، قمنا بدراسة ميدانية شملت طلبة السنة الثانية جامعي و أساتذة مقياسي التعبير الشفهي وعلم الأصوات بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، وذلك من أجل الإحاطة أكثر بالموضوع والوقوف على أهم المشاكل التي يعاني منها الطلبة

ولأجل ذلك، استعنا بإجابات طلبة وأساتذة مقياسي علم الأصوات والتعبير الشفهي على ثلاثة استمارات أسئلة قمنا بإعدادها لهذا الشأن. وتقدم دراستنا شرحا نظريا لنظام أصوات اللغة الإنجليزية واختبارا لطرائق ومقاربات مختلفة في تعليم النطق .

إن قيامنا بتحليل المعطيات التي حصلنا عليها وكذا ترجمة نتائج استمارات الأسئلة التي أعدناها قد أكد لنا صحة ما افترضناه ، وقادنا إلى اقتراح مجموعة من الأفكار والأنشطة الهادفة إلى تحسين تعليم نطق اللغة الانجليزية.